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EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

Addendum to the
9th National Report on the implementation of
the European Social Charter
submitted by

THE GOVERNMENT OF MALTA

(Article 15§3 for the period 01/01/2011 - 31/12/2014)



Report registered by the Secretariat on
27 June 2016

CYCLE 2016

Period 2012 to 2015

Article 15 - Right of persons with disabilities to independence, social integration and participation in the life of the community

Paragraph 3 - Integration and participation of persons with disabilities in the life of the community

Anti-discrimination legislation and integrated approach

During the period of 2012 and 2015, KNPD has continued investigating complaints in cases of alleged discrimination as required under the Equal Opportunity (Persons with Disability) Act- CAP 413 of the laws of Malta. Complaints in case of alleged discrimination can be addressed to ordinary courts or to a specialised body, the National Commission on Persons with Disability (KNPD).

The following is the link to the last Annual Reports of the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act. The Annual Report (EOA) of 2015 will be available on the KNPD Website soon.

Annual Reports of EOA: <http://www.knpd.org/eoa/>

Amendments to the Equal Opportunities Act (Bill 115) have been proposed in the year 2015 and the bill has gone through this year. These amendments will continue to strengthen the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act and are available on the following link:

Bill 115 -Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disabilities) (Amendment No 2) Bill - <http://www.parlament.mt/billdetails?bid=539&legcat=13>

In addition, Malta has ratified the UNCRPD in the year 2012, where Malta has bound itself to its implementation of the UNCRPD to the fullest extent possible.

Consultation

During the period of 2012 and 2015, the National Commission on Persons with Disability (KNPD) has continued to be responsible for devising and implementing social integration policies for disabled persons. As stipulated in the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act, the KNPD board is made up of not less than 14 members, and at least one half of the total number of the members of the Commission are themselves persons with a physical disability or family members of persons with a mental disability

Further to the above, below is the link to access the latest available annual reports on KNPD's website. The KNPD Annual Report of the 2015 will be available online soon. As noted on KNPD annual report of 2014, KNPD had regular meetings with the Disabled People Action Committee (DPAC) to discuss various areas and policies proposed. In 2015, ongoing consultations have also been regularly held with Disabled People Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations.

KNPD Annual reports: <http://www.knpd.org/publications/>

Forms of financial aid to increase the autonomy of persons with disabilities

For the period under review, the amount of Disability Pension paid, which is awarded to Maltese disabled people over the age of 18 (over the age of 14 in the case of visually disabled people) and qualifying under provisions in the Social Security Act increased from €408.85 per month in 2012 to €432.42 per month in 2015.

Furthermore, with effect from 1 January 2105, legislative amendments to the Social Security Act were carried out so that the Disability Pension of a person who is carrying out a gainful occupation with earnings exceeding the National Minimum Wage, will not be withdrawn or abated. This legal amendment led to an increase in the number of persons in receipt of a Disability Pension given that persons who were not entitled due to their earnings from employment, now could continue with their employment and also benefit from a Disability Pension and therefore enhance their financial independence and autonomy.

Measures to overcome obstacles

During the period of 2012 and 2015, the National Commission on Persons with Disability (KNPD) has continued with its advisory role in relation to the issuing of new building permits or the restructuring of existing buildings.

KNPD vets the applications received from the Planning Authority to see if they are if they are technically compliant and in line with the Access for all Standards. Further details on the work which is currently being carried out in relation to this can be found in the KNPD Annual reports:

KNPD Annual reports: <http://www.knpd.org/publications/>

Further to the above, in the past year, the *Access for all Guidelines* available in the link below have also become Standards, which will continue enforcing accessibility of public buildings, to effectively ensure the removal of structural barriers.

[Access for all Guidelines \(2011\): http://www.knpd.org/legislation/#section_access](http://www.knpd.org/legislation/#section_access)

Technical aids

During the period of 2012 and 2015, the National Commission on Persons with Disability (KNPD) has continued providing assistance through the Assistive Apparatus Service (SGhS) that provides disabled people with financial aid in purchasing assistive equipment.

Further information on the financial assistance provided through the Assistive Apparatus Fund during the years 2012 and 2015 can be found in the link to the KNPD Annual Reports below. As the end of 2015 and beginning of 2016, the administration of the

Assistive Apparatus Fund has been handed over to the Agenzija Sapport, who is the main service provider for disabled people in Malta.

The Sonia Tanti Independent Living Centre has been officially inaugurated in June 2011, and has started fully functioning in 2012. Assessments on Wheelchairs and Seating, Adaptive Driving and Adaptive Equipment are being carried out in this Centre. More information, including the number of people who have benefitted from such services, can be found in the below annual reports available in the link below:

KNPD Annual reports: <http://www.knpd.org/publications/>

Communication

During the period of 2012 and 2015, there have been various discussions and a Bill has been proposed on the recognition of Sign language as an official language. In March 2016, Sign Language has been officially recognised as an official language as it can be noted in the link below:

<http://www.eud.eu/news/maltese-sign-language-recognised-maltese-parliament/>

During the period of 2012 and 2015, The Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility (FITA) has continued with its work on making information communications technology (ICT) accessible for disabled people. Further information and updates on the work that FITA does can be found on the following link:

FITA has also implemented an EU funded Project during the past years to introduce the Maltese Speech Synthesiser in Malta. Further information can be found in the link below:

<http://www.fitamalta.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Maltese-Speech-Synthesiser-Info-sheet.pdf>

Mobility and transport

During the period of 2012 and 2015, and with the introduction of new bus operators in Malta, all public buses should be accessible for disabled people. KNPD had various discussions with the Transport Authority and the bus operators to ensure that these are accessible to disabled people, and progress has been made in this regard, including the introduction of low floor buses.

Disabled people can also apply for the Concession Card to use public transport, where they can benefit from cheaper rates. Further details are available in the link below:

<https://www.publictransport.com.mt/concession>

Free ferry trips on Gozo Channel are available to disabled people upon presentation of

Special Identity Card.

With regards to mobility, the Sonia Tanti Independent Living Centre (ERDF 072 Project) which has been inaugurated in June 2011, has an Adaptive Driving Assessment Training Unit. Disabled people can have an assessment as well as training on Adaptive driving. Further information can be found in the link below:

<http://www.knpd.org/services/sonia-tanti-independent-living-center/>

More information, including the number of people who have benefitted from such services provided at the Sonia Tanti Independent Living Centre, can be found in the below annual reports available in the link below:

KNPD Annual reports: <http://www.knpd.org/publications/>

Housing

The Sonia Tanti Independent Living Centre (ERDF 072 Project) was officially inaugurated in June 2011. The aims of this first Independent Living Centre (ILC) in Malta is to provide persons with disability and their families with advice, information and training in aspects of independent living such as mobility and assistive technology. The Independent Living Centre (ILC) has a Wheelchairs and Seating Unit, an Adaptive Driving Assessment and Training Unit, an Equipment Demonstration Unit and a Help Desk Office. Further information can be found on the following link:

<http://www.knpd.org/services/sonia-tanti-independent-living-center/>

Culture and leisure

KNPD has applied for an EU funded Project in the year 2015 and has started implementing the 'EU Disability Card in Malta' project which is co-funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union in 2016. Through this project, KNPD will be introducing the EU Disability Card in Malta which is a disabled person's card that will be recognized in other EU Member States and that disabled people could use to obtain discounted or free entries when visiting places in Malta or in other EU Member States. For the time being, this card will be introduced in the eight Members States which participated in the call for funds, these being: Malta, Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Slovenia and Romania. It is hoped that other countries will join this initiative in the future.

At the moment we are currently contacting entities around Malta to inform them about this Project and to check whether they would be interested in providing discounts to EU Disability Card and Special Identity Card Holders.