

## — Malta and the European Social Charter —

### Signatures, ratifications and accepted provisions

Malta ratified the European Social Charter on 04/10/1988 as well as the Amending Protocol to the Charter on 16/02/1994.

It ratified the Revised European Social Charter on 27/07/05, accepting 72 of the Revised Charter's 98 paragraphs.

Malta has not accepted the system of collective complaints.

### The Charter in Domestic law

Malta is a dualist state.

### Table of accepted provisions

1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	3.1
3.2	3.3	3.4	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	5	6.1	6.2	6.3
6.4	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.5	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.9	7.10	8.1
8.2	8.3	8.4	8.5	9	10.1	10.2	10.3	10.4	10.5	11.1	11.2
11.3	12.1	12.2	12.3	12.4	13.1	13.2	13.3	13.4	14.1	14.2	15.1
15.2	15.3	16	17.1	17.2	18.1	18.2	18.3	18.4	19.1	19.2	19.3
19.4	19.5	19.6	19.7	19.8	19.9	19.10	19.11	19.12	20	21	22
23	24	25	26.1	26.2	27.1	27.2	27.3	28	29	30	31.1
31.2	31.3										
									Grey = Accepted provisions		

### Reports on non-accepted provisions

The European Committee of Social Rights ("the Committee") examines the situation of non-accepted provisions of the Revised Charter every 5 years after the ratification. It adopted [reports concerning Malta](#) in 2010, 2015 and 2020.

In its reports, the Committee notes that Maltese authorities consider the acceptance of Articles 2§7, 12§2, 19§1, 19§2, 19§3, 19§5, 19§9, 21, 22 and 30 of the Charter in the near future. Furthermore, it considered that the situation in law and in practice in Malta does not seem to present obstacles to the acceptance of Articles 18§2, 19§11, 27§1(c) and 31§2 of the Charter.

Further information on the reports on non-accepted provisions is available on the [relevant webpage](#).

# Monitoring the implementation of the European Social Charter <sup>1</sup>

## I. Reporting system <sup>2</sup>

### Reports submitted by Malta

Between 1990 and 2024, Malta has submitted 16 reports on the application of the 1961 Charter and 17 reports on the application of the Revised Charter.

The [16<sup>th</sup> report](#), which was submitted on 20/04/2023, concerns the accepted provisions relating to thematic group 4 "Children, families and migrants" (Articles 7, 8, 16, 17, 16, 19, 27 and 31).

Conclusions with respect to these provisions have been published in March 2024.

On 28 February 2024, an [ad hoc report on the cost-of-living crisis was submitted by Malta](#)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Committee monitors compliance with the Charter under two procedures, the reporting system and the collective complaints procedure, according to Rule 2 of the Committee's rules: « 1. The Committee rules on the conformity of the situation in States with the European Social Charter, the 1988 Additional Protocol and the Revised European Social Charter. 2. It adopts conclusions through the framework of the reporting procedure and decisions under the collective complaints procedure ».

Further information on the [procedures](#) may be found on the [HUDOC database](#) and in the [Digest of the case law of the Committee](#).

<sup>2</sup> Detailed information on the Reporting System is available on the [relevant webpage](#). The reports submitted by States Parties may be consulted in the [relevant section](#).

<sup>3</sup> In accordance with the [decision of the Ministers' Deputies](#) adopted on 27 September 2022 concerning the [new system](#) for the presentation of reports under the European Social Charter, the European Committee of Social Rights and the Governmental Committee have decided to request an *ad hoc* report on the cost-of-living crisis to all State parties.

## Situations of non-conformity <sup>4</sup>

### Thematic Group 1 "Employment, training and equal opportunities" - Conclusions 2020

► *Article 154 – Right to work – Vocational guidance, training and rehabilitation*

It has not been established that the legislation provides for individual leave for training of employed persons.

► *Article 1053 – Right to vocational training – Vocational training and retraining of adult workers*

It has not been established that the legislation provides for individual leave for training for employed persons.

► *Article 1055 – Right to vocational training - Full use of facilities available*

It has not been established that equal treatment of nationals of other States Parties residing or working lawfully in Malta is guaranteed as regards financial assistance for vocational education and training.

► *Article 20 - Right to equal opportunities and equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation without discrimination on the grounds of sex*

The obligation to make measurable progress in reducing the gender pay gap has not been fulfilled.

► *Article 24 – Right to protection in case of dismissal*

- Employees undergoing a probation period of six months are not protected against dismissal;
- Termination of employment at the initiative of the employer on the sole ground that the person has reached the pensionable age, which is permitted by law, is not reasonably justified.

### Thematic Group 2 "Health, social security and social protection" - Conclusions 2021

► *Article 353 - Right to safe and healthy working conditions - Enforcement of safety and health regulations*

It has not been established that:

- occupational diseases are monitored effectively.
- the labour inspection system is effective.

► *Article 1152 - Right to protection of health - Advisory and educational facilities*

It has not been established that:

- public information and awareness raising are public health priorities,
- health education is incorporated into the school curriculum.

► *Article 1153 - Right to protection of health - Prevention of diseases and accidents*

It has not been established that:

- adequate measures were taken to overcome environmental pollution;
- efficient immunisation and epidemiological monitoring programmes are in place;
- adequate measures were taken to prevent alcohol consumption;
- adequate measures were taken to prevent accidents.

► *Article 1251 – Existence of a social security system - Right to social security*

The minimum levels of sickness and unemployment benefits are inadequate.

► *Article 1254 – Existence of a social security system - Social security of persons moving between States*

- It has not been established that equal treatment with regard to social security is guaranteed to nationals of all other States Parties;
- It has not been established that equal treatment with regard to access to family allowances is guaranteed to nationals of all other States Parties;
- It has not been established that the right to maintenance of accruing rights is guaranteed to nationals of all other States Parties.

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<sup>4</sup> Further information on the situations of non-conformity is available on the [HUDOC database](#).

- *Article 13§1 – Right to social and medical assistance - Adequate assistance for every person in need*
- Means of subsistence are not guaranteed to persons in need whose social assistance is withdrawn as penalty for having refused a job offer;
  - The level of social assistance paid to a single person without resources is not adequate;
  - It has not been established that foreign nationals unlawfully present in the territory have a right to emergency social and medical assistance.

► *Article 13§3 - Right to social and medical assistance - Prevention, abolition or alleviation of need*  
It has not been established that those in need may receive help and personal assistance services free of charge.

► *Article 23 – Right of the elderly to social protection - The Committee takes note of the information contained in the report submitted by Malta.*  
There is no legal framework prohibiting discrimination on grounds of age outside of employment.

### **Thematic Group 3 “Labour rights” - Conclusions 2022**

► *Article 2§1 – Reasonable working time*

The law does not guarantee the right to reasonable weekly working hours for certain categories of workers.

► *Article 4§1- Right to a fair remuneration – Decent remuneration*

The minimum wage does not ensure a decent standard of living.

► *Article 4§3 – Right to a fair remuneration - Non-discrimination between women and men with respect to remuneration*

Access to effective remedies in cases of gender pay discrimination is not guaranteed.

► *Article 4§4 – Right to a fair remuneration - Reasonable notice of termination of employment*

- The notice periods generally applied are manifestly unreasonable in the following cases:
  - less than six months of service;
  - between six months and two years of service;
  - between three and four years of service.
- No notice period is provided for in cases of dismissal in economic, technological or organisational circumstances requiring changes in the workplace.

► *Article 4§5 – Right to a fair remuneration - Limits to wage deductions*

It has not been established that the safeguards preventing workers from waiving their right to limitations of wage deductions are adequate.

► *Article 6§1 - Right to bargain collectively - Joint consultation*

It has not been established that joint consultative bodies exist in the public sector.

► *Article 6§2 - Right to bargain collectively - Negotiation procedures*

It has not been established that the legal framework allows for the participation of employees in the public sector in the determination of their working conditions.

► *Article 6§3 – Right to bargain collectively - Conciliation and arbitration*

- Decisions of the court of inquiry are binding on the parties even where they have not given their prior consent;
- The circumstances in which compulsory arbitration is permitted go beyond the limits set by Article G of the Charter.

► *Article 6§4 – Right to bargain collectively – Collective action*

- The police are denied the right to strike;
- Employees in some sectors may be dismissed for taking part in a strike.

► *Article 26§1 - Right to dignity in the workplace - Sexual harassment*

It has not been established that appropriate and effective redress (compensation and reinstatement) is guaranteed in cases of sexual harassment in relation to work.

► *Article 26§2 - Right to dignity in the workplace - Moral harassment*

- In relation to the employer's responsibility, there are no sufficient and effective remedies against moral (psychological) in relation to work;
- Appropriate and effective redress (compensation and reinstatement) is not guaranteed in cases of moral (psychological) harassment in relation to work.

**Thematic Group 4 "Children, families, migrants" - Conclusions 2023**

► *Article 7§1 – Right of children and young persons to protection – Prohibition of employment under the age of 15*

- The prohibition of employment of children under the age of 15 does not apply to children employed in occasional or short-term work involving domestic service in a private household or work in a family undertaking;
- The duration of working time for children under the age of 15 is excessive and therefore cannot be regarded as light.

► *Article 7§3 - Right of children and young persons to protection - Prohibition of employment of children subject to compulsory education*

The daily and weekly duration of light work permitted for children subject to compulsory education during school holidays is excessive and may deprive them of the full benefit of education.

► *Article 7§4 - Right of children and young persons to protection - Working time*

The daily and weekly working time for children under the age of 16 is excessive.

► *Article 7§8 – Right of children and young persons to protection – Prohibition of night work*

The legal prohibition on night work does not apply to the great majority of young workers under 18 years of age.

► *Article 7§10 – Right of children and young persons to protection - Special protection against physical and moral dangers*

- Children are not adequately protected against sexual exploitation;
- Internet service providers do not have an obligation to remove or prevent accessibility to illegal material;
- Children in vulnerable situations are not adequately protected.

► *Article 8§4 - Right of employed women to protection of maternity - Regulation of night work*

Pregnant women, women who have recently given birth or are nursing, who cannot perform night work and cannot be offered suitable alternative employment and are obliged to take leave are not entitled to 100% of their previous salary.

► *Article 8§5 – Droit des travailleuses à la protection de la maternité - Interdiction des travaux dangereux, insalubres ou pénibles*

Pregnant women, women who have recently given birth or are nursing, whose ordinary employment has been deemed unsuitable due to their condition and who cannot be offered suitable alternative employment and are obliged to take leave are not entitled to 100% of their previous salary.

► *Article 16 - Right of the family to social, legal and economic protection*

- Family benefits do not constitute a sufficient income supplement for a significant number of families;
- Nationals of other States Parties to the charter residing in Malta who do not hold long-term residence status are not entitled to equal treatment with regard to access to housing allowances (rent subsidy).

► *Article 27§2 – Right of workers with family responsibilities to equal opportunity and treatment - Parental leave*

No compensation or remuneration is provided for parental leave.

The Committee also considered that the failure to provide requested information on Articles 7§2, 7§5, 7§6, 7§7, 7§9, 7§10, 8§2, 16 and 17§1 amounts to a breach by Malta of its reporting obligations under Article C of the Charter.

**The Committee has been unable to assess compliance with the following rights:**

**Thematic Group 1 "Employment, training and equal opportunities"**

▶Article 1§2 - Conclusions 2020

**Thematic Group 2 "Health, social security and social protection"**

▶Article 11§1 - Conclusions 2021

▶Article 12§3 - Conclusions 2021

▶Article 12§4 - Conclusions 2021

▶Article 13§4 - Conclusions 2021

▶Article 14§2 - Conclusions 2021

**Thematic Group 3 "Labour rights"**

▶Article 2§2 - Conclusions 2022

▶Article 4§2 - Conclusions 2022

▶Article 5 - Conclusions 2022

▶Article 28 - Conclusions 2022

**Thematic Group 4 "Children, families, migrants"**

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## **II. Examples of progress achieved in the implementation of rights under the Charter (non-exhaustive list)**

### **Thematic Group 1 "Employment, training and equal opportunities"**

►The Equal Opportunities (Persons with a Disability) Act, amended in 2012, prohibits discrimination in all areas including employment (see Conclusions 2012). Under this law employers must not discriminate against persons with disabilities in procedures relating to job applications, recruitment, promotion, dismissal, remuneration, vocational training or other areas linked to employment conditions. It is not permitted for employers to use tests or procedures designed to exclude persons with disabilities unless they can prove that these tests are crucial to the work concerned.

### **Thematic Group 2 "Health, social security and social protection"**

►The OHSa in collaboration with the EU-OHSa has developed a risk assessment tool (Online interactive Risk Assessment (OIRA)) which can be used for work in an office setting. The tool has been developed in the Maltese language and is based on Maltese occupational health and safety legislation.

►The report mentions certain positive measures taken in favour of pensioners (exemption from taxes when the pension rate is equal to the national minimum wage; lowering of the age requirement – from 80 years old to 78, and then to 75 – for the granting of a €300 yearly allowance for elderly who continue to live in their residence; award of full widow pensions even when the beneficiary is employed).

►Elimination of gender-based discrimination with regard to the payment of survivor's pension and sickness benefit (changes made with effect from 1 January 1998).

### **Thematic Group 3 "Labour rights"**

►Since 2012 employers are obliged to conduct a risk assessment in accordance with the requirements of the General Provisions for Health and Safety at Work Regulations 2003, prior to assigning a worker to night work.

### **Thematic Group 4 "Children, families, migrants"**

►Pregnant employees are entitled to an uninterrupted period of fully paid maternity leave of 14 weeks (increased to 18 weeks as from 1 January 2013).

►Following amendments in 2011 to Regulation 5 of the Protection of Maternity (Employment) a special allowance equivalent to the rate of sickness benefit is paid for the whole period necessary for the protection of the employee's health and safety.

►The Protection of Maternity (Employment) Regulations (Legal Notice 439/2003) were amended in 2012 to the effect that employers are now obliged to conduct a risk assessment in accordance with the requirements of the General Provisions for Health and Safety at Work Regulations 2003 (Legal Notice 36/2003).

►The entry into force of the Domestic Violence Act in 2013, which establishes a commission on domestic violence. The functions of this commission are to advise the Minister responsible for social policy on the issue of domestic violence.

►Article 712 *et seq.* of the Civil Code has been amended so that children of second (or subsequent) marriages or children who were adopted are not discriminated against.

►Corporal punishment is unlawful in the home under a 2014 amendment to the Criminal Code. Corporal punishment is unlawful in alternative care settings under article 339 of the Criminal Code, as amended by the Criminal Code (Amendment No. 3) Act 2014. Corporal punishment is unlawful in schools under Article 339 of the Criminal Code as amended in 2014.

►The age of criminal responsibility has been raised to the age of 14. The relevant provisions of the law have been changed (Article 35 of the Criminal Code) and now a child under the age of 14 shall be exempt from criminal responsibility for any act or omission. Hence the Article in the Criminal Code relating to mischievous discretion between the ages of 9 to 14 has been removed.

►Malta abolished all forms of corporal punishment in all settings.