

## Fifth report on Malta [\[en\]](#) - [\[fr\]](#)

Press Release – 15 May 2018

### Malta should adopt an integration strategy for all migrants, says Council of Europe Anti-racism body

In a [report](#) published today, the Council of Europe Anti-racism Commission ECRI calls on the Maltese authorities to adopt an integration strategy for all migrants; intensify training for police, prosecutors and judges to ensure a more effective fight against racist and homo/transphobic hate crime; and remove the unnecessarily harsh conditions for obtaining long-term residence status. The report also acknowledges significant progress in a number of areas.

ECRI welcomes the ratification by Malta of Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights and impressive advances in equality for LGBT persons, including the legalisation of same sex marriage in 2017 and the enactment of the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act and the Affirmation of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression Act.

However, the Internet and in particular social media in Malta are rife with offensive content. The Criminal Code punishes incitement to hatred or violence but only against a person or persons *in Malta*. There is still no systematic data collection on the number of reported incidents of racist hate crime, including hate speech, investigations carried out or prosecutions and sentencing.

There is an overall negative climate of public opinion on immigration and towards migrants.

Refugees remain the most vulnerable and marginalised group in Malta, experiencing isolation and a low level of interaction with Maltese people, as well as exploitation in unregistered employment. Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are excluded from the right to family reunification, which causes suffering and seriously undermines their integration prospects.

ECRI acknowledges the efforts made over several years to develop a national migrant integration strategy and encourages the completion of this process as soon as possible.

“Malta should adopt a strategy for the integration of *all* migrants”, said Jean-Paul Lehnens, ECRI Chairperson. “This should address language acquisition in English and Maltese, and cover reasonable and achievable ways to obtain long-term residence status, as well as electoral rights and eventually Maltese citizenship”, he added.

The report makes 14 recommendations to the Maltese authorities. Within two years ECRI will evaluate compliance with two of them that it considers to be priority recommendations:

- put in place a mechanism for collecting disaggregated data on hate crime incidents, including hate speech, on grounds of race, colour, language, religion, ethnic origin, citizenship, sexual orientation and gender identity, recording the specific bias motivation as well as the criminal justice response;

- continue to allow persons who cannot be returned to their country of origin to stay legally in Malta; for those who have resided in Malta for more than ten years, the authorities should consider a more permanent form of regularisation.

The report was prepared following [ECRI's visit to Malta](#) in May 2017 and covers the period up to 6 December 2017.

*The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) is a human rights body of the Council of Europe, composed of independent experts, which monitors problems of racism, xenophobia, antisemitism, intolerance and discrimination on grounds such as "race", national/ethnic origin, colour, citizenship, religion and language (racial discrimination); it prepares reports and issues recommendations to member States. ECRI monitors the situation in member states in five year cycles.*

[Additional information on ECRI](#)

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