



20/04/2023

RAP/RCha/MLT/16(2023)

EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

16th National Report on the implementation of
the European Social Charter

submitted by

THE GOVERNMENT OF MALTA

Articles 7, 8, 16, 17, and 27

for the period 01/01/2018 – 31/12/2021

Report registered by the Secretariat on

20 April 2023

CYCLE 2023



**SIXTEENTH REPORT ON THE
EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER (REVISED)**

submitted by the

Government of Malta

**for Thematic Group Children, Families, Migrants
(1 January 2018 – 31 December 2021)**

2022

INDEX

I. INTRODUCTION.....	3
II. PROVISIONS OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER (revised)	4
Article 7 – The right of children and young persons to protection.....	4
Article 8 – The right of employed women to protection of maternity.	6
Article 16 – The right of the family to social, legal and economic protection.....	7
Article 17 – The right of children and young persons to social, legal and economic protection.....	133
Article 27 – The right of workers with family responsibilities to equal opportunities and equal treatment	19

I. INTRODUCTION

This Report by Malta is drafted within the context of the form for submission as adopted by the Committee of Ministers on the 26th March 2008.

The following information is to supplement previous information submitted by Malta with respect to the same provision under the European Social Charter and should be taken as additional information. Where a new provision of the Revised Charter has not been reported upon in previous Reports from Malta, full details of the situation of the respective Article in Malta will be provided.

II. PROVISIONS OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER (revised)

Article 7 – The right of children and young persons to protection

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of children and young persons to protection, the Parties undertake:

1 to provide that the minimum age of admission to employment shall be 15 years, subject to exceptions for children employed in prescribed light work without harm to their health, morals or education;

2 to provide that the minimum age of admission to employment shall be 18 years with respect to prescribed occupations regarded as dangerous or unhealthy;

3 to provide that persons who are still subject to compulsory education shall not be employed in such work as would deprive them of the full benefit of their education;

4 to provide that the working hours of persons under 18 years of age shall be limited in accordance with the needs of their development, and particularly with their need for vocational training;

5 to recognise the right of young workers and apprentices to a fair wage or other appropriate allowances;

6 to provide that the time spent by young persons in vocational training during the normal working hours with the consent of the employer shall be treated as forming part of the working day;

7 to provide that employed persons of under 18 years of age shall be entitled to a minimum of four weeks' annual holiday with pay;

8 to provide that persons under 18 years of age shall not be employed in night work with the exception of certain occupations provided for by national laws or regulations;

9 to provide that persons under 18 years of age employed in occupations prescribed by national laws or regulations shall be subject to regular medical control;

10 to ensure special protection against physical and moral dangers to which children and young persons are exposed, and particularly against those resulting directly or indirectly from their work.

Article 7.1

Waiting from DIER

Article 7.2

Waiting from DIER

Article 7.3

Waiting from DIER

Article 7.4

Waiting from DIER

Article 7.5

Waiting from DIER

Article 7.6

Waiting from DIER

Article 7.7

Waiting from DIER

Article 7.8

Waiting from DIER

Article 7.9

Medical exams of young persons

Whereas OHSA during its interactions with employers on matters related to the Protection of Young Persons at Work Places Regulations (LN 81 of 2000) routinely inquiries about risk assessments, medical examinations, training etc., the specific data being asked about medical examinations is not routinely collected. However, work on the development of a system that collates such information about breaches resulting from the said mentioned inspections has started and it is anticipated that within 18 months, OHSA would have the means to retrieve such data electronically.

Article 8 – The right of employed women to protection of maternity.

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of employed women to the protection of maternity, the Parties undertake:

- 1 to provide either by paid leave, by adequate social security benefits or by benefits from public funds for employed women to take leave before and after childbirth up to a total of at least fourteen weeks;
- 2 to consider it as unlawful for an employer to give a woman notice of dismissal during the period from the time she notifies her employer that she is pregnant until the end of her maternity leave, or to give her notice of dismissal at such a time that the notice would expire during such a period;
- 3 to provide that mothers who are nursing their infants shall be entitled to sufficient time off for this purpose;
- 4 to regulate the employment in night work of pregnant women, women who have recently given birth and women nursing their infants;
- 5 to prohibit the employment of pregnant women, women who have recently given birth or who are nursing their infants in underground mining and all other work which is unsuitable by reason of its dangerous, unhealthy or arduous nature and to take appropriate measures to protect the employment rights of these women.

Provisions for Article 8 all in conformity

Article 16 – The right of the family to social, legal and economic protection

With a view to ensuring the necessary conditions for the full development of the family, which is a fundamental unit of society, the Parties undertake to promote the economic, legal and social protection of family life by such means as social and family benefits, fiscal arrangements, provision and family housing, benefits for the newly married and other appropriate means.

The Foundation for Social Welfare Services offers several support services to victims of domestic violence and perpetrators of intimate partner violence and child to parent violence.

Apart from providing support services to victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence, the services offered through Agency Appogg, contribute towards the prevention of gender-based violence and domestic violence through raising awareness on the various local media and social media, as well as educational sessions within the community, including students. The FSWS also contributes towards awareness raising on the subject by focusing an annual national conference on the prevention and elimination of violence against women and domestic violence. The annual conference is part of the 16 Days of Activism for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls campaign and joins the Commission for Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence in its calendar of activities during this campaign with a number of awareness raising initiatives. A specific theme is chosen each year to focus on the different facets of gender-based violence and domestic violence, and a part of the conference is survivor-led through the sharing of their experience of intimate partner violence. The conference is attended by service providers, policy makers, politicians and professionals.

The psycho-social services provided to victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence contributes towards their protection as safety planning is done together with each victim. The professionals offer emotional and social support services, which include psycho-educational and psycho-social sessions, as well as accompaniment to court sittings, amongst others. A safe alternative accommodation in an emergency shelter is offered to all victims who need protection, in addition to empowering them to file a police report. A social work assessment evaluating the level of risk that the victim is exposed to is carried out with every service user and further support is given according to their wishes.

Victims requesting safe shelter are assisted to enter into one of the three first-stage emergency shelters in Malta and Gozo, two in Malta and one in Gozo respectively. FSWS runs one of these emergency shelters, and together with the Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights (MSPC), FSWS has two Public Social Partnership (PSP) Agreements with the two NGOs running these services. In addition to the above, another two Public Social Partnership Agreements are held with two NGOs offering second-stage domestic violence shelters. Other PSP Agreements are held with NGOs offering shelter for homeless persons.

FSWS' emergency shelter caters for women and children who are victims of domestic violence and provides them with an immediate safe environment conducive to self-healing for women and their children who suffer emotional, physical, sexual, and any other form of domestic violence. The safety of the residents at the shelter is paramount, and a number of safety measures are taken to ensure that the residence is secure. The location of the shelter is kept confidential and is only given to those residents who are confirmed to be admitted to the shelter. Since it is an emergency shelter, the average stay is about 3 months. However, each case is seen individually according to the service user's care plan. Residents move out of the emergency shelter once safety issues are no longer present, and different options are considered depending on the situation of the resident and her children. Those who continue to require sheltered accommodation move to a second-stage shelter run by one of the NGOs who have a PSP Agreement with the MSPC and FSWS.

Chapter 581 of the laws of Malta, the Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Act states that victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence who file a police report, are to undergo a risk assessment to evaluate and identify the risk factors experienced by the victim. In 2019, the FSWS set up the Domestic Violence Risk Assessment Service and employed a team of risk assessors to offer the service round the clock. The DV risk assessors are trained in the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence Risk Checklist DASH 2009 which was developed by Laura Richards in the UK. The Risk Assessment was identified in the Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Strategy and Action Plan document issued by the Commission for Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence, entitled *Society's Concern: Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Strategy & Action Plan - VISION 2020* (Ministry for European Affairs and Equality, 2018), as the risk assessment tool which should be used in the assessment of risk factors with victims when they report the abuse to the police. [Link to Society's Concern: Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Strategy & Action Plan - Vision 2020](#)

The DV Risk Assessment Service of Agency Appogg receive requests from the Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Police Unit (GBVDV) following a victim's report, to carry out a risk assessment with the said victim. The DASH Risk Assessment tool identifies the risk factors experienced by the victim. Following the risk assessment, the victim is offered further support services through the Domestic Violence Services, including shelter. The original copy of the risk assessment is passed on to the GBVDV Police Unit for their consideration in the level of protection extended to the victim, along with their investigation and prosecution of the perpetrator.

The Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights in collaboration with the FSWS is currently working on the setting up of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Meeting (MARAM) committee which brings together the various stake holders working in victims' services and perpetrators' services to discuss all cases which result in high risk.

Legal Aid services under the auspices of the Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights are offered to all clients who seek legal advice. This service is also offered by other services such as Legal Aid Malta, and a team of legal aid lawyers which was set up by the Ministry for Justice when Chapter 581 came into force.

Agency Appogg also offers support services to perpetrators of intimate partner abuse, including perpetrator programmes to address the abusive attitudes and behaviours from the male perpetrators towards their female partners. Another service works with adolescents and young adults who perpetrate violence towards their parents/guardians and supports them in stopping their abusive behaviour. The parents/guardians are supported by the victim services, the professionals work together systemically with the family.

Below please find attached the tables of data requested. The information for 2013 to 2021 is published data (online reports).

The 2022 data is data that the Research Department just extracted for Jan-Dec'2023 that has not been approved for release as yet but is the figure for the draft 2022 reports.

DVU DATA

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 Provisional Data	Sum
New cases opened	243	276	293	348	338	319	683	687	553	524	4264
Recontact cases opened	124	157	110	97	92	135	68	97	241	125	1246
Cases closed	375	401	420	291	276	296	749	971	665	623	5067
Total cases worked with	626	681	689	718	971	1007	1324	2321	2462	2121	

Ghabex data

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 Provisional Data	Sum
New cases opened	53	54	33	53	34	28	33	7	19	44	358
Recontact cases opened	12	16	15	17	17	21	2	23	24	4	151
Cases closed	64	68	52	66	55	44	27	37	22	38	473
Total cases worked with	71	78	55	73	58	55	37	41	48	81	

Childcare facilities

In October 2021, Malta published two important documents related to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) – the National Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care Services (0-3 years) and the Early Childhood Education and Care (0–7 years) National Policy Framework for Malta and Gozo. These documents aim to ensure quality ECEC services and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all children.

To support the implementation of the National Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care Services, the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) has developed an implementation plan. The plan is implemented through regular quality assurance exercises carried out with childcare service providers, focusing on both the structure and process quality. Additionally, the DQSE is providing professional development sessions for childcare center staff, especially regarding the introduction of internal review processes within childcare centers.

In 2022, the Institute for Education (IFE) in conjunction with the Quality Assurance Department within the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation launched an award entitled Assistant to the Child Care Educator (MQF Level 3, 30 ECTS) to improve the level and competencies of those aspiring to become childcare assistants and to facilitate their employability.

The DQSE is also partly implementing the Early Childhood Education and Care (0–7 years) National Policy Framework through evaluation and monitoring of educational institutions offering ECEC. The DQSE has integrated the 5 tenets included within the

Early Childhood Education and Care Policy for Malta and Gozo (access, workforce, curriculum, monitoring and governance within its external review structures and compliance visits in schools. This includes the monitoring of the accessibility present in Childcare and Kinder settings and the core curriculum which is being offered to children and how this reaches the outcomes set in national standards and policy. The DQSE also monitors through regular compliance visits that the workforce in Childcare Centres and Kinder schools are approved in their role.

In addition, the Foundation for Educational Services (FES) is funding a "Train the Trainer" concept by providing intensive training to childcare center coordinators within FES childcare centers. This training aims to make coordinators more confident and knowledgeable to mentor and support Childcare Educators. The FES has also invested heavily in the training of all staff across all centres in the child led approach (emergent curriculum).

To further improve the quality of ECEC, several initiatives are being implemented in the 2022/2023 school year. The reform of the learning outcomes framework will continue after being put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this, teacher training on the new curriculum for the early years has also resumed. The government plans to employ teaching assistants in childcare centers to help identify and address learning difficulties as early as possible. Evaluations of the role of learning support educators in Malta's schools and their impact on student outcomes may also help to better understand what to plan at the level of ECEC. Additionally, the Institute for Education will offer ECEC staff more opportunities to continue their professional learning to get a higher qualification on a part-time basis.

Child benefits

The Maltese Social Security system provides means tested child benefits to households where the annual income is less than €25,924 and a flat rate child benefit for households whose income exceeds €25,924. The total number of households in receipt of the former is circa 13,300 whereas circa 28,400 are in receipt of the latter. So out of circa 41,700 households with children eligible for child allowance, the percentage of families covered by the means tested child allowance is 31.8%. Furthermore, a child supplement is also paid to all households in receipt of a child allowance.

Benefit amounts

The annual maximum child allowance due per child is €1,252.16 and the minimum is €450 per child. Furthermore, as aforementioned, all households in receipt of a child allowance also receive a child supplement which amounts to €140 annually per eligible child in receipt of a flat rate and €160 annually per eligible child in receipt of a means tested rate. With regards to the median equivalised income, statistics issued by the National Statistics Office in Malta show that the medium equivalised income for 2021 was €17,036.

Residence requirement

The period of residence required for nationals of other States Parties lawfully resident in Malta is five years however, the waiting period is not applicable for persons holding an employment permit and working in Malta or for persons holding a refugee status. The above waiting period is also not applicable if person is from a CoE member state.

Measures for vulnerable families

The Maltese Social Security System provides vulnerable persons/families with an Energy Benefit to mitigate the problems encountered with the cost of electricity. The Energy Benefit is due according to the number of persons in the household and to the income of the said household.

However, persons in receipt of Social assistance are automatically eligible for this Benefit, and persons suffering from a medical condition that requires the use of certain of certain equipment that uses electricity are eligible for a much higher rate of Energy Benefit, otherwise known as Humanitarian Energy Benefit.

Article 17 – The right of children and young persons to social, legal and economic protection

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right of children and young persons to grow up in an environment which encourages the full development of their personality and of their physical and mental capacities, the Parties undertake, either directly, or in cooperation with public and private organisations, to take all appropriate and necessary measures designed:

- 1a. to ensure that children and young persons, taking account of the rights and duties of their parents, have the care, the assistance, the education and the training they need, in particular by providing for the establishment or maintenance of institutions and services sufficient and adequate for this purpose;
 - b. to protect children and young persons against negligence, violence or exploitations;
 - c. to provide protection and special aid from the state for children and young persons temporarily or definitively deprived of their family's support;
2. to provide to children and young persons a free primary and secondary education as well as to encourage regular attendance at schools.

Child poverty

Scheme 9 kicked off in the 2016-17 scholastic year as an Education Ministry initiative to give a helping hand to disadvantaged schoolchildren. Scheme 9 is a national budgetary measure intended to ameliorate the life of primary, middle and secondary school students aged between 3 to 16 years living in the most disadvantaged familial and cultural backgrounds. In essence this scheme addresses these students' basic educational necessities to ensure the provision of a quality educational experience hence diminishing barriers for students living in families experiencing economic, social, and cultural difficulties. Students can benefit from - a healthy and nutritious lunch delivered daily at school, pack of stationery, uniform, photocopies, and extra-curricular activities including summer school, after-school club and sport.

As of Scholastic year 2022/ 2023 the scheme has widened to include more students. In addition, a parallel scheme will be administered by state schools with an allocation of approximately €10,000 for this scheme for each school so that more students will benefit from more individualised support.

Furthermore, Malta's Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools: Route to Quality Inclusion (2022) gives a guiding plan to all stakeholders within the education sector to ensure that all learners have access to quality education, intervention, and support to experience success in learning within a high-quality inclusive education system.

Malta's inclusion policy 'A Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools: Route to Quality Inclusion' was first published in 2019 and revised in 2022. A number of targets under the said policy have continued to be implemented, these include:

- the school mission statement includes evidence of values of diversity and inclusion placing high importance on equity and improved outcomes for all learners;
- the setting up of communication channels between mainstream and Resource Centres/Learning Support Centres for further collaboration and upskilling of educators;
- ensure that yearly individual education plans (IEPs) are well-written and well-designed;
- adaptations and differentiation practices are being carried out collaboratively between teachers and learning support educators;
- creating / reviewing memoranda of understanding and agreements with other services and agencies outside the National School Support Services within the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation and involvement in inter-ministerial committees;
- upskilling of educators through the support of heads of department (inclusion) and psychosocial team;
- the senior leadership team and educators engage in professional development and training in different areas of inclusive education every scholastic year;
- schools and services provide potential networking opportunities such that collaborative professional development can be organised potentially for sharing expertise and developing interschools' teams;
- involvement of stakeholders as early as possible during interventions through collaborative practice;
- learners' transition is prioritised and a plan is devised between schools;
- learners are aware of the different academic, vocational or applied pathways available.

Free primary and secondary education - regular attendance at school

To support the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014–2024’s four overarching goals, a number of policies have been reviewed and renewed with a life cycle spanning up to 2030. These policies are underpinned by the four broad goals of the Framework for Education Strategy 2014-2024. The Policy Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate is also closely monitoring the process which should lead to the creation of a new Education Strategy 2024-2030, whose goals are currently being consulted on and with an action plan expected to be launched in April 2024.

One of these initiatives of the Education Ministry was My Journey, which was launched in 2019 to offer students vocational and applied subjects alongside traditional academic

courses. The Learning Outcomes Framework was also implemented, which focused on student-centered teaching and continual assessment. Additionally, the Tiny Teen Science Café initiative engaged primary school students and parents in informal discussions on STEM subjects and careers. The STEM Campaign, START STEM, targeted students, parents, and the public to engage more with STEM subjects and careers. Guidelines on the weight and carriage of schoolbags were published to reduce the weight for students.

Several measures were also undertaken in response to COVID-19 pandemic. Schools were closed and distance learning was facilitated through IT infrastructure, educational software, and online training materials. Literacy and reading programs were shifted online and on television. Predictive assessments were used to determine progress and promote students to the next year level.

In 2021, the then Ministry for Education opened all state schools with preventive measures in place for children from childcare to Year 11. A virtual school was opened for vulnerable students from primary, middle, and secondary schools, and a summer catch-up educational program was launched. The ministry engaged around 90 educators to run the catch-up program for 500 students from Year 1 to Year 10, incorporating academic and enrichment activities. Additionally, the ministry is working on implementing an Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Education pilot project in two parts. The first part involves developing an AI-powered adaptive learning system to support personalized learning programs for 1,000 students across primary and secondary education, and the second part involves constructing a rich dataset and using AI analytics to deliver predictive insights to assist in identifying potential early school leavers.

In 2022, the National Literacy Agency published a Bilingual Glossary of Mathematics Terms for public consultation. The glossary provides words and expressions used in mathematics communication in Maltese and English languages for ages 3-11 years. The Institute for Education is collaborating with the National Student Support Services to develop an accredited teaching qualification for personnel to specialize in teaching students with disabilities. Moreover, in line with the Core Competences Policy and Strategy (2009), alternative annual examination papers for Maltese and English subjects for primary students with learning difficulties in Years 4 and 5 will be discontinued, and these students will sit for the standard examination paper. However, alternative annual examination papers for the Math subject will still be used for Scholastic Year 2022-2023 and will be discontinued in the following year.

Enrolment rates, absenteeism and dropout rates

Malta has been successful in reducing its early leaving from education and training (ELET) rate since 2010, with a decrease of 10.7 percentage points.

To tackle ELET, Malta has implemented several initiatives in recent years through an ELET policy. An early school leaving unit has been established within the Ministry for Education to coordinate efforts to address ELET. Malta has also strengthened vocational education and training, providing an alternative to traditional academic programmes. Vocational subjects have been offered to secondary students since 2011 and applied learning subjects are now being offered as part of an alternative learning programme.

Psychosocial services for students and teacher trainings on ELET and social inclusion have also been strengthened, along with several second-chance education programmes for those who disengaged from education or did not successfully complete secondary education. A free childcare scheme was also launched in 2014 for all parents and guardians working or studying full-time as a prevention measure to reduce the risk of ELET.

To continue tackling ELET, Malta plans to implement a whole-school approach, which may be key to success. The recently revised national strategy on ELET endorses whole-school approaches and targeted prevention measures for at-risk pupils. The government aims to address the main ELET risk factors and strengthen prevention, intervention and compensation measures through collaboration with key stakeholders, including students, parents and educators. This strategy is projected to be launched in 2023.

All schools record daily attendance of all pupils on an electronic portal. Parents are notified by means of an SMS when a student is absent on the day. Additionally, should a student miss more than 3 days in a month without providing a valid justification, the parents/legal guardians receive a written notification informing them about this absence. Once unjustified absence amounts to 7 scholastic days for Primary students and 10 scholastic days for Middle and Secondary students, these are referred to the Regional Tribunal for further legal action. At the same time, schools are expected to monitor attendance of all students regularly and intervene accordingly. If their interventions are ineffective, they refer the student to the college social worker, who will in turn assess the case and formulate an action plan together with the school Senior Management Team, College Psycho-Social Practitioners and other services and professionals outside the Education Directorates.

Malta provides a safe educational environment within a thorough and robust regulatory framework for children of all nationalities who join state, church, or independent schools. In fact, at compulsory education level, the National School Support Services (NSSS) within Malta's Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation supports local education system through various support services. It strives to support all children, their families, and schools, by providing equitable and high-quality services. It also aims to eliminate challenges and barriers to ensure the well-being and full inclusion of every child.

Vulnerable groups

The Migrant Learners' Unit within Malta's Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation was first set up in 2014, to cater for the needs of migrant learners accessing schooling in Malta. The MLU provides an induction course to those migrant learners who do not understand English and Maltese, and who are finding language barriers an issue in terms of integrating in Malta.

Migrants can benefit, without any charges, from the services of a team of Community Liaison Workers who can converse in a range of foreign languages and who are knowledgeable about Malta's educational pathways and education opportunities available to migrant children.

When registering children for school at the Migrant Learners' Unit within Malta's Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation, parents are informed of the service given by the Board of exemptions from fees at state educational institutions. The board gives all necessary information and provides support in sending an application for exemption of fees which is submitted together with necessary documentation.

Ever since 2011, Malta's Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation has been involved in the Language Learning and Parental Support for Integration (LLAPSI and LLAPSI+) Project, that is a series of EU-funded projects mainly through the Integration Fund (IF), the European Refugee Fund (ERF) and currently the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). The LLAPSI+ project is an evolution on the previous LLAPSI projects. The aim of the LLAPSI+ project is that of adopting a holistic approach to integration and language acquisition of migrants.

Activities of the LLAPSI + components include the following:

- a) The 'Making Friends-Bringing Friends Clubs':
- b) the 'Language to Go' – Summer Intensive Language Courses for learners who are still struggling with learning the languages of schooling in Malta, i.e. Maltese and English.
- c) The recruitment of Community Liaison Workers who act as a bridge between the home and the school.
- d) The setting up of an online tool for learning Maltese as a foreign language as well as the refurbishment of premises to house the MLU and in which the provision of support services, especially those related to psychosocial services, will be provided.
- e) The provision of induction programme to migrants who do not yet communicate in basic Maltese and English and without which language knowledge such learners would not be able to access mainstream curriculum and benefit from.
- f) Training and management of cohorts working within the MLU including but not limited to: (i) teachers working with induction groups; (ii) the community liaison team; (iii) the psycho-social team; and (iv) the administrative group.

Furthermore, the Migrant Learners' Unit is involved in the:

- i) Coordination between schools and colleges such as when there is transition between school levels, selection of options of subjects by the students, transfers between colleges and linkage to post compulsory schooling institutions for the benefit of the learners and their families.
- ii) Recruitment of staff, procurement and policy implementation. This is an ongoing process.

Migrant students were and continue to be supported alike national students with the provision of teaching and learning materials delivered to their homes as well as through

the provision of access where possible to internet and digital hardware. This is a scheme which was rolled out by Malta's Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Migrant Learners Unit within Malta's Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation organised support for these provisions to be accessed to and for the families to access the online tools available.

Services like the free childcare scheme, before and after school clubs like Breakfast Club, Klabb 3-16 and other similar services available in schools are also accessible for migrant families.

Anti-bullying measures

In Malta, efforts are continuously made to provide the right setting for students with a migrant background to build and maintain friendships with the local community which will enhance a migrant's experience in schools and the community.

The MOSAIC project funded through ERASMUS, led by Malta's for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation was designed specifically for the realities which the partners were experiencing in their country and which could be replicated elsewhere. The objectives of this project were to strengthen the competences of teachers and school staff to promote diversity, empathy and inclusion in schools and furthermore to support the schools with regards to facilitation integration and success of migrant students through an Educational Platform, while making the communication process between migrants, parents and school community easier and accessible.

With regards to the 'Addressing Bullying Behaviour in Schools Policy', this has been completely overhauled and become the 'Managing Behaviour and Addressing Bullying Behaviours in Schools Policy'. Through this change, a more focused and proactive approach is in place.

The 'Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools: Route to Quality Inclusion', 'A National Inclusive Education Framework' that was launched in 2019 and revised in 2022 ensures there are inclusive education measures in place which are accessible to all children. By acting as a guide to educators, professionals and parents, this policy aims to reach a more inclusive education system, reduce gaps in educational outcomes, increase learner participation, raise student attainment levels and support educational achievement for all children, thus moving away from a one size fits all approach.

Furthermore, free pre-primary (Kindergarten), primary, secondary and post-secondary education is offered to all children aged 3 to 17 years in Malta. Students' active participation in the learning process through engagement in pro-social lifestyles, critical thinking, creative expression and hands-on learning, that reduce absenteeism and early school leaving, are promoted.

Article 27 – The right of workers with family responsibilities to equal opportunities and equal treatment

With a view to ensuring the exercise of the right to equality of opportunity and treatment for men and women workers with family responsibilities and between such workers and other workers, the Parties undertake:

1. to take appropriate measures:
 - a. to enable workers with family responsibilities to enter and remain in employment, as well as to re-enter employment after an absence due to those responsibilities, including measures in the field of vocational guidance and training;
 - b. to take account of their needs in terms of conditions of employment and social security;
 - c. to develop or promote services, public or private, in particular child day care services and other childcare arrangements;
2. to provide a possibility for either parent to obtain, during a period after maternity leave, parental leave to take care of a child, the duration and conditions of which should be determined by national legislation, collective agreements or practices;
3. to ensure that family responsibilities shall not, as such, constitute a valid reason for termination of employment.

Article 27.2

Waiting from DIER