



NEWSLETTER ISSUE NO.2

MALTESE NATIONAL CONTACT POINT - MALTA
EMN WORK PROGRAMME 2021-2022

EMN Team

The current EMN National Contact Point (NCP) of Malta is made up of three members: Mr. John Testa, Ms. Anna Catania and Ms. Xylona Spiteri.



John Testa is a Senior Manager within the Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate of the Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement. He has been working on migration policy issues for 12 years and he also provides support on various policy matters that fall under the remit of the Ministry, including bilateral cooperation. He is responsible for the Maltese National Contact Point of the European Migration Network (EMN). John read for a Master's Degree in Youth and Community Studies, a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Maltese and Psychology, and a Post Graduate Diploma in Probation Services.



For the past 12 years, *Anna Catania* has been working with the Third Country Nationals Unit. Her work revolves around the Maltese National Contact Point of the European Migration Network (EMN). In June this year she joined the Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate to form part of the new EMN team. Anna read for a Bachelor of Arts degree in Italian and Communication Studies and pursued her studies with a post graduate Diploma at the Institute of Political Formation, Pedro Arrupe in Palermo, Italy. Anna also produced radio programmes and contributed to a weekly column on The Times of Malta, raising awareness on drug abuse and other social issues. She brings to the EMN Team her diverse skills in event organisation, her creative flair and her aptitude in pushing boundaries while retaining her attention to detail.



Xylona Spiteri joined the Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate in October 2021 as an EMN Officer. Still fresh out of University, in 2020, she graduated from the University of Malta with a Bachelor in European and Communication Studies. Moreover, she pursued her studies by reading for a Master's Degree in Diplomatic Studies in 2021. During her University experience, Xylona also gave importance to student activism. This was specifically through her work with the 'Third Eye' the media organisation at the University of Malta. Prior to her engagement within the Ministry, Xylona worked as a customer services representative at the Malta International Airport.

These past 2 years have been challenging for all. They have brought several changes to the way we work and meet. Such challenges have not halted our operations; we have managed to overcome them using technology to keep on working together. We hope that such collaboration will continue to grow and that we get to meet face-to-face in the near future. The Maltese EMN NCP would like to thank you for all for your interest and input you have provided throughout these years.

Wishing you a Peaceful Christmas and a productive year full of inventive initiatives.

John, Anna & Xylona

The European Migration Network (EMN) National Contact Point of Malta falls under the Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate within the Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement. The National Contact Point (NCP) of Malta aims to provide up to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information on Malta's migration and asylum situation. The Maltese EMN NCP is responsible for all EMN activities, primarily by taking an active role in the studies, replies to Ad-Hoc Queries, replies to EMN Informs and the preparation of situation reports. The EMN NCP will cooperate and network with various national stakeholders to manage more effectively and give more visibility the outputs of the EMN.



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Lavinia Seguna - Senior Manager (International Affairs), Policy Development and Programme Implementation, Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement.

Malta's Chairmanship of the ICMPD Steering Group in 2022

Cooperation between the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and Malta dates back to over two decades. Relations were however formalised in 2018 when Malta became a member of the ICMPD.

Being an ICMPD member, Malta took on the Chairmanship of the ICMPD Steering Group. The Steering Group is the strategic decision-making body of the ICMPD, constituted by the representatives of the ICMPD Member States. It provides general supervision, including approval of the annual reports and budget, and the working programme. Two meetings of the Steering group are held annually. This year the meeting in June was held virtually while the second meeting will be held in December in Malta.

The overarching theme chosen for the Maltese Chairmanship of the Steering Committee of ICMPD was "Redefining Migration Partnerships". Malta aimed to create opportunities to generate debate on how migration partnerships between countries can be redefined to ensure win-win situations. This was discussed both in the context of the external dimension of the proposed EU Pact for Migration and Asylum and post-COVID recovery.

Two webinars have been organised. The first was held in May titled "Facilitating legal migration in the post-COVID recovery period", while the second was held in December and dealt with 'Enhancing cooperation to counter migrant smuggling: A senior expert discussion.' The panels which were made up of officials from the European Commission, Europol, IOM, WHO, and UNODC were stimulating.

Malta's Chairmanship also coincides with the five-year anniversary since the opening of the ICMPD's 'Coordination and Cooperation centre for Migration in

the Mediterranean' in Malta. All ICMPD activities in the Mediterranean are coordinated from this office. A ceremony is also being organised to celebrate this milestone, as well as the launch of the Training Institute on Migration Capacity Partnership for the Mediterranean (MCP Med). This project will involve the creation of an accredited regional training institute resulting in certification for migration actors. This is therefore a noteworthy contribution by Malta during its Chairmanship of the ICMPD Steering Group.





Return Counselling

Darren Darmanin – Manager I, Returns Unit, Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement.

Andrew Grech – Manager II (Research), Returns Unit, Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement.

Return counselling is an important tool for return counsellors to impart accurate information to third-country nationals about their legal status and opportunities to return to their country of origin. Return counsellors support the implementation of migration policies by encouraging voluntary return while ensuring compliance with return procedures.

The aim of return counselling is to assist migrants in making an informed decision about their return. Additionally, return counselling, provides third country nationals obtain reliable and correct information about the opportunities to return and reintegrate in their country of origin. Counselling sessions are to be carried out in a language the migrant understands, be tailored to the different stages of migration, and to the circumstances of the individual, especially in the case of vulnerable persons. According to the EU Framework on Return Counselling

and the Reintegration Assistance Tool, there are three main approaches to return counselling:

- a) The migrant-centred approach, which focuses on giving support adapted to the individual's situation, as to make informed decisions.
- b) The compliance approach, which focuses on convincing the migrant to return and/or to comply with a return decision.
- c) The mixed approach which combines the two approaches.

The Government of Malta understands the importance of having sound policies and procedures on returns; to this effect, the Returns Unit was established within the Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement in January 2021. The Unit seeks to identify the shortcomings in the national return management system, recommend, and ensure the introduction

of new efficient processes. One of the main objectives of the Returns Unit is to provide return counselling to migrants. The Returns Unit ensures that return counselling is carried out in detention centres, open centres, hospitals, homeless shelters and within the Community.

Since January 2021, the Returns Unit is participating in an EU-funded project implemented by the European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN). The Capacity Development and Training for Return Counsellors (CADRE) aims to improve and enhance the quality of return counselling which is provided across the European Member States. One of the main objectives of the CADRE project is to improve the training practices and capacity development opportunities offered to return counsellors. The Returns Unit will shortly be carrying out further training practices related to return counselling at a national context, so as to improve the quality of return counselling.

WE WILL SUPPORT YOU TO REINTEGRATE IN YOUR COUNTRY

IN-CASH OR IN-KIND ASSISTANCE

ENTERING THE LABOUR MARKET

STUDYING

RECEIVING HEALTH SERVICES

STARTING A SMALL BUSINESS

FINDING A PLACE TO STAY OR PAY THE RENT

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE ASK THE RETURNS UNIT

WHAT IS VOLUNTARY RETURN?

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration is offered to those migrants who are unable or unwilling to stay in Malta and who are interested in returning voluntarily to their home country.

VOLUNTARY RETURN MALTA

THINKING ABOUT RETURNING HOME?

WE CAN ASSIST IF:

You have received no financial support from your legal representative.

You have withdrawn your legal representative.

Your previous return has been withdrawn, cancelled, or has expired.

You do not work in Malta.

You do not qualify to stay in Malta.

You lack a valid or validating document.

You are waiting in prison sentence.

Others: Please contact the Returns Unit to discuss your situation.

WHERE DO I ASK ABOUT VOLUNTARY RETURN?

RETURNS UNIT
2812, Vincent Buildings, Sirena Street, Valletta, Malta
Tel: +356 2248 9777 / +356 9913 1777
E-mail: returns@goa.gov.mt
Facebook: Voluntary Return Malta

WE SUPPORT YOU THROUGHOUT ALL THE JOURNEY

AT THE AIRPORT

IN TRANSIT

UPON ARRIVAL AT DESTINATION

BEFORE RETURNING WE ASSIST YOU WITH:

COUNSELLING

OBTAINING TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

FREE FLIGHT TICKETS

SPECIAL NEEDS

Ad hoc relocation exercises



Julian Micallef – Senior Officer, Policy Development and Programme Implementation, Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement.



Asylum applicants were relocated from Malta during the course of 2021, as a continuation of exercises that had been initiated in previous years.

The implementation of ad-hoc relocation exercises is coordinated by the Ministry for Home Affairs, National Security and Law Enforcement in close collaboration with the European Commission, the European Asylum Support Office and the respective administrations of the participating Member States.

The process follows various steps, based on Standard Operating Procedures agreed to between these partners since 2019. Such procedures enable participating Member States and other organisations to identify

what needs to be done and what to expect when undertaking such an operation following pledges made at higher levels.

Furthermore, to ensure a successful operation, the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers, the International Protection Agency including the Dublin Unit, the Malta Police Force, the Detention Service and Health authorities are all involved in various roles. The participation of Member States is facilitated at various levels, based on specific requests made by the different Member States, and may also include the organisation of missions to Malta to interview the allocated asylum applicants.

The International Organization for Migration, which manages an EU

co-financed project under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF – Emergency Assistance), provides organisational support in the final preparations leading to the transfer of asylum applicants including, if required, at transit points and on arrival at the destination country.

Various relocation exercises have taken place from Malta and are in line with continued calls for solidarity for Member States facing disproportionate pressure from irregular migratory flows. Similar exercises also take place from other Member States. It is worth noting that relocation exercises involving several EU Member States assisting a Member State in difficulty were piloted in Malta over a decade ago.



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