



Implementation & Evaluation Report 2014 - 2016

NATIONAL STRATEGIC POLICY
FOR POVERTY REDUCTION & SOCIAL INCLUSION

MALTA 2014-2024



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MINISTER'S FOREWORD



Three years have passed since the launch of the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion 2014-2024 and therefore the time has come to take stock of the developments registered between 2014 and 2016 in the implementation of this policy. It is in this context that this "Implementation and Evaluation Report 2014-2016" presents the initiatives that have been undertaken to combat poverty and promote social inclusion whilst also analysing their impact within the six dimensions of wellbeing presented in the national strategic policy.

Poverty trends and characteristics are ever changing and multi-variate, and we thus need to continuously seek to understand and address such a dynamic reality so as to maintain and improve the well-being of society in general and vulnerable groups in particular. One hopes that this Report will not only provide more awareness about what has been done and achieved between 2014 and 2016 but will also generate a better understanding of emerging trends and challenges that could either arise from or lead to poverty and social exclusion.

A major strength emanating from the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion, is Government's commitment to set up a national structure to benchmark, monitor and evaluate progress towards poverty reduction and social inclusion. This commitment was achieved through the setting up of an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) with our colleagues from the Ministry for Education and Employment, the Ministry for Health and the Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government, these being the key Ministries covering the six dimensions underpinning the vision and strategic direction of the national strategic policy. Through its regular meetings, monitoring and reporting, the IMC closely followed the introduction and progress of various measures and initiatives undertaken by Government to address the 94 actions emanating from the national strategic policy. Although these measures have already contributed towards the lifting of 14,000 people out of poverty or social exclusion in 3 years, Government is still committed to pursue its fight against poverty.

Whilst this report focuses on measures and initiatives that were newly introduced since 2014, it also acknowledges the relevance of measures and initiatives that were introduced prior to 2014 and are still ongoing. This Report measures the impact of such a range of initiatives through statistical analysis arising from a review of general economic and living conditions indicators published by Eurostat and the National Statistics Office (NSO) as well as through relevant in-house statistics compiled by the different Ministries.

The analysis presented in this Report highlight the impact that the implementation of the national strategic policy, despite it being still in its early stages, has had on the quality of life and wellbeing of people particularly upon the four main vulnerable groups targeted by the strategic policy, namely children and young people, elderly persons, unemployed persons and the working poor.

Effective and holistic policymaking requires such an objective analysis of the work done and the challenges that remain. This is vital to achieve poverty reduction and promote social inclusion in the best interest of society.

Michael Falzon

Minister for the Family, Children's Rights & Social Solidarity

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALP	Alternative Learning Programme
AROPE	At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion Rate
ARP	At-Risk-of-Poverty Rate
AŽ	Aġenzija Żgħażaġh
BM	Budget Measure
CB	Core Business
CPS	Child Protection Services
CRPD	Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability
DECC	Department for the Elderly and Community Care
DES	Directorate Educational Services
DG-SP	Directorate General (Social Policy)
DQSE	Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education
DSWS	Department for Social Welfare Standards
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESL	Early School Leavers
EU	European Union
FEAD	Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived
FSWS	Foundation for Social Welfare Services
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMC	Inter-ministerial Committee
IT	Information Technology
LWI	Low Work Intensity
MCAST	Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
MD	Material Deprivation
MDH	Mater Dei Hospital
MEDE	Ministry for Education and Employment
MFCS	Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity
MFH	Ministry for Health
MFIN	Ministry for Finance
MFSS	Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity
MHAS	Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security
MJCL	Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government
MQF	Malta Qualifications Framework
MSDC	Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs, and Civil Liberties
NEI	National Equivalised Income
NLA	A National Literacy Strategy for All in Malta and Gozo 2014-2019
NRP	National Reform Programme
NSO	National Statistics Office
PSDAA	Parliamentary Secretariat for Rights of Persons with Disability and Active Ageing
SEC	Secondary Education Certificate
SILC	Survey on Income and Living Conditions
VET	Vocational and Educational Training
WI	Work Intensity



CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1// OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC POLICY

Malta's National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion which was launched on 19th December 2014 by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity (MFSS)¹ is a ten year plan that maps the country's strategic direction to address poverty and social exclusion up to the year 2024.

This strategic policy is based on six dimensions that are considered to be vital for promoting well-being and combating poverty and social exclusion. Income and social benefits, employment, education, health and environment, social services and culture are considered to be key contributors for promoting the prospects of people who are already experiencing poverty or social exclusion or are at risk thereof. In recognition of the fact that no one is spared from the possibility of falling into poverty or social exclusion, besides seeking to address the needs of vulnerable persons, the strategic actions presented in the policy also serve as a safety net by acting on a preventative and interventionist level. The strategic policy thus adopts both a targeted as well as a universal approach.

The strategic policy document which is based on extensive consultations with relevant stakeholders aims to address three overarching national challenges, namely:

- (i) increasing Malta's sustainable development;
- (ii) promoting empowerment and social solidarity, and
- (iii) consolidating social services. In order to address these challenges, the strategic policy presents a total of 23 policy objectives categorised under the six dimensions mentioned above. These objectives among them put forward 94 strategic actions to promote the well-being of society in general, and four target populations in particular, namely, children and young people, elderly persons, unemployed persons and the working poor.

Malta's National Budget for the year 2015 explicitly underlines Government's commitment to implement the recommendations emanating from the strategic policy against poverty and social exclusion. While all Maltese people have over the years enjoyed access to free healthcare services, education and social services, in line with the objectives of the strategic policy, during the period under review, Malta continued to strengthen existing measures and introduce new ones so as to address the well-being of society in general and vulnerable people in particular.

Although the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion is the main policy document for combating poverty and social exclusion by providing a comprehensive framework to effectively address this dynamic reality, the strategy is complemented by a number of other national strategies and policy documents that

¹ As from June 2017, the name of this Ministry has changed to Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity (MFCS).

aim to promote wellbeing in its various dimensions. These amongst others include such:

Social Welfare policies and strategies as:

- National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing 2014-2020;
- National Policy on the Rights of Persons with Disability (2014);
- National Strategic Policy for Positive Parenting 2016-2024;
- National Youth Policy Towards 2020: A shared vision for the future of young people;
- Draft Malta National Disability Strategy (2016);
- Draft National Children's Policy 2016.

Education and Employment related policies and strategies as:

- Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024;
- A Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta 2014;
- Addressing Attendance in Schools Policy 2014,
- Addressing Bullying Behaviour in Schools Policy 2014;
- The National Employment Policy 2014;
- A National Literacy Strategy for all in Malta and Gozo 2014-2019;
- National Digital Strategy 2014-2020.

Health-related policies and strategies as:

- Sexual Health Policy 2010 and Sexual Health Strategy 2011;
- Healthy Weight for Life Strategy 2012;
- National Health Systems Strategy for Malta 2014-2020;
- Food and Nutrition Policy and Action Plan for Malta 2015-2020;
- A Whole School Approach to a Healthy Lifestyle: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Policy 2015;
- A National Policy for Sport in Malta and Gozo 2017-2027.

Culture-related strategy as:

- Create 2020 Strategy (2015).

Through such a concerted and multi-disciplinary effort, Malta aspires to meet the objectives set out in the poverty strategy which include:

- Increasing disposable income for a good standard of living
- Promoting activation and creating more quality employment opportunities
- Ensuring equal access to quality health care and a health friendly environment
- Promoting inclusive, further and higher education
- Consolidating social services to promote social solidarity and social cohesion
- Promoting a more inclusive culture.


To complement the work carried out by various governmental, private and voluntary entities with the aim of combating poverty and social exclusion, the national strategic policy not only puts forward various actions but also provides for the setting up of a national mechanism in the form of an inter-ministerial committee to monitor progress and thus consolidate Malta's multi-faceted commitment in this sphere.

1.2// AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION REPORT

This Report presents a review and evaluation of the developments addressing the actions emanating from the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion 2014-2024 between 2014 and 2016. Since this strategic policy was launched in 2014, the official published data quoted therein pertains to 2013. In view of this, the present report focuses on the measures and initiatives that were undertaken as from 2014 so as to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion.

The aim of this report is twofold, namely (a) to analyse the progress that has been registered in the six dimensions of wellbeing presented in the policy, and (b) to identify any emerging trends and challenges that could either arise from or lead to poverty and social exclusion. Apart from progress reports drawn up by relevant stakeholders on the implementation of the policy actions presented in the strategy, developments were also measured through statistical analysis arising from a review of general economic and living conditions indicators published by Eurostat and the National Statistics Office (NSO). These were complemented by relevant in-house statistics compiled by the different Ministries.

This reporting exercise thus not only reflects the effectiveness of the yearly budget measures and core business initiatives which were implemented by the various Ministries in their commitment to combat poverty and social exclusion, but also helps to map the way forward with regards to the planning and development of new measures, programmes and initiatives that could contribute towards the alleviation of poverty and the promotion of social inclusion.



CHAPTER 2

**IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE
STRATEGIC POLICY**

This Chapter:

- (a) outlines the mechanisms set up to monitor the implementation of the strategic policy; and
- (b) presents an overview of the measures undertaken to address the strategic policy actions.

2.1// MECHANISMS SET UP TO MONITOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC POLICY ACTIONS

The National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion provides for the setting up of a national structure to monitor and evaluate the progress sustained within the different policy areas of the strategy across its operative term. Following the launch of this strategic policy in December 2014, MFSS set up an Action Committee to:

- (i) draw up an Action Plan in respect of the measures arising from this national strategic policy;
- (ii) monitor the implementation progress of such measures;
- (iii) analyse the effectiveness of such measures in relation to the SMART objectives that the strategic policy sets out to achieve.

In recognition of the importance that the implementation of such a national strategic policy seeking to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion, requires regular input and monitoring by various stakeholders extending beyond the remit of MFSS, in 2015, the Ministry set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) that eventually replaced the Action Committee. This IMC brings together representatives from the key Ministries covering the six dimensions underpinning the vision and strategic direction of the policy, namely the:

- Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE) to report upon the employment and education dimensions
- Ministry for Health (MFH) to report upon the health and environment dimension
- Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government (MJCL) to report upon the culture dimension, and
- Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity (MFSS) to report upon social benefits and social services dimensions.

The IMC ensures an open channel of communication that promotes synergy among the key stakeholders, thus facilitating the implementation of this strategic policy. The IMC meets on a quarterly basis and regularly compiles implementation updates.

2.2// MEASURES UNDERTAKEN TO ADDRESS THE STRATEGIC POLICY ACTIONS

In line with its remit to monitor the implementation of the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion 2014-2024, the IMC has, through its regular meetings and reporting, closely followed the introduction and progress of various measures and initiatives that have been undertaken by different Ministries to address the 94 actions emanating from this strategic policy. Table 1 below presents an overview of the number of such measures that were introduced between 2014 and 2016 in respect of the six dimensions of wellbeing underpinning the strategic policy.

Table 1: Overview of Implementation covering period January 2014 - December 2016

Dimensions	Policy Actions	Actions being addressed	Actions not yet addressed	No. of measures/projects feeding into the policy actions
Income & Social Benefits	14	12	2	48
Employment	13	10	3	29
Education	17	16	1	48
Health and Environment	11	10	1	36
Social Services	30	29	1	94
Social Welfare Services for Children & Young People	5	5	0	34
Social Welfare Services for Elderly	6	5	1	12
Social Welfare Services for Other Vulnerable Groups	6	6	0	18
Housing	5	5	0	10
Culture	9	9	0	21
Total	94	86	8	276 ²

Source: Ministry for the Family, Children's Rights and Social Solidarity (MFCS).

A selection of these measures addressing each of the six different dimensions of wellbeing is being presented in some detail in the forthcoming sections. Furthermore, a full list showing all the initiatives undertaken by the different Ministries, Departments and entities between 2014 and 2016 to combat poverty and promote social inclusion can be found in the Annexes (Annex A to Annex J).

Besides the listed measures specifically addressing the 94 strategic policy actions, there were other important measures that had a horizontal positive impact. Two such

² Excluding two overarching measures which commenced in 2016: i) the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) and; ii) the Positive Parenting Policy 2016-2024.

measures that are of significant benefit to society in general and vulnerable groups in particular are: a) the reduction of energy tariffs that came into effect in March 2014; and b) the commitment undertaken in 2013 and the subsequent extensive works undertaken by December 2016 to switch from heavy fuel oil to a gas-powered station so as to: (i) reduce the level of emissions associated with the combustion of fossil fuels generated by the oil-fired conventional power plants; (ii) reduce the energy generation costs, and; (iii) reduce Malta's reliance on other more polluting imported liquid hydrocarbons.

Whilst this report focuses on measures and initiatives that were newly introduced since 2014, yet it also acknowledges the relevance of measures and initiatives that were introduced prior to 2014 and are still ongoing. The impact of such measures is also reflected in the scenario presented in Chapter 3.

2.2.1// INCOME AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

The main objective of this dimension is that of increasing disposable income so as to promote a good standard of living for all, while ensuring the sustainability and adequacy of the social protection system. This dimension addresses a wide range of initiatives such as the extension of coverage of social benefit provision including the consolidation of the pension system; initiatives to encourage activation and promote sustainable consumption patterns and lifestyles; and the provision of in-kind support to vulnerable groups.

Some of the measures introduced that feed into the strategic policy actions presented under this dimension are the:

i) Tapering of Benefits: In 2014, the tapering of benefits was introduced for persons who enter the labour market after having registered for work for more than two years. When these persons start working, the unemployment benefit is not fully and immediately terminated, but decreases gradually over a period of three years. Such tapering facilitates a smooth transition from unemployment to work. In the first year, the beneficiary would retain 65% of the benefit, 45% in the second year and 25% in the third year, whilst 25% of the assistance would be given to the employer for the first three years. In 2015, this benefit was also extended to single parents with children under the age of 23 years. The number of beneficiaries in 2014 was 497 persons, which number rose to 1,731 persons (of which 584 were single parents) in 2015 and to 2,482 persons (of which 975 were single parents) in 2016.

ii) In-Work Benefit: In 2015, the in-work benefit was introduced for families with children under 23 years of age having an income that falls within the following brackets:

a) Married couples with both parents in employment whose collective income is greater than €10,000 and less than €24,000 (where the income of one of the spouses has to be over €3,000) are eligible for a maximum of €1,200 yearly per child;

b) Single parents in employment who earn more than €6,600 and less than €16,500 are eligible for a maximum of €1,250 yearly per child.

In 2016, the in-work benefit was further extended to married couples of whom only one person is in gainful employment and earning an income ranging between €6,600 and €16,500.

In 2015, the number of persons in receipt of the in-work benefit was 1,336 persons whereas in 2016, 1,147 persons (344 married couples where both parents are in employment, 666 single parents and 137 married couples where one parent is in employment) were entitled to this benefit.

iii) Child Supplement Grant of €400 per child for each of the first three children (€200 per child from the 4th child upwards)³ to low income families⁴. A total number of 14,440 persons benefitted from this supplement between 2015 and 2016.

iv) consolidation of the adequacy of the pension system through such initiatives as the:

a) Full Pension Entitlement to those elderly persons who continue working beyond retirement age. Upon the introduction of this measure, in 2014, a total number of 10,968 persons benefitted from this measure;

b) Senior Citizen's Grant whereby a €300 annual allowance is paid out to persons aged 78 years and over (in 2014) and 75 years and over (in 2015 and 2016) who are still living in the community. The total number of such beneficiaries amounted to 28,270 persons in 2014, to 29,402 persons in 2015 and to 29,623 persons in 2016;

c) bonus⁵ to retirees (mostly women) aged between 62 and 74 years and who are not entitled to a pension⁶. This bonus was paid out to 12,378 persons in 2015 and to 12,763 persons in 2016.

v) efforts undertaken to promote financial literacy through the:

³ This child supplement is paid on condition that the children: register at least 95% of school attendance; undergo regular medical check-ups; and participate in sport and cultural activities, with the aim of improving their education and psychosocial health.

⁴ Less than €11,900 per annum.

⁵ €200 if they have paid more than 5 years contributions, and €100 if they have paid contributions for more than 1 year but less than five years.

⁶ As a consequence of having spent many years out of work either due to the laws applicable or the prevailing social situation at that time.

a) 2016 project Għaqal id-Dar, Hajja Aħjar which aims to promote sustainable consumption patterns and lifestyles among the general public through free community courses (consisting of 10 sessions each) delivered in Malta and Gozo⁷. The course helps adults make better use of their resources and thus promotes financial literacy and improves their own and their family's quality of life. Indeed, the project tackles the intergenerational transmission of poverty. A total of 310 persons benefitted from the three courses held till December 2016. Persons participating in this course are awarded a certificate of attendance;

b) Draft National Strategy for Retirement Income and Financial Literacy: Knowledge, Planning, Action 2016-2018 which was launched for public consultation in January 2016. The aim of this strategy is to create a financially educated population by raising awareness on the need to plan, during one's lifetime, for retirement. In collaboration with financial institutions together with other relevant Ministries, MFCS will embark upon designing information and knowledge campaigns to assist people to make informed financial choices and decisions for their retirement.

vi) the legislation enacted to specifically address precarious work, and the regulations enacted to address bogus self-employment and the resultant abuse.

vii) The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), a measure that commenced in 2016 and which entails the distribution of food packages⁸ to eligible households⁹ across Malta and Gozo¹⁰ up till the year 2023.

There were four distributions¹¹ by end 2016 with the total number of households that collected the packages amounting to 3,487 households from the first distribution, 3,454 households from the second distribution, 3,418 households from the third distribution, and 3,471 households from the 4th distribution. It is important to note that these households were composed of 12,560 persons, of which 50.4% were children, 5.5% persons were elderly (aged 65 years and over) and 0.5% were persons with a disability.

7 The following localities have all benefitted from this course: Hamrun, Dingli, Birgu and Għarb (Gozo) constituting the first batch, Mosta, Sliema, Paola and Kirkop constituting the second round of the course and Birkirkara, Żabbar, Bormla and Xagħra (Gozo) constituting the third batch.

8 Each package contains nutritious food items including cereals, pasta, tuna, nuts, rice and other healthy dietary requirements.

9 Eligible households are:

- households receiving non contributory benefits and having 2 or more children below the age of 16 (families with three or more children receive 2 packages);
- households with 2 or more children earning less than 80% of the national minimum wage;
- households having 2 or more children earning less than the national minimum wage (families with three or more children receive 2 packages);

- non-single households receiving Age Pension (families with three or more children receive 2 packages).

10 Distribution is carried out from the following 17 zones: Xewkija (Gozo), Qawra, Mosta, San Ġwann, Msida, Santa Venera, Qormi, Marsascula, Żejtun, Żurrieq, Kirkop, Valletta, Marsa, Santa Luċija, Cottonera, Rabat and Żebbuġ.

11 The total number of eligible households for these four distributions was 4,030 in January 2016 for the first distribution, 3,880 in April 2016 for the second distribution, 3,877 in July 2016 for the third distribution and 3,907 in October/November 2016 for the fourth distribution.

Having outlined a few of the initiatives undertaken to promote people's prospects in terms of income and social benefits, the forthcoming section will be presenting some of the key measures that were introduced between 2014 and 2016 to enhance employment benefits and opportunities as a means to reduce poverty and social exclusion.

2.2.2// EMPLOYMENT

The main objective of this dimension is that of promoting activation and creating more quality employment opportunities, with particular focus on women and vulnerable groups. This dimension, mainly implemented by Jobsplus¹², addresses a wide range of initiatives such as the: provision of training to promote activation and retention in the labour market; provision of supported and sheltered employment for disadvantaged groups; maximisation of funding to promote productive investment and job-creation; as well as the introduction of a number of schemes to promote employability, job-mobility and de-segmentation of the labour market.

Some of the measures introduced that feed into the strategic policy actions presented under this dimension are:

- i) the strengthening of the *Youth Guarantee Scheme*¹³ and ensuring monitoring and assessment of outcomes. Some of the measures offered by the Scheme are the:

a) NEETs Activation Scheme

NEETs (youth Not in Education, Employment, or Training) are individually profiled by experts and receive fifty four hours of direct contact with a youth worker and another eighty hours of training intervention. The target is to reach out to 150 NEETs per annum and it is being envisaged that by 2020, 600 participants will be trained and provided with personalised support. Through the first cycle of the provision of this scheme, 354 participants have improved their skills and competences listed in the Europass CV. As at April 2016, out of 354 youths, 41 were in education, 150 in employment, 45 registering and 118 inactive. For the second cycle, beginning in July 2016, 45 persons applied for this scheme.

¹² Jobsplus is Malta's public employment service. The role of Jobsplus is to provide information and work placement services to the unemployed who are seeking work. Jobsplus also provides training to participants to enhance the workers' skills. Other programmes include partial wage subsidies and tax deductions to companies to encourage employment of the earmarked groups.

¹³ Jobsplus has a number of programmes which specifically focus on young people. These range from personal action plans, advisory services, employability programmes and work exposure schemes to traineeships, and training courses. Through the initiatives listed in the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, launched in 2014, the Maltese Government is committed to provide a second chance education to individuals with a low level of education and to help them enter the labour market with the aim of retaining their employment and progressing in their career.

b) ICT Summer Course for Alternative Learning Programme (ALP) students

This programme builds upon the Alternative Learning Programme (ALP) delivered to 15/16-year-old secondary school students, which provides them with an additional educational opportunity to acquire new practical ICT skills and knowledge.

c) SEC Revision Classes

The Maltese Government launched the SEC Revision Classes free of charge for students whose grade in Maltese, English Language, Mathematics and Physics is 6, 7, U or were absent. In 2016, 1,105 students applied for these courses indicating that these classes addressed the demand for this service. These students attended over 1,900 classes since a considerable number of students applied for more than one subject.

d) MCAST¹⁴ Remedial Classes

The Remedial Classes are offered to MCAST students who failed the final examinations in the Foundation programmes. In 2014, these remedial classes were offered to students doing their resits at MQF levels 1 and 2. In 2015 and 2016, these classes were also offered for resits at MQF level 3. This complementary measure increases the students' chance of not repeating the academic year. In 2016, 96 students attended these classes.

ii) the maximisation of EU funds to increase seed money for productive and long-term investments, such as the:

a) Access to Employment Scheme

The scheme provides employment aid in the form of wage subsidies to enterprises in Malta and Gozo to promote the recruitment of disadvantaged, severely disadvantaged and disabled persons who are either registered job seekers, unemployed or inactive. The wage subsidy for disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged persons is that of €85 per week and the subsidised period may be 26 weeks, 52 weeks or 104 weeks depending under which target group the participant is found to be eligible. The wage subsidy for registered disabled persons (RDP) is of €125 per week for a fixed period of 156 weeks. The measure started in June 2015 for the registered disabled persons and in November 2015, the scheme was launched for the disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged persons. The scheme is still active and up to December 2016, there were 433 active participants.

b) Training for Employment Project (TEP)

TEP, a project funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), is also led by Jobsplus and consists of three main initiatives with the aim of facilitating access to employment through the development of skills and competences. These initiatives are the Work Placement Scheme, the Work Exposure Scheme and the Traineeship Scheme, which as from January 2016 up to December 2016, 430, 372 and 72 trainees benefitted from these initiatives respectively.

14 Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology.

c) Supported and Sheltered Employment Training for Disadvantaged Groups including Registered Disabled Persons (RDPs)

The aim of this pilot measure, part-financed by ESF funds, was to further increase the participants' confidence and practical job-specific skills through work exposure opportunities, thus enhancing the financial independence of disadvantaged persons and preventing social exclusion and marginalisation. This measure, which commenced in 2014 and ended in 2015, enhanced the employability of registered disabled persons through a hands-on approach to training. Through various activities offered by this project, out of a total of 276 participants, 114 were placed in employment and another 162 have undergone training.

iii) more targeted strategies that enhance investment and job creation for vulnerable groups, such as:

a) Community Work Scheme

Following the Social Enterprise Scheme announced in 2015, a private provider was entrusted to set up and administer the social enterprise, 'The Community Work Scheme Enterprise Foundation', whereby people who were on the previous scheme are now being employed by this private provider. Up to the end of December 2016, the number of participants was 571.

b) Document Management

As from 2016, in Gozo, the private sector is being encouraged to employ people with a disability. Up to December 2016, 22 people with a disability were engaged in employment performing document management tasks.

c) Employment and Training Schemes in Gozo

• Scheme A: National Insurance Contribution Refund Scheme

In order to stimulate employment in the tourism sector, the Government refunds the Employers' National Insurance contribution in full up to a maximum of €1,000 during the agreement period. Through this scheme, which started in 2015, 28 persons are now in full-time employment (19 of the participants were previously inactive, whilst 9 had their employment changed from part time to full-time employment). The scheme will be completed in 2017.

• Scheme B: Seasonality Scheme

Operators in the tourism sector will be asked to send their full-time and/or part-time employees (whose employment is registered with Jobsplus as their only primary job, and/or part-time employees who are transferred to full-time employment at application stage) for classroom-based training. The scheme which initiated in 2015 and was completed in September 2016 had 39 applicants attending the training.

iv) the promotion of mobility and de-segmentation in the labour market by the:

a) Work Programme

The Work Programme Unit aims to up-skill long-term unemployed persons, reintegrate them into the labour market, and ensure their work retention. From the beginning of the initiative in 2015 up to December 2016, 1,168 persons benefitted from this scheme.

b) National Apprenticeship Scheme

MCAST's strategy is to ensure that work-based learning is implemented across all programme levels offered within Vocational and Educational Training (VET). The strategy, introduced in 2014, is divided into three modes of work-based learning: work placements, apprenticeships and internships. During 2016, MCAST continued to further strengthen and widen the scope of the apprenticeship scheme through the identification of more apprenticeships placements at MQF level 3 and 4. Furthermore, as from October 2016, MCAST piloted new forms of work-based learning in engineering courses at MQF level 2 whereby 100 students benefitted from this initiative. Internships were piloted in a programme of study in ICT and Applied Science at MQF level 5 and 6. Additional programmes have been identified in MQF levels 5 and 6 for the implementation of work based internship in academic year 2016/2017. It is envisaged that a minimum of 500 students will benefit from the internship. The number of apprentices and companies involved in the apprenticeship scheme has increased rapidly with over 1000 apprentices for the year 2016-2017 and over 900 companies interested to offer apprenticeship sponsorship. However, the need to continue to invest in the development of a high quality reform is essential in order to meet the requirements of industry and tackle the existing skills gap and skills mismatch. Hence, this measure also addresses apprenticeships and vocational schemes that fall under the dimension of Education.

c) Provision of training and/or employment to employees who are between 45 and 65 years of age. As from January 2014, a tax deduction of €5,800 was given to incentivise employers to employ persons within this age group and who were unemployed during the preceding three years. This measure was completed in 2016 and 35 taxpayers benefitted.

In addition to these measures, to encourage female participation in the labour force, several measures have been undertaken which include free childcare, breakfast clubs and after-school care services (for further information on these initiatives please refer to the Education section). Complementing these measures, the Maltese government has committed itself to facilitate work-life balance measures which include parental leave, flexi-time, teleworking and reduced working hours. Furthermore, tax exemptions were granted to females over 40 years.

These initiatives, undertaken between 2014 and 2016, are further complemented in the following dimension by various measures in the field of education.

2.2.3// EDUCATION

The main objective of this dimension is the promotion of inclusive further and higher education within the formal, informal and non-formal settings. MEDE has established a wide range of initiatives to address this dimension. These include: the improvement of digital and financial literacy; promotion of parental involvement in their children's education; investment in human and material resources including reforms in the maintenance grants system; consolidation of before and after school hours services; summer clubs and childcare centres; introduction of various measures to primarily engage youth in education and training; and the expansion of lifelong learning and adult learning opportunities.

Such initiatives feed into the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024, which aims to: i) reduce the gaps in educational outcomes, decrease the number of low achievers and raise the bar in students' literacy, numeracy, and science and technology achievement; ii) support educational achievement of children at-risk-of-poverty and from low socio-economic status, and reduce the incidence of early school-leavers; iii) raise levels of student retention and attainment in further, vocational, and tertiary education and training and; iv) increase participation in lifelong learning and adult learning.

Other relevant policies and strategies include: A Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta 2014; A National Literacy Strategy for All in Malta and Gozo 2014-2019 (NLA); the Malta National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020; the National Vocational Education and Training Policy; the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) which has led to the Learning Outcomes Framework and the Education for All policy documents.

Some of the measures introduced that feed into the strategic policy actions presented under this dimension are the:

i) consolidation of lifelong learning, vocational training, and informal and non-formal education through:

a) the National Lifelong Learning Strategy for Malta 2020

This strategy addresses four main challenges namely: the low number of adults participating in adult learning; early school leaving and low skills achievement; the low number of women actively in employment or engaged in lifelong learning; and the intergenerational persistence of low education achievement.

b) the provision of support for apprenticeships and vocational schemes including the expansion of hands-on teaching. This action is mainly being addressed by the National Apprenticeship Scheme (further details are presented under the Employment Section above). The need to introduce vocational subjects at secondary education to fill the vacuum created by

the closure of Trade Schools had long been felt as indicated clearly in a number of local reports and studies. For this purpose, as part of the National Curriculum Framework for All (2012) and in line with the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024, in scholastic year 2015/2016, the education authorities introduced vocational programmes at MQF level 3 in the final three years of compulsory schooling (Year 9 to Year 11¹⁵, i.e. children aged 14 to 16 years). Students whose learning abilities does not fit within the mainstream education may find it difficult to pursue academic studies, hence running the risk of disengaging from education and becoming early school leavers. Vocational subjects provide an alternative educational pathway to meet students' different learning styles. The take-up of VET subjects has increased steadily with excellent success rates in the SEC examinations.

c) the Career Exposure Experience (CEE) which has taken place during 2014, 2015 and 2016. The CEE is a scholastic-year project whereby Year 10 students are placed within a workplace for one week. Throughout the placement, students are monitored by an onsite mentor. Moreover, they are visited regularly by guidance practitioners¹⁶ who form part of the psycho-social team. In scholastic year 2014-2015, out of the total population of Year 10 students, 77.3% (1,875 students) participated, while in 2015-2016, participation increased to 92.3% (1,978 students). The Career Guidance Section provided 745 placements (39.8% out of 1,875 students) in scholastic year 2014-2015 and 890 placements (45% out of 1,978 students) in scholastic year 2015-2016. Other placements coordinated by the Principal Education Support Practitioner (Career Advisor) were provided at college level.

ii) efforts for the improvement of literacy (including digital and financial literacy) through the:

a) National Literacy Agency (NLA) that seeks to promote and enhance lifelong and life wide, high quality literacy practices among children, youth, adults, third country nationals and persons with learning difficulties. It strives also to improve literacy outcomes, resulting in inclusive practices, higher educational qualifications, and better job prospects. The agency was established in mid-2014 to promote and ensure the delivery of the different aspects of the National Literacy Strategy for All in Malta and Gozo, and serve as a main driver in the field of literacy. In this regard, various programmes were introduced, some of which are being highlighted hereunder:

- Aqra Miegħi / Read with Me which is an early literacy education programme for children from 0 to 3 years. During 2015, 2,107 sessions were delivered to circa 16,300 infants and circa 12,800 parents/carers. In 2016, the Aqra

15 Compulsory schooling starts with Year 1 for children aged 5 years. Year 1 to Year 6 constitute primary schooling while Year 7 to Year 11 cover secondary schooling.

16 Including Career Guidance Teachers (CGT), the College Career Advisor (CCA), the Career Advisor and the guidance teacher of the College, all having different yet complementary roles.

Mieghi reading animators delivered 3,152 sessions to circa 2,000 infants and parents or caregivers per month.

- The Nwar Programme which is a family literacy programme designed for learners who have not acquired the basic skills level by the end of Year 3. During scholastic year 2014/2015, 252 low ability school children and their parents benefitted from this programme. In scholastic year 2015/2016, 350 low-ability primary school children and their parents benefitted from this programme.

- Aqra Kemm Tiflaħ! The Enriching Classroom Libraries programme was launched in December 2014. The overall purpose of this programme is to promote and enhance lifelong and life wide, high quality literacy practices among children, youths, adults, third country nationals and persons with learning disabilities. It strives also to improve literacy outcomes, resulting in inclusive practices, higher educational qualifications and better job prospects. Between September 2015 and December 2016, 23,773 books were distributed to 63 primary schools.

b) provision of electronic tablets and e-content to children in schools from an early age. Electronic tablets and e-content are being used to promote more and better reading, writing, numeracy, literacy and digital literacy skills. In December 2016, 6,027 tablets were distributed to all Year 4 students and educators in all State, Church and Independent schools. In addition, 473 Year 4 teachers and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) received training in the pedagogical use of these devices.

iii) consolidation of after-school hours services, summer clubs and childcare centres through the provision of:

a) Free Childcare Centres

As at end of 2016, a total of 98 registered childcare centres were operating under this scheme. Since the launch of the scheme in April 2014, up to December 2016, a total of 9,734 children benefitted from the free childcare centres scheme.

b) The Breakfast Club

Introduced in April 2014, this service is intended to provide care for children attending state primary schools one hour before the schools' official opening hours. The incentive permits further flexibility to working parents and may also encourage more women to either return or enter the labour market. During scholastic year 2015/2016, a total of 3,362 students benefitted from the clubs. As at end of December 2016, 3,796 students were attending these clubs. It has to be noted that registrations remain open throughout the scholastic year.

c) The afternoon school programmes in the community (Klabb 3-16)

This measure provides an after-school care service within the school setting

and seeks to bridge the gap between the school day and the regular working hours of parents. The Klabb 3-16 programmes include support in homework, and support in learning languages, drama, sports and Information Technology (IT). Since its inception, uptake has continued to increase from 900 in 2014 to over 1,500 in 2016.

d) SkolaSajf¹⁷

Skolasajf is a nationwide project offering non-compulsory education during the summer months. Children between 3 and 16 years of age may attend for a programme full of themed activities and outings. The service is offered in various centres around Malta and Gozo, utilising the premises of primary schools and resource centres. Prior to 2014, SkolaSajf was exclusively available to children aged 5 to 11 years in the mornings. Following the merger of SkolaSajf and Klabb 3-16, the programme is now offered to children aged between 3 and 16 years, both in the morning and in the afternoon. In 2014, 10,800 students attended SkolaSajf and in 2016, the figure increased to 11,500 students.

iv) establishment of cooperative educational spaces, such as:

a) The Youth Village

A new National Youth Policy Towards 2020 was launched in 2015 and is being managed and coordinated by Aġenzija Żgħażaġh (AŽ). In 2014, AŽ assumed responsibility of the Youth.Inc¹⁸ and a Youth Village was opened in 2015. The aim and purpose of the Youth Village is to create a physical, administrative, cultural and learning environment to attract young people and voluntary youth organisations. The second phase of the Youth Village project will provide for a youth residential centre, planning for which is underway. Around 150 youth organisations have access to the Youth Village. During 2016, 500 youth leaders worked with young people, 2,145 youths benefitted and 30 organisations used the facilities.

b) Outreach and Detached Work with Youth

In 2016, AŽ launched the Outreach and Detached Youth Work Service, which is community based and seeks to attract and work with socio-economically excluded and hard-to-reach young people. The scheme aims to address school absenteeism and early school leaving through prevention, intervention and compensatory measures. The service focuses on specific localities that include Cottonera, Birżebbuġa, Marsasala, Żurrieq and Valletta, and reaches out to around 150 youths per month.

v) the implementation of A Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving which was launched in 2014. The Strategic Plan aims at facilitating focused action that will support students to make the best out of their school years, from early

¹⁷ Skola Sajf is a summer school programme run in State schools in Malta and Gozo.

¹⁸ Youth.Inc is an inclusive education programme based on applied learning for young people aged between 16 and 21 years. The aim of the programme is to help young people improve their standard of education and gain more knowledge, values and skills to facilitate their entry into the labour market or gain qualifications to continue further education and/or training.

childhood to the end of compulsory school and further education. The aim is to enable students to develop their potential as human beings, as citizens and as stakeholders in the economy. Some of the measures that have been undertaken as a result of this strategic plan are:

a) Prince's Trust International Achieve

In 2015, the XL Programme was developed by the Prince's Trust, which is the global extension of the UK's leading youth charity. The main aim of such a programme is to reduce the early school leaving rate and increase lifelong learning participation. This programme, which as of 2016 changed its title to Prince's Trust International Achieve, is still running in 18 secondary schools in Malta, where young people aged 13 to 16 years who are at risk of underachievement or educational disengagement are offered a personal development programme as an opportunity for re-engagement in education. As from 2015 until the end of 2016, the programme reached approximately 150 students.

b) The Guzé Ellul Mercer 16+ Learning Centre (GEM16+)

This Learning Centre took its first students intake in 2015. It caters for post 16-year-old students who have only obtained one subject in the SEC examination at the end of the compulsory schooling. This Centre gives students another opportunity to obtain the required certification to proceed to further and higher education. In school year 2015/2016 there was an intake of 80 students and in 2016/2017 the intake was of 94 students.

c) Alternative Learning Programme (ALP)

Introduced in January 2014, the ALP is intended for Year 11 students who would benefit from an out-of-school programme offering a combination of academic and vocational subjects. The students who are offered a place on the programme would normally not be sitting for any SEC examinations and face challenges following the standard curriculum. As from school year 2016/2017, the ALP+ was also launched, where students continued their learning experience at a post secondary level whilst receiving a monthly stipend. In scholastic year 2014/2015, there were 272 students who attended ALP, and in scholastic year 2015-2016 there were 253 students. The intake for scholastic year 2016/2017 was of 154 students for the ALP and 25 students for the ALP+.

vi) Stipends for students that pursue studies beyond compulsory education include:

a) Stipends linked to the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)

From January 2014, students started receiving a yearly percentage rate of the established COLA. The objective of this measure is increasing the amount of stipends students receive, so as to reflect the established cost of living index on a yearly basis. Approximately 19,000 students benefit per year.

b) Stipends for Repeaters

Students who repeat one year in their course of study also receive their stipend. This measure came into effect on 1st January 2014. During academic year 2014/2015, around 1,030 students benefitted from this measure, while in 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 the number of students benefitting from this measure was 935 and 970 respectively.

Some of these students are also eligible for the supplementary maintenance grant.

c) Stipends exempt from income tax

Financial benefits in terms of students' maintenance grants paid to full-time post-secondary, vocational and tertiary students as outlined in Subsidiary Legislation 308 of 2016 will have no tax deductions and this irrespective of other income. It is expected that, through this initiative, there will be a marginal increase in the number of students who work on a part-time basis whilst studying. Approximately 19,000 students yearly benefit from this measure.

d) Stipends for students following the ALP+ course

As from scholastic year 2016/2017, students who turn 16 and continue their studies or training under the ALP in Hospitality and Customer Care and/or Welding and Fabrication are eligible for the award of stipends and grant. To date, 26 students have applied for the Students' Maintenance Grants under this measure. This measure complements the GEM16+ programme which was implemented in scholastic year 2015/2016 for students who are eligible for the award of stipends and grant.

e) Stipends to students applying under the maturity clause

As from February 2016, students who enrol under the maturity clause at the University of Malta and at MCAST, are eligible to receive the students' maintenance grants. In academic year 2015/2016, 559 applications were received and in 2016/2017 there were 913 applications.

f) Helping single parents to enrol into education

With the new amendments to the Students' Maintenance Grants Legal Notice which came into force from academic year 2016/2017, single parents on social assistance who choose to continue their education and enhance their employability prospects will receive a maintenance grant. Single parents who opt to follow a full-time course at a post-secondary or tertiary institution are entitled to an extra annual grant ranging from €200 to €1,000 depending on the MQF level of the course. In the first months since the introduction of this measure, 80 students have applied.

These actions indicate Malta's commitment to address poverty and social exclusion through education. However, since poverty and social exclusion are multi-faceted, these need to be targeted also through other dimensions. In light of this, the next section will be highlighting initiatives undertaken by the Ministry for Health, in terms of health and environment, with the scope to promote people's well-being.

2.2.4// HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

The main objective of this dimension is that of ensuring equal access to quality healthcare and a health friendly environment since that socio-economic conditions shape a person's health and wellbeing throughout life. Therefore, this dimension focuses upon a wide range of initiatives with the aim of addressing the inequality gap such as through the development and implementation of legislative frameworks and strategies; the provision of specialised healthcare services; the modernisation and refurbishment of healthcare settings; implementation of measures to resolve challenges in public healthcare provision such as waiting lists, out of stock medicines, and hospital overcrowding; improved accessibility of services at a community level; as well as improved coordination in the area of environmental health.

Some of the introduced measures which feed into the strategic policy actions presented under this dimension are the:

i) introduction and implementation of new legislation, charters and frameworks including the:

a) implementation of the new Mental Health Act¹⁹ which promotes the rights of mental health patients, empowers patients and their carers to participate in their own care plan and treatment, supports reduced hospital stays and endorses community treatment schedules;

b) Charter for Patients' Rights and Responsibilities which was developed and published towards the end of 2016 following public consultation. This Charter addresses the manner, quality and timeframes in which the healthcare service is provided;

c) legislation making it illegal to smoke in cars in the presence of children, enacted in January 2017.

ii) development and implementation of a number of public health strategies such as:

a) the Food and Nutrition Policy and Action Plan 2015-2020 which was published in September 2014;

b) A National Strategy for Diabetes 2016-2020 entitled Diabetes: A National Public Health Priority which was launched in 2015. Statistics show that in Malta, out of around 400,000 inhabitants, around 33,000 persons are diabetic. As part of the new Diabetes Strategy, further free medications were introduced, free glucose sticks and other benefits were included for

¹⁹ This Act was approved by Parliament in 2012 and according to Legal Notice 276 of 2013, all articles came into force by October 2014.

diabetics and weight management classes were set up;

c) Three large studies were carried out/supported by MEH: the National Health Interview Survey, a Food Consumption Survey, and a Sexual Health Survey amongst parents.

iii) strengthening of Mental Health Services by:

a) improving mental health services for youths through the opening of a Youth Residence which can cater for 16 young persons in March 2016;

b) ongoing cooperation with NGOs to improve mental health services in the community. In 2015, a third community hostel was opened in collaboration with Richmond Foundation to accommodate males suffering from mental health illness. Subsequently a 4th hostel was opened in 2016 to accommodate females with mental health illness;

c) developing plans for the establishment of an acute mental health hospital close to Mater Dei Hospital (MDH) which is estimated to accommodate 450 patients.

iv) advancement in Cancer Services through:

a) a new Oncology Hospital which opened in September 2015. This is expected to cater for 9,000 oncology visits per year, 5,000 patients per year treated in terms of haematology, and around 1,500 patients per year requiring radiotherapy and chemotherapy;

b) a National Screening Programme for cervical cancer was initiated in 2016. This Programme targets 30,000 persons over the 3 year roll out period of the Programme; Till end of December 2016, 10,828 women were invited to participate out of whom 3,853 invitees chose to participate in this screening programme;

c) the designing of a New Cancer Plan entitled The National Cancer Plan for the Maltese Islands 2017-2021 which was launched for public consultation in March 2017;

d) the availability of a new drug used in the treatment of cancer in 2014 as part of the national health service.

v) Health reforms aimed at reducing out-of stock medicine, long waiting lists and hospital overcrowding by:

a) the introduction of changes in stock control practices in March 2016 to resolve problems of out of stock medicines;

b) the number of persons registered with the Pharmacy of Your Choice (POYC) Scheme that continues to increase each year, reaching 147,806 persons at end of December 2016 (as shown in Table 2);

c) a pilot project that aims to deliver medicines at people’s homes. This project was introduced in June 2015 and till end of December 2016, 268 persons were making use of this service. A yearly breakdown of this data can be found in Table 2;

Table 2: Registered Patient Population for the POYC Scheme and the 70+ Domiciliary Delivery Scheme 2013-2016

Registered Patient Population		
Year	POYC Scheme (Cumulative)	70+ Domiciliary Delivery Scheme* (Cumulative)
2013	115,681	na
2014	131,460	na
2015	140,342	138
2016	147,806	268

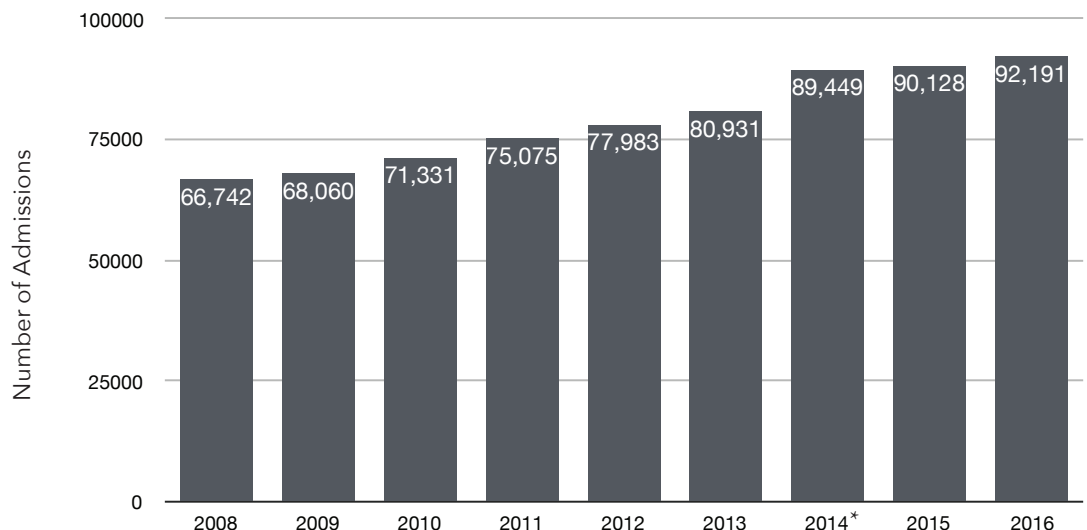
*Launched June 2015

Source: MFH

d) the establishment of two new acute wards in December 2015. These two wards are expected to accommodate 7,000 persons per year;

e) putting in place protocols and systems to increase the number of available beds at MDH, also with the help of the private sector. Although the number of admissions into MDH continued to increase each year as can be seen from Figure 1, it is also important to note that patient admissions in non ward areas was practically eliminated;

Figure 1: Number of Admissions 2008-2016

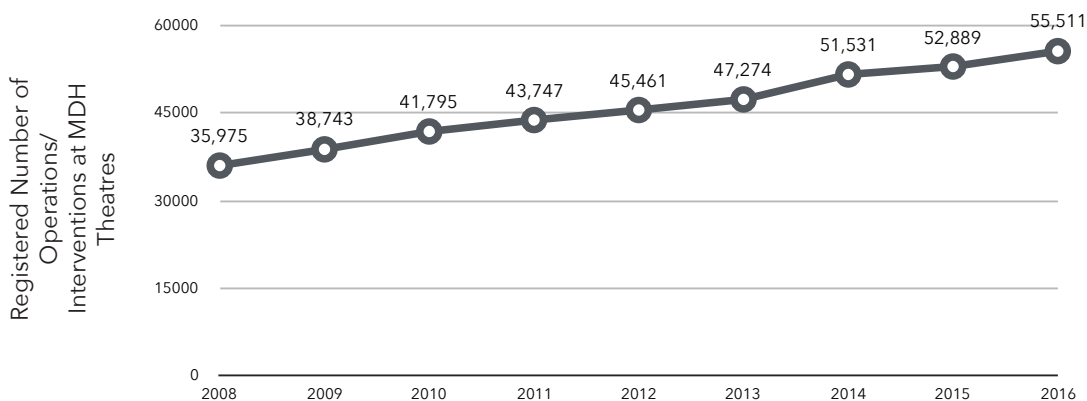


* IT system Administration Changeover

Source: MFH.

f) increasing the total annual number of operations carried out, through the introduction of theatre sessions over the weekends (1,694 additional operations in 2016) as well as operation sessions carried out under a public-private partnership (139 beneficiaries in 2015 and 431 beneficiaries during 2016). Waiting list for surgical operations decreased by 7,300 between end of 2015 and end of 2016. Figure 2 shows that the annual number of surgical operations/interventions continued to increase every year, reaching 55,511 in 2016;

Figure 2: Surgical Operations/Interventions at MDH Theatres 2008-2016



Source: MFH.

g) reducing further the waiting lists for various Imaging Services through the introduction of new sessions out of the normal working hours. Comparison of output between 2013 and 2016 shows 12,866 additional MRI's, 6,622 additional ultrasound examinations and 8,302 additional CT scans. Table 3 illustrates the increase in output of medical imaging investigations over the period 2013 till 2016.

Table 3: Medical Imaging Investigations: changes in output between 2013 and 2016

Medical Imaging	2013	2014	2015	2016
MRIs	9,307	14,122	19,736	22,173
US	29,642	31,211	32,736	36,264
CT Scans	25,797	28,554	30,831	34,099

Source: MFH.

h) development of community services by :

a) improving and expanding services offered at Health Centres through their refurbishment and modernisation. During 2014-2016, refurbishment works were carried out in a number of Health Centres and peripheral Health Clinics, with the largest major refurbishment being carried out in Mosta

and Rabat Health Centres. New equipment such as Digital X Rays was also acquired in all speciality fields;

b) introduction of new services and clinics which promote care at a primary level and make services more accessible at community level. These include lifestyle clinics, chronic disease management clinics, anticoagulant clinics, outreach clinics, plaster clinics, vascular doppler screening and retinopathy screening. During 2016, a form of electronic prescription was introduced to facilitate easier accessibility to routine prescriptions and new arrangements were made for the renewal of Schedule V for common chronic conditions such as hypertension and hyperlipidaemia to be done by private family doctors;

c) reengineering of services to match current demand and increase access to service users through the opening of afternoon clinics for podology, physiotherapy and immunisation clinics. This process of increasing accessibility was also aided by the devolvement of a number of peripheral Health Clinics to Local Councils;

d) planning of a Regional Health Centre in Paola and a new Health Centre in Kirkop to better accommodate demand in the Southern area of the island. The Regional Health Centre in Paola will offer a myriad of health services including operating theatres, ambulance services, mental health centre, dental care services, centre for the care of dementia and a disease prevention centre to provide the necessary medical care to approximately one third of the population of Malta, roughly 140,000 people. The new health centre in Kirkop is expected to be of service to 25,800 persons.

The health and environment measures discussed above contribute to the promotion of wellbeing, thus also responding to the needs of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion. However, health initiatives need to be complemented by social services so as to ensure a more comprehensive approach towards the holistic development of all persons particularly of those who are more deprived. In view of this, the forthcoming section will be presenting some of the social welfare services and housing measures/initiatives that were introduced during the period under review so as to enhance the prospects of persons who are already experiencing poverty and social exclusion, or are at risk thereof.

2.2.5// SOCIAL SERVICES

The main objective of this dimension is that of consolidating social services and promoting social solidarity and social cohesion. Under this dimension, a number of initiatives have and are being undertaken with the aim of improving the social inclusion prospects and wellbeing of all people, particularly vulnerable groups

and empowering them to actively participate in society. Such measures include: the consolidation of community-based one-stop-shops; the introduction of innovative services; the enactment of legislative measures to combat discrimination and safeguard the rights and wellbeing of vulnerable persons; and the promotion of adequate and affordable housing.

2.2.5.1// SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES

A service which proved to be beneficial to all the four main target groups of the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion (2014-2024) is the LEAP project - Building the future together: Promoting Social Mobility, an originally EU co-financed project (ESF 3.234) which as from 2016 was nationally funded. The project aimed to create occupational opportunities for certain target groups which included single parents, long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, ex-offenders, inmates, migrants and working poor, amongst others. The actual implementation of the project started in June 2013 and all activities were wrapped up by December 2015. In all, a total of 274 participants took part in the traineeship programme. Following the closure of this EU co-financed project, in 2016, LEAP continued to be implemented through local funds by delivering various initiatives and strengthening outreach through community services. During 2016, LEAP provided services to clients having problems regarding:

- Mismanagement of limited funds;
- Dwelling rental expenses;
- Illnesses / Disability within the family (boarded out cases);
- Legal fees due to marital separations / problems;
- Lack of qualifications (education) leading to low paid jobs;
- Spousal maintenance problems;
- Vicious cycle on the dependence of undeclared income;
- Precarious work / Short term contracts;
- Lack of family planning / single parents;
- Benefit trap;
- Lack of support from extended family;
- Non-family oriented conditions of work.

In order to offer a holistic service to its beneficiaries, LEAP personnel are carrying out various accompanying measures which aim to equip the beneficiaries with a number of skills that may be useful in their daily lives. These range from positive parenting (through, for instance, the new LEAP initiative Home Based Therapeutic Services - HBTS) to nutrition and health information, healthy eating, cooking on a budget (even through the promotion of the Ghaqal id-Dar, Hajja Aħjar initiative), household budgeting and furniture delivery.

Moreover, LEAP is embarking on a number of initiatives aimed at providing the necessary tools for their personnel to be able to mentor their beneficiaries in an efficient manner. These initiatives include training to personnel on issues related to professional development in relation to employment skills, the CV clinic, energy poverty awareness, surviving on a tight budget, and other areas which amongst others include information about various entities that are working within the social field.

A more specific initiative mainly targeting children and young people is that of having a more efficient Child Protection Service (CPS) system whereby all high-risk children and youth would be investigated upon referral. The Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) is reaching this goal by: establishing clear criteria of what constitutes child abuse²⁰; restructuring the CPS; planning for the expectations arising from the Child Protection Bill (January 2017); continuing to pursue the implementation of the Lanzarote Convention²¹ and; reviewing child friendly justice and support houses. In order to deal with the increasing demands of the service and in preparation for the Child Protection Bill, in February 2016, the CPS social workers were divided into two teams - the Investigation Team and the Child Monitoring and Support Team. This will further ensure that child protection investigations are carried out immediately and within a stipulated timeframe as well as ensure that children and families who require further help and support are seen to by an even more specialized service. Furthermore, in 2014, Aġenzija Appoġġ²² also opened a new residential home for teenage girls. In 2015, the residence focused on accepting young females between the age of 14 and 18, with the aim of preparing them for independent living. The home welcomed 11 female residents between 2014 and 2016.

In line with this, various outreach, prevention, early identification and intervention initiatives aimed at high-risk children and youth have been implemented in various communities around Malta and Gozo, including: mother and baby clubs (support in child care and parenting), home-based family therapy, medical check-ups, literacy and homework clubs, socio-educational sessions (in groups as well as individual attention through mentoring), creative and physical activities, vocational skills sessions (learning basic woodwork and stone work), budgeting sessions, outdoor events, summer projects, youth exchange and live-in opportunities.

Furthermore, in order to sustain Malta's commitment to uphold children's rights and strengthen families, in 2016, A Positive Parenting Policy 2016-2024 was launched with the primary aim of consolidating family support services. During the same year, a draft National Children's Policy was also launched for public consultation.

20 The Child Protection's Criteria had been established as part of the memorandum of understanding which was signed by the Education Department and Aġenzija Appoġġ during 2015. These criteria were reviewed further during October 2016.

21 On the 6th September 2010, Malta ratified the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (also referred to as the Lanzarote Convention, signed on 25 October 2007 in Lanzarote, Spain). This multilateral Council of Europe treaty (Treaty No.201) is the first international instrument that: i) criminalises the various forms of sexual abuse against children, "including such abuse committed in the home or family, with the use of force, coercion or threats" (Council of Europe, 2017), and ii) puts forward various measures to promote the prevention of such exploitation and abuse.

22 Aġenzija Appoġġ is the main Government agency that is formally entrusted to safeguard the well-being of children in Malta and falls under FSWS.

Apart from children, the elderly and other vulnerable groups have also been addressed, amongst others by:

i) the Intake and Family Support Services (IFSS) and Community Services within FSWS that offer social work service to released offenders seeking such assistance. Such work includes aiding service users to actively seek employment, to integrate into the community and receive all the necessary support. This service was offered to 36 persons between 2014 and 2016.

ii) a new Bill against any form of abuse on the elderly which was tabled in Parliament in June 2014 by the Parliamentary Secretary for the Rights of People with Disability and Active Ageing. This new law, which is now in force, includes new forms of deterrent measures to be incorporated in the Maltese Criminal Code. These specifically deal with abuse, which so far has been defined in a very broad manner in order to encapsulate all forms of abuse, but with specific focus on the ill-treatment of older persons. This new legislation includes informative concepts to ensure maximum protection for the elderly, even from relatives, to safeguard their interests. From a purely academic perspective, this new law combines civil and criminal concepts to achieve higher levels of protection in more expeditious and effective terms without the need to resort to either criminal or civil proceedings, which are generally more time-consuming, expensive and discouraging.

iii) strengthening the human rights and equality framework in Malta, Government embarked on a process to restructure current legislation regulating the sector and eventually launched two legislative initiatives:

a) a Bill towards an Equality Act that will aim to meet the highest anti-discrimination and equality standards; and

b) a Bill towards a Human Rights and Equality Commission Act that will set up the Human Rights and Equality Commission based on the Paris Principles.

Additionally, Malta ratified Protocol 12 of the European Convention on Human Rights providing for a general prohibition of discrimination. The Protocol removes the current limitation in the application of Article 14 (non-discrimination) of the Convention and guarantees that no-one shall be discriminated against on any ground by any public authority.

2.2.5.2// HOUSING

Through the Housing Authority, various Housing arrangements were provided, such as the:

i) provision of a number of apartments in shell or semi finished form on the market

for purchase at subsidised prices. There were 46 families who benefitted from this measure.

ii) increase in grant given to beneficiaries of two schemes – ‘Subsidy on adaptation works in residences occupied by owners or tenants’ and ‘Subsidy on adaptation works related to dangerous structures in private dwellings held on lease or emphyteusis’. There were 8 households that benefitted from this scheme.

iii) embellishment work in social housing blocks distributed across six localities in Malta: St. Paul’s Bay, Paola, Senglea, Hamrun, Ta’ Giorni and Pembroke. A total number of 275 families (St. Paul’s Bay, Paola and Senglea: 83 families in total; Hamrun: 48 families, Ta’ Giorni: 64 families and Pembroke: 80 families) have benefitted from these maintenance and re-structuring works.

iv) installation of lifts in government-owned blocks. Since 2014, 23 lifts were installed in existing blocks and 8 lifts were upgraded, thus rendering the residence of 298 families fully accessible. By so doing, elderly people and persons with disability can continue living in the community.

v) building of new Housing Estates (a €50 million project) that include the restructuring of existing premises and the building of new premises already covered by the Planning Authority (PA) permits as well as the acquisition of neglected private properties. Works on this project are in progress and are expected to be completed by 2020.

The development of housing projects and other initiatives including regeneration and embellishment programmes take into account the social and recreational needs of communities through integrated planning and holistic investment. This involves analysis of the availability and accessibility of amenities and recreational facilities within neighbourhoods by all citizens including vulnerable and disadvantaged groups such as those targeted by the strategic policy which include children, young people and elderly persons. For example, besides the installation of lifts in government-owned blocks, other schemes were also on a high demand by elderly people living in the community since as from 2014, as reflected

Table 4: Application from Elderly Persons for Housing Authority Schemes 2014-2016

Scheme	Applications from Elderly Persons	Elderly Applicants as a % of Total Applicants
Sir Sid Darek Scheme	676	73.8%
Disability Scheme	430	80.4%
Adaptation Scheme	482	60.3%
Rent Subsidy Scheme	450	26.8%
Structural Repairs Scheme	80	72.7%

Source: Housing Authority.

Such analysis and planning not only help to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of housing policies, but also contribute to better address the various social challenges within communities such as sub-standard housing, overcrowding, empty buildings, and lack of green and open spaces.

Social services play a decisive role in shaping people's prospects for a good quality of life. However, the positive impact of such social initiatives can be further enhanced through other dimensions of wellbeing such as culture which promotes social inclusion and social cohesion. The next section will thus focus on some of the cultural initiatives that were undertaken between 2014 and 2016 with a view to promote the participation of a wide spectrum of people in different cultural activities.

2.2.6// CULTURE

The main objective of this dimension is that of promoting a more inclusive culture in the recognition that culture is a fundamental right which should be enjoyed by all individuals, irrespective of their differences. Access to culture not only empowers people, but also enriches the whole community. Under this dimension, a number of initiatives have been and are being undertaken with the aim of facilitating access to and participation in cultural initiatives for all in such areas as art and craft, creativity, music, dance, drama, storytelling, fashion, history, architecture and cultural heritage. These initiatives include the management and provision of financial support to various community oriented and school-based projects, as well as the undertaking of research with the aim of addressing cultural barriers to cultural participation.

An overarching initiative contributing to cultural welfare within the general notion of socio-economic welfare is the Create 2020²³ Strategy developed and implemented by Arts Council Malta that aims to place the arts and creativity at the heart of Malta's future. One of the strategic paths of Create 2020 focuses on community exchange with investment in:

1. a wider spectrum of quality work that inspires community cultural exchange and reaches a broader range of people – engaging them as both audience and participants;
2. artists and arts organisations that promote cultural diversity and address cultural inclusion and accessibility;
3. championing cultural rights.

As part of this 2016-2020 strategy, research will be conducted in terms of cultural participation to examine possible barriers to cultural access and recommend ways of overcoming them.

²³ Published in December 2015.

Some of the measures introduced that complement the Create 2020 Strategy and feed into the strategic policy actions presented under this dimension are:

i) Community Oriented Projects managed by Arts Council Malta consisting of the:

a) Creative Communities Fund, which is a fund for community-led creative and artistic activities, primarily addressing local communities. It provides the opportunity for training, research and the development of artistic projects led by the community for the community, while celebrating cultural diversity. The Creative Communities Fund aims to: (1) encourage active participation of local communities in the culture and arts sector, (2) celebrate the cultural diversity found in the various towns and cities around Malta and Gozo, and (3) support projects that encourage cultural integration. This fund, which was launched in February 2016, is an ongoing initiative and most projects are to be completed by end of 2017. In April 2016, 5 organisations with 5 projects²⁴ benefitted from this fund, while in December 2016, an increase in the number of beneficiaries was exhibited with 12 organisations having a total of 14 projects²⁵;

b) President's Award for Creativity which supports organisations and institutions that target the social needs and well-being of the community at large, especially the more vulnerable sectors and hard-to-reach groups - with a special emphasis on children, young people, minority groups and the elderly, through creativity and art. 11 projects were awarded in 2015 and in 2016 this initiative invested in another 10 new projects.

c) KulturaTV Fund, introduced in August 2016, which aims to incentivise the development of cultural and creative content on private broadcasting stations in order to enhance the quality of television programming in Malta. Through this funding scheme, Arts Council Malta aims to support the creation of innovative and culturally significant storytelling relevant to contemporary media audiences. KulturaTV had 6 beneficiaries, each of which has an indefinite multiple number of participants.

ii) Community Oriented Projects managed by Valletta18 consisting of a number of projects namely:

a) Darba Waħda which is an intergenerational project that gives the two generations (elderly and children) the opportunity to relate, create and exchange, through various creative methods such as drama, arts, crafts, games and storytelling. During 2014 and 2015, there were 50 participants, while in 2016, there were 40 participants. However, between September and December 2016, a number of workshops were held in various communities around Malta and a total of 100 individuals participated;

b) Dance4All which involves a series of dance workshops carried out in

²⁴ Each of which has an indefinite number of participants.

²⁵ Each of which has an indefinite number of participants.

various localities and community spaces (hospitals, day centres, etc.). It started at the end of 2016 and 78 persons participated in this new project;

c) Ondamarela which is a music project open to communities of all ages and musical backgrounds. This project also started at the end of 2016 where an initial workshop was held and around 60 people were involved;

d) Naqşam il-Muża which is a community-oriented project showcasing the national collection of art and whereby members of an identified community choose and present artworks from the art collection to be displayed at MUŻA²⁶. This project was carried out in a number of localities, most recently in Gżira, and a total number of 300 persons participated;

e) Ġewwa Barra, formerly known as the Valletta Forum²⁷. This is another community oriented project inspired and developed by the members of the community itself to empower local communities by instilling greater civic pride and ownership of public space through art and creativity. Initial workshops with local members took place in Valletta in late 2016 and 50 persons participated;

iii) a Community Oriented Project managed by Heritage Malta introduced in 2014, consisting of: a) special reduced rates for local groups (€1 per person) and local councils, and b) assisting local councils to set up exhibitions to increase local cultural heritage awareness/identities. These special reduced rates have been very well received and all requests by local councils for assistance/loans of showcases and artefacts for local displays have been addressed.

iv) School Projects managed by Arts Council Malta consisting of the:

a) Kreattiv which is another public funding programme that gives the opportunity to around 1,500-2,000 students every year to collaborate with creative practitioners and teachers to initiate creative projects in schools. This fund was introduced in 2015 and there were 17 projects for each of the two scholastic years.

b) Culture Pass, an initiative launched jointly by Arts Council Malta and the Culture Directorate in 2016. This national commitment provides all students in all years of secondary school with the opportunity to experience at least one cultural activity as an extension to the curriculum covered during the scholastic year for events of a cultural and artistic nature. 7,165 students participated in the pilot phase of the programme.

v) School Projects managed by Valletta18 consisting of:

²⁶ Malta's new Museum of art and flagship project for Valletta's European Capital City of Culture Title in 2018.

²⁷ This project was introduced in March 2016 and there were 30 individuals (Valletta residents) by the end of June 2016.

a) A project called Sounds Out Loud which works with Resource Centres proposed by the project leader to identify children with difficulties, as well as collaborates with the ALP to attract teenagers. Sounds Out Loud started in May 2016 and till the end of 2016, there were 20 persons who worked with local and international percussionists through a series of percussion workshops. This project was previously known as Happy Jam where in November 2014, 60 children benefitted.

b) the educational project Ohloq Kultura which was carried out in 6 schools²⁸ and which by the end of June 2016 benefitted a total of 220 children. During 10 sessions per school, children (aged 9-10 years) form a made-up culture in a fashion comparable to how cultures come about in real life. By paralleling this discovery to how Valletta was created as a city with its own culture, children learn about history, architecture and cultural heritage.

c) the KantaKantun project which is another innovative educational project that is being carried out with secondary school students (Years 7 and 8). Students examine ideas of space and sound followed by a trip around the school's locality where they can observe architecture first-hand. The project started during scholastic year 2014/2015 and till December 2016, 80 students²⁹ benefitted from this project. KantaKantun was carried out in a total 6 schools³⁰; 2 schools in each of the following academic years: 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017.

d) The Box, a creative project for Year 9 and 10 students which explores elements of theatre making. A call was sent out to all schools through the Ministry for Education and Employment, and eventually the project took place at St. Albert the Great College in Valletta. Valletta18 also collaborated with Aġenzija Żgħażaġh on the project. A total of 120 students³¹ participated throughout 2016.

vi) Contextual analyses consisting of:

a) the National Cultural Participation Survey commissioned by Arts Council Malta which was conducted in 2016 with results announced in 2017. This survey is the most important statistical tool for policy makers to understand further the complexity of cultural participation and the impact of culture on the well being of society.

b) an extensive audit on theatre spaces to map local cultural resources. The valorisation of such spaces and development into accessible spaces for cultural activity is another policy action towards further decentralization of cultural activity and increased access. This audit was commissioned by

28 Letters were sent to all heads of schools, and schools book on first come, first served basis.

29 40 students by end of June 2016 and another 40 students during September-December 2016.

30 Letters were sent to all heads of schools, and schools book on first come, first served basis.


31 80 students by June 2016 and 40 students during September-December 2016.

Arts Council Malta in 2015 and delivered by the University of Malta and Valletta 2018 Foundation, leading to the publication of an audit catalogue published in 2017.

It is pertinent to note that all cultural projects mentioned above are planned to continue throughout 2017 and beyond.

Another achievement which traverses the educational and cultural dimensions is the digitisation initiative undertaken by the National Library. In 2015, the National Library catalogued and made available on its portal the first collection of 'Incunabula'. By digitising its collections, the National Library continued to safeguard its unique treasures and at the same time make them available to scholars, researchers and the general public for educational and cultural purposes. This initiative was a product of the project A Digitization Strategy and Framework for the National Library of Malta facilitated through ERDF Funds acquired in 2009. By means of these funds, the National Library purchased sophisticated digitisation equipment, including high resolution cameras and scanners. The digitisation process included scanning of material, downsizing and editing of images, creation of relative metadata and uploading of digital assets on the National Library portal, Digivault.

After having outlined a few of the measures and initiatives undertaken by various Ministries in their commitment to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion, the next Chapter will present a statistical analysis of socio-economic trends since 2013 in terms of poverty reduction and the promotion of social inclusion.



CHAPTER 3

**EVALUATION:
MEASURING
PROGRESS**

This Chapter presents an evaluation of the impact of the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion 2014-2024 based on the status of implementation of the various initiatives presented under the different dimensions of wellbeing as well as the analysis of emerging socio-economic trends which have an impact on poverty and social exclusion. The following section presents an overview of the indicators chosen to measure and monitor progress.

The methodology endorsed for the purpose of monitoring and measuring progress acknowledges the multi-faceted aspects of poverty. As a result, in addition to the headline AROPE indicator (At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion Rate), various other specific indicators contributing to the reduction of poverty and the promotion of social inclusion were collated for the purpose of this monitoring exercise.

These indicators which have been established in consultation with the NSO³², feed into the main policy objectives of the strategic policy as well as contribute towards the EU 2020 Strategy. The following is a list of the indicators utilised to monitor and assess the progress of the strategic policy:

- At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion Rate (AROPE)
- At-Risk-of-Poverty (ARP) Rate - Total Population and In-Work
- Severe Material Deprivation (SMD) Rate - Total Population and Elderly Persons
- Persons aged 65 years or over At-Risk-of-Poverty living in households by type of deprivation
- Share of Population in Very Low Work Intensity (VLWI)
- S80/S20 Income Quintile Share Ratio
- At-Risk-of-Poverty Rate (ARP) Before Social Transfers
- Housing Cost Overburden Rate by Poverty Status
- Unemployment Rate
- Long-Term Unemployment Rate (LTU)
- Absenteeism Rate in State Schools
- Early School Leavers (ESL) Rate
- NEET Rate (Share of young people Neither in Employment nor in Education and Training)
- Persons Registering for Work in Malta and Gozo (including data for persons with a disability)
- Share of Total Population (25-64 years) Participating in Non-Formal Education
- Share of Total Population (25-64) Participating in Formal Education Activities
- Share of Children Attending Formal Childcare (including data for children living in low-income households).

3.1// GENERAL POPULATION

The National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion presents a comprehensive approach to address poverty and social exclusion among the general population and the four target groups, in particular. This section provides

³² Through the NSO's Social and Regional Statistics Directorate and in particular the Social and Cultural Statistics Unit.

an overview of progress registered with regards to the At-Risk-of-Poverty Rate (ARP) and At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion (AROPE) rate, Material Deprivation (MD) and Severe Material Deprivation (SMD) which constitute the main headline indicators in the area of poverty reduction. This evaluation is complemented by an analysis of secondary indicators including low work intensity (LWI), income inequality, impact of social transfers, and burden of housing costs.

At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion (AROPE)

The AROPE is the headline indicator to monitor the EU 2020 Strategy poverty target. This indicator refers to the situation of people who are either at risk of poverty, or are severely materially deprived or living in a household with a very low work intensity.

The AROPE rate for Malta exhibited a slight decline between the base year 2013 and 2014 which was sustained in 2015 by a further decrease of 1.4%. This decrease in the AROPE accelerated in 2016, with a further 2.3% decrease. It should be noted that Malta has always experienced a lower AROPE rate in comparison to the EU average. This is also noted when the AROPE rate is disaggregated along gender lines. However, in line with EU trends, AROPE registers a marginally higher rate among Maltese females than males.

Table 5: At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion Rate in Malta and EU by Sex 2013-2016

At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU: Total	24.5%	24.4%	23.8%	23.4% ^e
Malta: %	24.0%	23.8%	22.4%	20.1%
Malta: Total Population	99,000	99,000	94,000	85,000
EU: Males	23.6%	23.5%	23.0%	22.5% ^e
Malta: % Males	23.1%	22.9%	21.9%	20.0%
Malta: Total Male Population	48,000	48,000	46,000	43,000
EU: Females	25.4%	25.2%	24.4%	24.3% ^e
Malta: % Females	24.9%	24.7%	23.0%	20.1%
Malta: Total Female Population	51,000	51,000	48,000	43,000

^e = estimated. Note: Total Population in '000s may not tally due to rounding up.

Source: Eurostat.

At Risk of Poverty Rate (ARP)

The ARP is the share of people with an equivalised disposable income (after social transfers) below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. Thus, the ARP rate only measures the financial aspect of poverty in relation to the moving 60% median National Equivalised Income (NEI).

From 2013 to 2016, Malta has seen a gradual increase in the number of people who are considered as being ARP; however Malta still remains below the EU average. This increase may be explained by an ever increasing median NEI which rose from €12,093 in 2013 to €13,572 in 2016.

Contrary to the situation found in the EU, the ARP rate of females in Malta in 2016 is marginally lower than that of males, however there is no significant disparity.

Table 6: At-Risk-of-Poverty Rate in Malta and EU by Sex 2013-2016

At-Risk-of-Poverty Rate	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU	16.7%	17.2%	17.3%	17.3% ^e
Malta: %	15.7%	15.9%	16.3%	16.5%
Malta: Total Population	65,000	66,000	69,000	70,000
EU: Males	16.2%	16.7%	16.9%	16.6% ^e
Malta: %Males	15.4%	15.7%	16.1%	16.5%
Malta: Total Male Population	32,000	33,000	34,000	35,000
EU: Females	17.2%	17.7%	17.7%	17.9% ^e
Malta: % Females	16.1%	16.0%	16.6%	16.4%
Malta: Total Female Population	33,000	33,000	35,000	35,000

e = estimated.
 Source: Eurostat.

Severe Material Deprivation (SMD)

The SMD is defined as the enforced inability to pay for at least four of the following 9 items of deprivation, while the EU currently defines material deprivation (MD) as the proportion of people living in households who cannot afford at least three of these 9 items:

- coping with unexpected expenses;
- one week annual holiday away from home;
- avoiding arrears (in mortgage or rent, utility bills or hire purchase instalments);
- a meal with meat, chicken, fish or vegetarian equivalent every second day;
- keeping the home adequately warm;
- a washing machine;
- a colour TV;
- a telephone;
- a personal car.

The MD rate is an indicator that provides a more nuanced view of the impact of poverty on the quality of life and lifestyle choices of people. This indicator expresses the inability to afford some items considered by most people to be desirable or even necessary to lead an adequate life. It must be understood that this indicator captures an enforced lack, i.e. it is not by personal choice that this person is deprived of this item.

In line with the trend exhibited on an EU level, in recent years, Malta has also registered a decline in its SMD. Data shows that between 2013 and 2016, SMD in Malta registered a relatively pronounced reduction from 9.5% to 4.4%, with a slightly deeper decrease for females.

Table 7: Severe Material Deprivation in Malta and EU by Sex 2013-2016

Severe Material Deprivation	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU: Total	9.6%	8.9%	8.0%	7.5% e
Malta: %	9.5%	10.2%	8.1%	4.4%
Malta: Total Population	39,000	43,000	34,000	19,000
EU: Male	9.4%	8.7%	8.0%	7.3%
Malta: % Males	9.4%	9.9%	8.2%	4.7% p
Malta: Total Male Population	19,000	21,000	17,000	10,000
EU: Females	9.8%	9.0%	8.1%	7.7% e
Malta: %Females	9.6%	10.5%	8.0%	4.2% p
Malta: Total Female Population	20,000	22,000	17,000	9,000

p = provisional data. e = estimated.

Source: Eurostat.

Share of Population in Very Low Work Intensity (VLWI)

This indicator captures the share of people living in households with Very Low Work Intensity (VLWI). This is defined as those households where the adults worked 20% or less of their total work potential during the past year.

During recent years, Malta has exhibited an increase in its employment rate which as at 2016 stood at 69.6%. In parallel, Malta has also witnessed a decrease in its unemployment rate which has declined from 6.4% in 2013 to 4.7% in 2016. Notwithstanding these positive trends, the share of people in VLWI has remained stable.

Table 8: Share of Population in Very Low Work Intensity (VLWI) in Malta and EU by Sex 2013-2016

Share of Population (aged 0-59 years) in Very Low Work Intensity (VLWI)	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU: Total	10.9%	11.2%	10.7%	10.4% ^e
Malta: Total	9.0%	9.8%	9.2%	7.3%
Malta: Total Population	28,000	31,000	29,000	23,000
EU: Males	10.5%	10.8%	10.2%	9.9% ^e
Malta: % Males	7.6%	8.8%	8.8%	7.2%
Malta: Total Male Population	12,000	14,000	14,000	12,000
EU: Females	11.4%	11.6%	11.1%	10.9% ^e
Malta: % Females	10.4%	10.7%	9.7%	7.4%
Malta: Total Female Population	16,000	17,000	15,000	12,000

e = estimated.

Source: Eurostat.

In the Maltese labour market of a 40 hour week, VLWI would translate into the adults in a household working less than 8 hours per week, averaged out over a year, among them. This is done to take into account seasonal jobs, whereby the adults in a household may work for a limited period of time and be inactive the rest of the year. Even in the context of a tight labour market, Malta has maintained a consistent percentage of people who can be considered as VLWI. While this may indicate that the people in such households may have deeper problems that could be hindering their increased activation in the labour market, a gendered analysis of this issue sees a higher VLWI rate for females .

Income Inequality (S80/S20 Income Quintile Share Ratio)

The income quintile share ratio or the S80/S20 ratio is a measure of the inequality of income distribution within a society. This ratio is calculated as the ratio of total income received by the 20% of the population with the highest income (the top quintile) to that received by the 20% of the population with the lowest income (the bottom quintile).

Table 9: Income Quintile Share Ratio (S80/S20) in Malta and EU by Sex 2013-2016

Income Quintile Share Ratio (S80/S20)	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU: Total	5.0	5.2	5.2	5.1
Malta: Total	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.2
EU: Males	5.1	5.3	5.3	5.2
Malta: Males	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.2
EU: Females	4.9	5.1	5.1	5.1
Malta: Females	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.2

Source: Eurostat.

Income inequality remains stable and below the EU average. The income of the richest 20% of households was 4.2 times higher than that of the poorest 20% in 2016, a ratio which is below the EU average of 5.1. The Country Report for Malta 2017 notes that “in view of the fast economic growth there is a risk of future polarisation between high-skilled workers in well paid jobs and low-skilled work-poor households” (EU Commission, 2017)³³. It is relevant to note that Malta’s marginal gender disparity in the S80/S20 Ratio has converged during the period under review.

The impact of social transfers on the ARP rate

The impact of social transfers on the ARP rate can be calculated by comparing the income poverty rate before social transfers with the income poverty rate after social transfers. This indicator allows assessment of the impact of social transfers on monetary poverty.

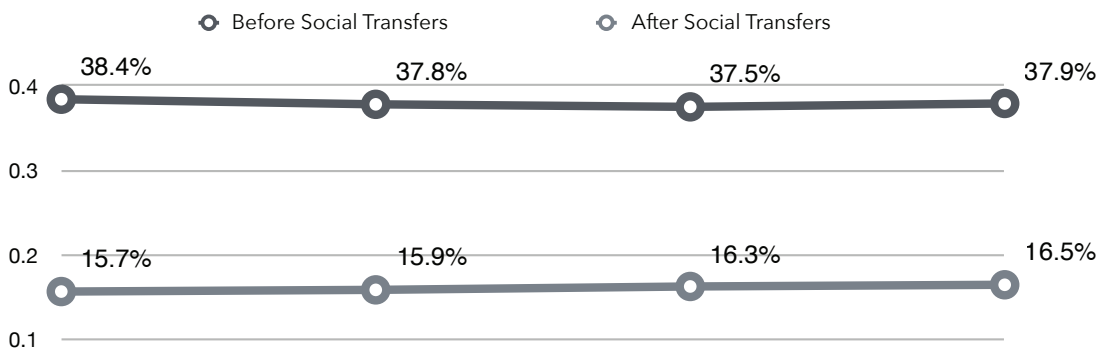
Social transfers are the primary tool in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. The impact of social transfers on the quality of life of people can be observed from the

³³ EU Commission (2017). Country Report Malta 2017 Retrieved at https://ec.europa.eu/malta/news/european-commission-publishes-2017-country-report-malta_en

graph below which shows the reduction of ARP for Malta after social transfers. Whether in the form of contributory pensions, such as age pensions, or non-contributory benefits that provide a minimum income for all, the impact of these social transfers can be seen in the reduction of the at-risk of poverty rate after these social transfers have been taken up. For example, in 2016, the ARP before social transfers stood at 37.9%, while the ARP after social transfers stood at 16.5%.

It is pertinent to note that the social transfers discussed above do not include social transfers in kind such as free education, free healthcare and free social welfare services.

Figure 3: ARP Rate Before and After Social Transfers 2013-2016

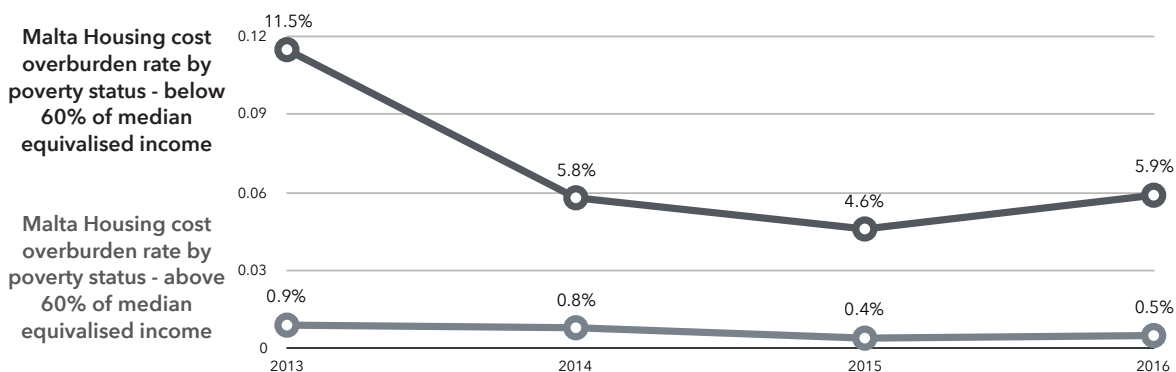


Source: Eurostat.

Housing Cost Overburden Rate by Poverty Status

The Housing Cost Overburden Rate is defined as the percentage of the population living in a household where the total housing costs represent more than 40% of the total disposable household income by poverty status. This indicator also factors in any housing allowances that the household receives. While the wide discrepancy in the housing overburden rate between those households above and below the poverty line is self-evident, there was a decrease between 2013 and 2016 for both types of households, where it decreased from 11.5% to 5.9% for those below the median NEI (the Poverty line), and from 0.9% to 0.5% for those above.

Figure 4: Housing Cost Overburden Rate by Poverty Status 2013-2016



Source: Eurostat.

3.2// MAIN VULNERABLE GROUPS

Whilst addressing the needs of the general population, the national strategic policy primarily targets four main vulnerable groups namely children and young people, elderly persons, unemployed persons and the working poor. This section provides an overview of the quality of life and social situation of these vulnerable groups through an analysis of a number of indicators in the areas of poverty, employment and education.

3.2.1// CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Children At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion

The child poverty indicator is defined as the number of children aged 0-17 years who live in households at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion. Child poverty is particularly damaging not only in the here and now but also due to its long-term effects on the life prospects of the child. Children coming from low income families experience a number of disadvantages which tend to be exhibited in low outcomes across all aspects of wellbeing including health, education, income and employment, socialisation and behavioural/emotional development. As a result, combating the intergenerational transmission of poverty and social exclusion through a preventative and early interventionist approach offers an effective and sustainable approach to reduce poverty and promote greater social justice.

In line with EU trends, Malta's child poverty rate (Table 10 below) is higher than that of the general population (Table 5 above). However, Malta's child poverty rate is also relatively lower than the EU average standing at 24.0% compared to an EU average of 26.4% in 2016. The at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate for children in Malta has exhibited an accelerating decline from 32% in 2013 to 24.0% in 2016. One should note that child poverty tends to be unfairly distributed among males and females, with Maltese boys 6.0% more at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion than girls. Reflecting EU realities, in Malta, the prevalence of poverty and social exclusion among children is primarily evident in large families³⁴, single parent households³⁵, and among children living in jobless households³⁶ and in households with low and medium work intensity³⁷.

34 In Malta, 41.6% of children living in families consisting of 'two adults with three or more dependent children' are AROPE.

35 In Malta, 56.9% of children living in these households are AROPE.

36 In Malta, 86.1% of these households are ARP.

37 In Malta, 41.2% of children living in households with low work intensity and 34.1% of children living in households with medium work intensity are ARP.

Table 10: Children At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion in Malta and EU by Sex 2013-2016

Children (0-17years) At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU: Total	27.8%	27.7%	26.9%	26.4% ^e
Malta: %	32.0%	31.3%	28.2%	24.0%
Malta: Total Population	24,000	24,000	21,000	18,000
EU: Males	27.8%	27.8%	26.8%	26.0% ^e
Malta: % Males	32.8%	33.6%	29.5%	26.9%
Malta: Total Male Population	13,000	13,000	12,000	10,000
EU: Females	27.7%	27.6%	27.3%	26.7% ^e
Malta: % Females	31.1%	28.9%	26.9%	20.9%
Malta: Total Female Population	11,000	11,000	10,000	8,000

e = estimated.

Source: Eurostat.

Absenteeism rate

The rate of absenteeism in state schools is calculated on unauthorised absences of 30 days and more. The absenteeism rate for primary schools tends to be significantly lower than that for secondary schools. While absenteeism in primary schools has remained relatively stable over the last number of years, yet a significant improvement was registered for secondary schools with a decrease from 7.5% in scholastic year 2012-13 to 4.5% in 2015-16.

Table 11: Rate of Unauthorised Absences in Primary and Secondary State Schools for the Last Four Scholastic Years

Unauthorised absences in state schools	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Primary schools	1.04%	1.72%	0.09%	1.20%
Secondary schools	7.50%	7.50%	4.80%	4.50%

Source: MEDE - DSS (Administrative data).

Young People At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion

The youth poverty indicator is defined as the number of young people aged 18-24 years who live in households that are at-risk of poverty or social exclusion. In contrast to EU trends, young persons in Malta are significantly less likely to be at-risk of poverty or social exclusion when compared to the general population (Table 5 above). In 2015, the AROPE rate for young persons in Malta stood at 20%, compared to a higher EU average of 31.3%. Similarly to the child poverty rate, youth poverty exhibited a consistent decline from 22.8% in 2013 to 17.1% in 2016.

As can be observed from Table 12 below, while in 2013, the youth poverty rate for females in Malta was higher (24.2%) than that for males (21.4%), this disparity was overturned in 2016, where it stood at 21.2% and 12.6% for males and females respectively. From 2013 to 2016, the AROPE rate for females practically halved from 24.2% to 12.6%.

Table 12: Young Persons At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion in Malta and EU by Sex 2013-2016

Young Persons (18-24 years) At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU: Total	31.9%	31.9%	31.3%	30.5% ^e
Malta: %	22.8%	21.6%	20.0%	17.1%
Malta: Total Population	9,000	8,000	8,000	6,000
EU: Males	31.1%	30.8%	30.8%	29.3% ^e
Malta: %Males	21.4%	21.1%	21.1%	21.2%
Malta: Total Male Population	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
EU: Females	32.7%	33.1%	31.8%	31.7% ^e
Malta: % Females	24.2%	22.2%	18.9%	12.6%
Malta: Total Female Population	5,000	4,000	3,000	2,000

e = estimated.

Source: Eurostat.

Early School Leavers (ESL) rate

The Early School Leavers (ESL) rate is the share of population aged 18-24 years who have left compulsory schooling and who do not have at least 5 SEC passes grade 1 to grade 7 and who have not pursued further education or training.

While Malta's ESL rate has consistently been higher than the EU average, a constant gradual decline in early school leaving has been registered in the last number of years. In line with EU trends, in Malta, males tend to have a significantly higher early school leaving rate than females. Moreover, while over the years, the male ESL rate has remained consistent, an improvement was registered in the female ESL rate which fell from 17.7% in 2013 to 15.8% in 2016.

Table 13: ESL rate by Sex 2013-2016

ESL rate	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU: Total	11.9%	11.2%	11%	10.7%
Malta: %	20.5%	20.3%	19.8%	19.6%
EU: Males	13.6%	12.8%	12.4%	12.2%
Malta: Males	23.2%	22.2%	22.9%	23.1%
EU: Females	10.2%	9.6%	9.5%	9.2%
Malta: Females	17.7%	18.3%	16.6%	15.8%

Source: Eurostat.

NEET rate

The NEET rate is the share of young people neither in employment nor in education and training covering the ages of 15-34 years. The National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion 2014-2024 puts an emphasis on improving the quality of life of young people aged 18-24 years and highlights this age cohort as one of its main target groups.

Following a marginal increase from 10.1% in 2013 to 10.4% in 2015, Malta registered a sharp drop in the NEET rate (18-24 year-old cohort) in 2016 when it fell to 8.4%. Malta has consistently registered a NEET rate (18-24 year-old cohort) that is much lower than the EU average. This observation can be extended to both males and females, however, the latter still lag behind their male counterparts.

Table 14: NEET rate by Sex 2013-2016

NEET rate (18-24 years)	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU: Total	17.1%	16.5%	15.8%	15.2%
Malta: Total	10.1%	10.4%	10.4%	8.4%
EU: Males	16.7%	16.2%	15.4%	14.7%
Malta: Males	9.9%	9.2%	9.1%	6.8%
EU: Females	17.4%	16.8%	16.3%	15.7%
Malta: Females	10.3%	11.6%	11.7%	10.1%

Source: Eurostat.

3.2.2// ELDERLY PERSONS

Elderly Persons At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion

In Malta, the AROPE rate for elderly people over 65 years of age tends to be higher than the EU average standing at 26.1% compared to an EU average of 18.2% in 2016. In line with EU trends, females tend to exhibit a higher AROPE rate than males. Moreover, while the AROPE rate for elderly women stabilized between 2014 and 2015, elderly men registered an increased AROPE rate throughout the years under review. Elderly women remained more AROPE than men throughout.

As pensions are a fundamental income stream in old age, a major factor behind this gender disparity rate in the AROPE rate may be attributed to the gender pensions gap. These inequalities in pensions tend to accumulate over a person's lifetime and, amongst others, reflect such factors as the gender wage gap, the type of employment contract and the work interruptions arising from a larger burden on women with family care responsibilities. While the design of pension systems may be a cause of this pensions gap, a number of initiatives have been/are being taken to rectify this situation along with a number of in-kind benefits and service provision.

Table 15: Elderly Persons At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion in Malta and EU by Sex 2013-2016

Elderly Persons (65 years or over) At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU: Total	18.1%	17.7%	17.3%	18.2% ^e
Malta: %	20.8%	23.3%	23.7%	26.1%
Malta: Total Population	14,000	17,000	18,000	20,000
EU: Males	15.2%	14.6%	14.5%	15.0% ^e
Malta: % Males	20.5%	22.3%	23.1%	24.6%
Malta: Total Male Population	6,000	7,000	8,000	9,000
EU: Females	20.6%	20.3%	19.6%	20.6% ^e
Malta: % Females	21.0%	24.2%	24.2%	27.5%
Malta: Total Female Population	8,000	9,000	10,000	11,000

e = estimated. Source: Eurostat.

Severe Material Deprivation (SMD) of Elderly Persons

In order to gain a deeper analysis of the social situation of elderly persons, the SMD for elderly persons is also being presented. As noted above under the General Population Section, SMD is the enforced inability to pay for at least four of the following 9 items³⁸ of deprivation.

³⁸ i) coping with unexpected expenses; ii) one week annual holiday away from home; iii) avoiding arrears (in mortgage or rent, utility bills or hire purchase installments); iv) a meal with meat, chicken, fish or vegetarian equivalent every second day; v) keeping the home adequately warm; vi) a washing machine; vii) a colour TV; viii) a telephone; ix) a personal car. Items i-v fall under the 'economic strain' category and vi-ix fall under the 'durables' category.

Table 16 below shows that the SMD rate for those aged 65 years or over in Malta has experienced a fluctuation. While in 2013, the SMD rate stood at 7.1% corresponding to the EU average of 6.9%, by 2016, it decreased to 3.5% compared to an EU average of 5.7%. Conforming with EU trends, in 2013 and 2014, the SMD rate for females in Malta was higher than that for males. However, this gender disparity was eliminated by 2015 and 2016 where it stood at 4.7% and 3.5% respectively for both elderly males and females.

Table 16: Severe Material Deprivation among Elderly Persons in Malta and EU by Sex 2013-2016

Severe Material Deprivation for Elderly Persons (65 years or over)	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU: Total	6.9%	6.2%	5.5%	5.7% ^e
Malta: %	7.1%	8.1%	4.7%	3.5%
Malta: Total Population	5,000	6,000	3,000	3,000
EU: Males	5.6%	5.0%	4.5%	4.6% ^e
Malta: % Males	5.8%	6.8%	4.7%	3.5%
Malta: Total Male Population	2,000	2,000	2,000	1,000
EU: Females	7.8%	7.2%	6.3%	6.6% ^e
Malta: % Females	8.2%	9.1%	4.7%	3.5%
Malta: Total Female Population	3,000	4,000	2,000	1,000

e = estimated. Note: '000 population may not tally due to rounding up/down. Source: Eurostat.

Persons aged 65 years or over At-Risk-of-Poverty living in households by type of deprivation

The following table presents the ranking of the five items that fall within the economic strain category of material deprivation by which elderly persons at-risk-of-poverty were most deprived in 2013 and 2016. It is notable that during these years, the items have retained the same ranking, with the 'inability to afford paying one week holiday away from home' ranking as the most deprived item.

Table 17: Ranking of Items of Economic Strain by Deprivation of Persons aged 65+ At-Risk-of-Poverty in Malta 2013 and 2016

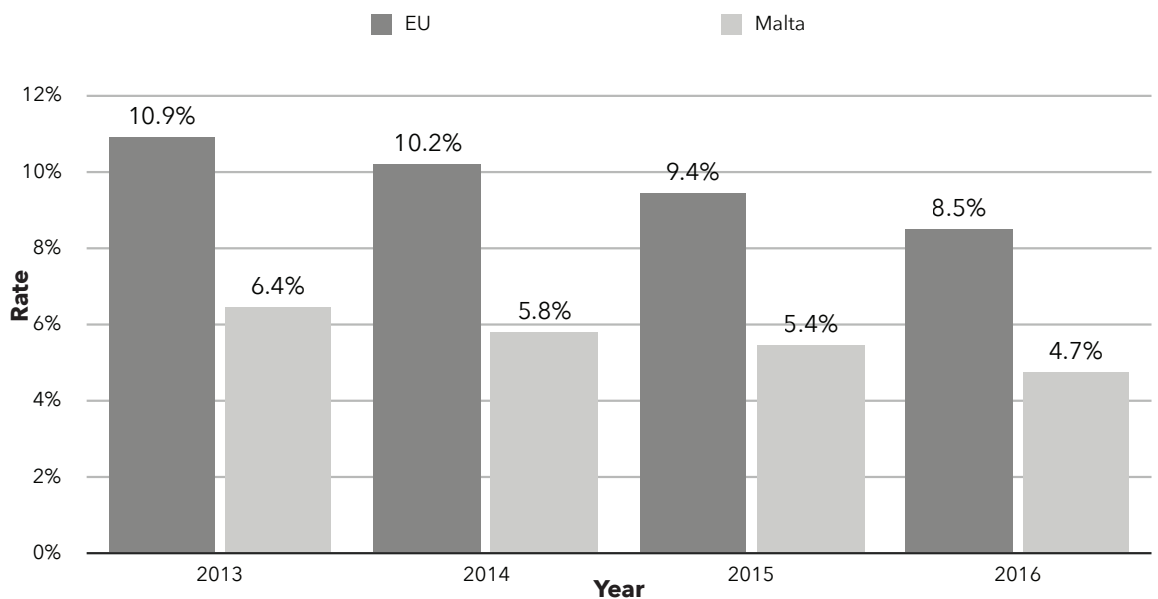
Ranking of Items by Deprivation	Item	2013		2016	
		Count	% total	Count	% total
1st	Inability to afford paying for one week annual holiday away from home	6,401	63.7	11,535	61.8
2nd	Inability to face unexpected financial expenses (of €450 and over)	2,821	28.1	5,986	32.1
3rd	Inability to keep home adequately warm	2,527	25.1	2,267	12.1
4th	Inability to afford a meal with meat, chicken, fish (or vegetarian equivalent) every second day	[951]	[9.5]	1,830	19.8
5th	Inability to avoid arrears (in mortgage or rent, utility bills or hire purchase installments)	Data for this item is not being presented since it is considered unreliable due to low counts (below 20 counts).		[889]	[4.8]

[] estimate based on 20-49 counts. Source: NSO.

3.2.3// UNEMPLOYED PERSONS

A major factor in the fight against poverty and social exclusion is engagement in regular, stable and high-quality employment. There is a direct correlation between being unemployed and being financially poor (income poverty). While at an EU level, the aftermath of the financial crisis resulted in stagnant growth and an anaemic job market, the 2017 National Reform Programme notes that the Maltese economy continued to exhibit a strong economic performance during 2016, successfully recording one of the highest economic growth rates in the European Union (EU). Economic growth, in terms of real Gross Domestic Product (GDP), stood at 5.0% in 2016, on the back of strong growth rates of 8.3% and 7.4% recorded in 2014 and 2015 respectively. Economic growth has been mainly underpinned by increases in exports, supported by strong domestic demand and dynamic investment activity. This favourable economic situation is also reflected in the labour market which reported a decrease in the unemployment rate from 6.4% in 2013 to 4.7% in 2016.

Figure 5: Unemployment Rate 2013-2016



Source: Eurostat.

As employment has undoubtedly a major impact on a person's income, the chances of being AROPE while unemployed tend to be significantly higher. The AROPE for the unemployed in Malta stood at 61.7% in 2016 compared to an EU average of 67.3%. Moreover, from 2013 to 2015, while the AROPE rate has registered an increase from 70.0% in 2013 to 72.1% in 2015, there was a very significant 10.4% decrease in 2016. The AROPE rate for unemployed men in Malta tends to be higher than that for women standing at 63.3% and 56.1% respectively in 2016. However, this disparity has to be read with caution given the higher male activation rate in the labour market.

Table 18: Unemployed Persons At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion in Malta and EU by Sex 2013-2016

Unemployed Persons At-Risk-of-Poverty or Social Exclusion	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU: Total	66.7%	66.9%	66.2%	67.3% ^e
Malta: %	70.0%	69.8%	72.1%	61.7%
EU: Males	70.2%	71.1%	70.1%	71.0% ^e
Malta: Males	73.9%	72.8%	75.0%	63.3%
EU: Females	62.7%	62.2% ^e	61.8% ^e	63.3% ^e
Malta: Females	56.7%	55.5% ^u	58.9% ^u	56.1% ^u

e = estimated. u = low reliability.

Source: Eurostat.

The long-term unemployment (LTU) rate is the “share of persons who have been unemployed for 12 months or more in the total active population³⁹, expressed as a percentage. As per the below table, Malta has registered a relatively lower LTU rate compared to the EU average, diminishing by 1.0% between 2013 and 2016. Long-term unemployed men register a slightly higher rate than female LTU.

Table 19: Long-Term Unemployed Persons in Malta and EU by Sex 2013-2016

Long-Term Unemployment	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU: Total	5.1%	5.0%	4.5%	4.0%
Malta: %	2.9%	2.7%	2.4%	1.9%
Malta: Total Population	5,000	5,000	4,000	4,000
EU: Males	5.1%	5.0%	4.5%	3.9%
Malta: % Males	3.3%	3.2%	3.0%	2.0%
Malta: Total Male Population	4,000	4,000	3,000	2,000
EU: Females	5.1%	5.0%	4.5%	4.1%
Malta: % Females	2.2%	1.8%	1.3%	1.8%
Malta: Total Female Population	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000

Source: Eurostat.

Persons Registering for Work in Malta and Gozo

This indicator measures the number of persons registering for work under Part I and Part II of the unemployment register on a monthly basis by the NSO. In actual terms, the number of people looking for work in Malta and Gozo declined steadily from 7,382 (M: 5,626; F: 1,756) in December 2013 to 3,566 (M: 2,621; F: 945) in December 2016.

³⁹ The total active population (labour force) is defined as the total number of the employed and unemployed population.

Table 20: Persons Registering for Work under Part I and Part II of the Unemployment Register in Malta and Gozo by Sex as at December 2013-2016

Persons registering for work	Dec 2013	Dec 2014	Dec 2015	Dec 2016
Malta and Gozo: Total	7,382	6,992	5,295	3,566
Malta: Males	5,122	4,811	3,519	2,288
Gozo: Males	504	495	459	333
Malta: Females	1,517	1,447	1,090	742
Gozo: Females	239	239	227	203

Source: NSO.

As observed from the table below, the number of people with a disability looking for work has been on the decline with the figure decreasing from 533 in December 2013 to 358 in December 2016. This decline can be attributed to the fact that Malta has specifically promoted the active inclusion of persons with disability due to their higher vulnerability to experience poverty and social exclusion, especially that arising from barriers to employment.

Table 21: Persons with a Disability Registering for Work under Part I and Part II of the Unemployment Register in Malta and Gozo by Sex as at December 2013-2016

Persons with a Disability Registering for Work	Dec 2013	Dec 2014	Dec 2015	Dec 2016
Malta and Gozo: Total	533	493	398	358
Males	444	412	317	276
Females	89	81	81	82

Source: NSO.

Participation in Adult Education (25-64 years)

The Share of Total Population (25-64 years) Participating in Non-Formal Education is calculated from the Labour Force Survey by NSO. This share has been rising steadily from 3.3% in 2013 to 4.1% in 2016. The same progress, however, was not sustained in the Share of Total Population (25-64 years) Participating in Formal Education Activities, where a steady decline was registered from 4.9% in 2013, down to 3.9% in 2016.

Table 22: Participation in Adult Formal and Non-Formal Education (25-64 years) in Malta by Sex 2013-2016

Malta	2013	2014	2015	2016
Share of total population (25-64 years) participating in non-formal education	3.3%	3.3%	3.6%	4.1%
Males	3.1%	3.3%	3.6%	3.6%
Females	3.6%	3.4%	3.6%	4.6%
Share of total population aged (25-64 years) participating in formal education activities	4.9%	5.0%	4.5%	3.9%
Males	5.0%	4.2%	3.9%	3.7%
Females	5.0%	4.8%	4.4%	4.2%

Source: NSO.

3.2.4// PERSONS EXPERIENCING IN-WORK POVERTY

This indicator is defined as the percentage of persons in the total population who declared to be at work [and] who are at-risk-of-poverty i.e. with an equivalised disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold. The In-Work At-Risk-of-Poverty (IWARP) indicator constitutes an important indication of the structural aspects of poverty and social exclusion including disadvantages arising from labour market biases and the quality of employment contract. Thus, this indicator provides recognition that a person may be in poverty or socially excluded despite being economically active. An analysis of the indicators related to IWARP should go beyond the total percentage of the population who are IW but should also analyse other aspects of the labour market, such as the gender bias, work intensity and level of education.

Table 23: In-Work At-Risk-of-Poverty in Malta and EU by Sex and Age (18-64 years) 2013-2016

In-Work At-Risk-of-Poverty (18-64 years)	2013	2014	2015	2016
EU: Total	9.0%	9.6%	9.5%	:
Malta: %	5.9%	5.7%	5.3%	5.7%
EU: Males	9.4%	10.0%	10.2%	:
Malta: Males	7.8%	7.0%	6.6%	7.5%
EU: Females	8.4%	9.1%	8.7%	:
Malta: Females	2.7%	3.6%	3.3%	3.0%

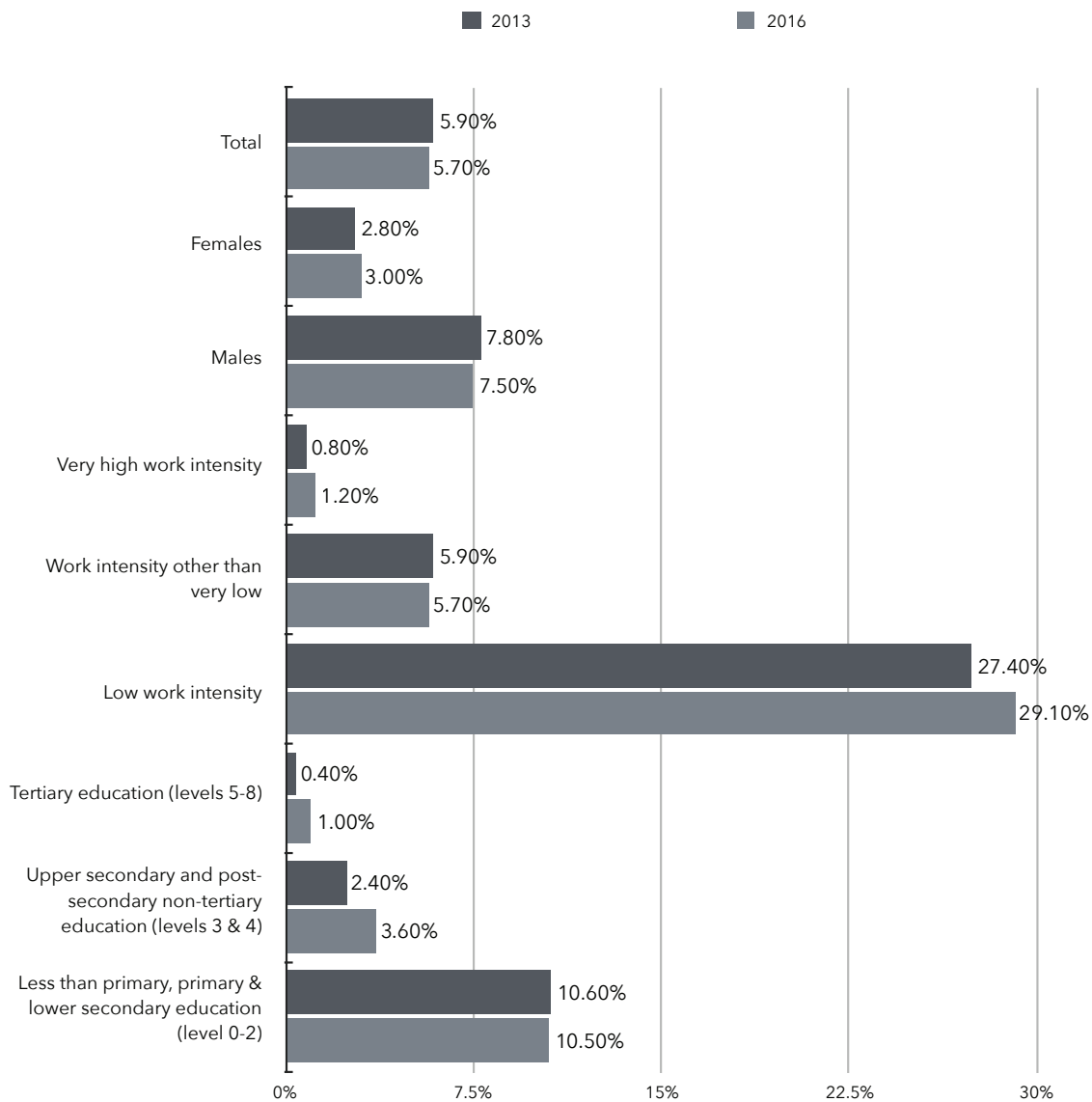
: Not available.

Source: Eurostat.

The in-work poverty rate in Malta stood at 5.3% compared to a higher EU average of 9.5% in 2015. In 2016, Malta registered a rate of 5.7%, while EU IW ARP rates are unavailable. Although the EU has registered a slight increase in the IW ARP rate, in recent years, Malta has registered a marginal decline from 2013. While male workers in Malta are experiencing a fluctuating rate of IW ARP, female workers have seen a gradual decline between 2014-2016.

IW ARP is correlated with the number of hours worked/work intensity, whereby those households with low work intensity experience a higher risk of IW ARP. This indicator is also correlated to the level of educational attainment. There is a substantial decrease in IW ARP among those workers who have achieved an upper secondary and post-secondary education and those who attained a lower than primary, primary and lower secondary education. The IW ARP of tertiary educated workers is practically negligible.

Figure 6: In-Work At-Risk-of-Poverty Rate by Sex, Work Intensity of the Household and Educational Attainment for Persons aged 18 - 64 years 2013-2016



Note: Work Intensity Indicators are based on persons aged 18-59 years.

Source: Eurostat.

Share of Children Attending Formal Childcare

As noted earlier, free childcare services are available for children whose parents are both engaged in formal employment or pursuing activation initiatives, including educational endeavours. The number of children aged 0-3 years attending formal childcare as at December 2016 stood at 3,987. This accounts for 24.9% of all children falling within that age cohort. When the age cohort is reduced to 0-2 years, the share of children attending formal childcare increases to 31.7% (3,811 children).

Table 24: Children Attending Formal Childcare 2013-2016

Age group	2013	2014	2015	2016
0-3 years	11.4%	14.0%	14.0%	24.9%
0-2 years	14.6%	18.4%	17.7%	31.7%

Source: NSO.

During the same year, a total of 153 children (0-3 years) attended free childcare despite the fact that only one of the parents was not employed. This service is available for children residing in households whose yearly income is less than €10,000.


Table 25: Children from Low-Income Families Attending Free Childcare 2013-2016

Children from Low-Income Families Attending Free Childcare	Dec 2013	Dec 2014	Dec 2015	Dec 2016
Number of Children	279	241	134	153

Source: FES (Administrative data).

**Let's continue to stand
up for those who are
vulnerable to being left
out or marginalized.**

Hillary Clinton



CHAPTER 4

**CONCLUSION &
WAY FORWARD**

This report has presented a general overview of the developments sustained in the context of the strategic policy actions put forward in the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion. This progress was evaluated through an analysis of the status of implementation of a number of measures and initiatives falling under the six dimensions of wellbeing, as well as developments registered on a number of statistical indicators.

The analysis presented in this report highlights the positive impact that the national strategic policy had on the quality of life and wellbeing of people, including that of targeted vulnerable groups. As reviewed in Chapter 2, the large majority of actions proposed in this strategic policy have been addressed through the successful implementation of various measures and initiatives. Throughout this phase of implementation, a number of actions proposed in the national strategic policy have been consolidated and or complemented through other measures with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness of the strategy. In view of this, it could be positively asserted that the national strategic policy, in addition to other initiatives undertaken under different policy areas, including the economic sphere, has positively contributed towards the favourable socio-economic situation as indicated by the statistical analysis presented in Chapter 3.

The successful impact of the strategic policy is seen to have been made possible through addressing poverty in an inter-disciplinary manner. Indeed, the strategy has sustained collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders across different policy areas. Through promoting synergy among key stakeholders and ensuring better complementarity between the different dimensions of the strategic policy, the IMC has facilitated its implementation as well as its monitoring and evaluation. With the aim of sustaining the positive impact of the strategy, the IMC aims to further its efforts by enhancing collaboration with a wider range of stakeholders including service providers and beneficiaries, and consolidating the monitoring mechanisms of the policy through the collation and analysis of relevant indicators. For such purpose, the IMC will remain vigilant to emerging issues of concern and keep abreast with research and developments on issues having an impact on people's wellbeing in order to enable the development of evidence based policies and practice. In this process, consideration will be given to assess the impact of the strategic policy and the progress made by taking into account Malta's specific challenges as well as its limited geographic⁴⁰ and population size⁴¹. In line with this, while actual numbers of beneficiaries may look insignificant due to their small numerical value, they may be significant in proportional terms.

The ongoing monitoring and regular evaluation of the strategy should help to highlight emerging needs and realities with the aim of identifying gaps and lacunae in service provision, and developing the necessary services and structures to address these arising demands. The strategic policy thus acknowledges that the way forward to effectively address poverty and social exclusion in the short, medium and long term strongly relies on the institution of evidence-based practice with the aim of promoting greater social and economic justice.

Although this report focuses on the key measures/initiatives undertaken by various government ministries, yet it also duly acknowledges the contribution of the President's Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society as well as that of various NGOs in Malta that are committed towards promoting the different dimensions of wellbeing for the general population, particularly the prospects of vulnerable groups.

40 Malta's area is 316 square kilometers (122 square miles).

41 As at December 2016, Malta's population size was 419, 531.



ANNEXES

ANNEX A

Income and Social Benefits - List of measures/initiatives and projects introduced/enhanced/ongoing during 2014, 2015 and 2016 contributing to the implementation of the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion, and which are being implemented fully or partially by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity.

No	2014
1.	Pensioners whose pension does not exceed the national minimum wage will not be taxable.
2.	An incentive aimed at persons who have been registering for work for more than two years and want to work by introducing a system whereby, instead of terminating the full unemployment benefit the moment such persons start working, the benefit would be decreased gradually over a number of years in order to create a smooth transition from registering as unemployed, to entering the labour market.
3.	In the first year, the beneficiary will retain 65% of the benefit, 45% in the second year and 25% in the third year. The difference will be redirected to a training fund.
4.	Start the process so that over a number of years, and in a gradual manner, the National Minimum Pension would be equivalent to 60% of the national average wage.
5.	Employed widows will benefit from the full widows' pension since the link that currently exists between this pension, income derived from work, and the age of their children will be removed.
6.	Retain the measure by which service pensioners continue to benefit gradually from improvements in the two-thirds pension. As of 2014, the amount of service pension that is not taken into consideration in assessing the social security pension, which is €1,266, will rise by €200, thus amounting to €1,466.
7.	Senior Citizen's Grant - During 2013, the €300 annual allowance was given to individuals aged 78 years or over. As from 2014, this allowance was extended to individuals who are 75 years of age or over.
8.	Exempt elderly persons and persons with a disability from paying the National Insurance Contribution when they employ a live-in carer to help them continue living in their own homes.
9.	Increase the allowance given to children with disability from €16.31 per week to €20 per week.
10.	Incentives to encourage the employment of older persons. ⁴²
11.	Encouraging single parents to get training.
12.	Flusi f'Idejja! - a project for money management awareness both on a personal and family level at the Msida/Birkirkara LEAP Community Services.
13.	Improved guidance and support from existing specialised services to protect citizens from abuses such as usury, rental violations, and fraud.
14.	Drawing up a legislation to specifically address precarious work. ⁴³

42 Measures 10 and 11 are being implemented by MEDE.

43 Measures 14 and 15 are being implemented by MSDC.

15.	Implementation of regulations enacted to address bogus self-employment and the resultant abuse.
16.	Professionals and volunteers worked on a tailored plan of action to support families/individuals experiencing budgeting difficulties as part of the Budgeting Project at the Msida/Birkirkara LEAP Community Services.
No	2015
17.	From this year onwards, the full amount of COLA was granted to pensioners so that they will receive full compensation for the increase in the cost of living.
18.	A one-time additional, non taxable bonus of €35 to be given to all those full-time workers who will not benefit from the reduction in income tax as well as pensioners and all those on social security benefits. This will also be given pro-rate to part-time workers and students.
19.	The introduction of the in-work benefit, which is linked to the concept of work will be paid to those families where both spouses are in employment, have low income and have children up to 23 years of age. This benefit will be calculated on the income after deduction of the social security contributions, and there will be not deduction from any other benefit that the family may be entitled to such as the Children's Allowance.
20.	Those persons receiving Social Assistance for unemployment will be given four months to either join the Youth Guarantee and continue to receive benefits, or keep on registering in which case benefits will stop when one exceed the age of qualification for the Youth Guarantee.
21.	In cases of single parents under the age of 23 who are receiving social assistance for unemployment - this assistance will be paid until the youngest child is one year old. As soon as the child is one year, the mother will be enrolled in the Youth Guarantee and will continue to benefit from social assistance and free childcare. In cases where the younger child is over one year of age she will be given the 4 month chance to join the Youth Guarantee. Should she refuse to enter the Youth Guarantee, the benefits will cease.
22.	New cases of single unmarried parents under the age of 23 years, who apply for social assistance will be accepted and this will be paid on the same conditions (see measures 15 & 16).
23.	As from 1st January 2015, the tapering of benefits shall be introduced. Single parents who enter the labour market will still receive a percentage of their social assistance. In fact during their first year of employment they will be receiving 65%, 45% in the second year and 25% during their third year of employment.
24.	Launching a programme through which by end of February 2015, those who are not sure of their entitlement or are receiving benefits they are not entitled to, will have the possibility to regularise their position. Those who come forward by the stipulated date to verify the benefits due to them, and are found not to be in conformity with the law, will only have to pay a one-time minimal penalty as long as it is not a case of systematic fraud. The penalty will increase if the beneficiary does not come in time or is caught defrauding the Department for Social Security.

25.	As from 1st January 2015, a single parent who receives social assistance and marries or enter into civil union with a person who is employed will no longer lose entitlement to social assistance with immediate effect, but gradually over a period of three years. They will be receiving 65% during their first year, 45% in the second year and 25% during their third year of employment.
26.	As from 1st January 2015 onwards the rate of the maternity leave benefit will be increased and be paid at a rate equivalent to the National Minimum Wage. This means that all women in employment and giving birth will benefit from an increase of more than €6 per week in their Maternity Leave benefit.
27.	The Senior Citizen's Grant (€300 annual allowance) will still be given to elderly aged 75 years or over.
28.	In order to correct the anomalies created in the social security pension, and which affected thousands of works, among them former Shipyard employees, as from 2015, the peg with Government salaries will no longer be applied at the point where the person retired from work but at the point when the company closed down or the post no longer was in place, and therefore the comparability will be based on the collective agreement currently in force. The anomaly was created when upon the closing down of the company or when their post became suppressed, their pension was calculated on the same salary structure of Government employees. In view of this, all pensions which were paid according to this system will be reviewed.
29.	Service Pensioners shall continue to benefit, in a gradual manner, from the improvement in their two-thirds pension whereby an increase of €200 will not be taken into account in the calculation of their social security pension.
30.	As from 1st January 2015, persons who are still in employment but do not have enough contributions to qualify for a pension will be given the opportunity to pay up to five years in missing contributions, so that they improve their pension. These years do not need to be the five years preceding the claim.
31.	As from 2015, those retirees aged between 62 and 74 years and do not have a pension will receive a bonus of €200 if they have paid more than five years contributions, and €100 if they have paid contributions for more that one year but less than five years. This measure aimed at bringing justice to a number of workers in particularly women, who in the past spent many years out of work either due to the laws applicable or the prevailing social situation during that time, and hence do not have a pension.
32.	During 2015, an income supplement of €400 per child (€200 from the 4th child up) will be given to low income families to combat child poverty.
33.	A project to carry out structural works in private homes shall be initiated in order to allow disabled persons to continue residing in their own homes.
34.	Improve respite services in specialised residential centres, in order to give relief to parents of children with a disability.. This will also include the possibility whereby families will be able to provide this service on a basis similar to that of fostering.
35.	Extend the services provided by day care centres for persons with a disability.
36.	A full disability pension shall be given to disabled persons even when they enter the labour market irrelevant of their income.
37.	During 2015, the sum of €500,000 was invested for the documentation scanning of public documents by persons with a disability. This initiative will create 80 job opportunities for persons with a disability in Gozo.
38.	The government is working to identify a centre where minor immigrants, whether accompanied or not, may be placed in a more dignified manner.

No	2016
39.	Extension of the in-work benefit.
40.	Guaranteed National Minimum Pension.
41.	Married couples who receive the minimum pension for married persons and who will not benefit from measure 35 will be given increased payments beyond the COLA to a total amount of €4.15 per week.
42.	The full Widows Pension will be paid to those pensioners who were entitled to a retirement pension but had to renounce it on the death of a spouse.
43.	Persons who are in receipt of the Disability Pension will be paid the Age Pension rate as soon as they reach the age of 60 years without the need to submit an application.
44.	To continue to pay the Senior Citizen's Grant to elderly people aged 75 years or over who are still living in the community.
45.	As from 2016, the children's income will not be considered in the means testing for Social Assistance purposes.
46.	The Sickness Allowance will be paid to single persons who cannot work due to mental or terminal illness, and who live with their parents who are pensioners.
47.	The National Commission for Persons with Disability (CRPD) will be setting up a call centre to improve the services it provides to persons with disability and their families. Families wanting to care for young people and adults with disability will be given support through the Sharing Lives scheme. Above all, the support given to persons with disability will be enhanced through the Empowerment Programme intended for disabled persons wishing to live independent lives as well as to provide improved respite services.
48.	The "Ghaqal id-Dar" project.

ANNEX B

Employment - List of measures/initiatives and projects (including EU co-financed projects) introduced/enhanced/ongoing during 2014, 2015 and 2016 contributing to the implementation of the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion, and which are being implemented fully or partially by the Ministry for Education and Employment.

No	2014
49.	Youth Guarantee Scheme.
50.	Work in Gozo for Gozitans.
51.	Circular 2/2014 - Contracts for the Provision of Care, Security and Cleaning Services ⁴⁴ .
52.	Circulars 8,9,12 & 16/2014 - Blacklisting of Economic Operators from the award of Public Contracts after being found guilty of offences in breach of the provisions of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act.
53.	Circular 27/2014 - New Regulations Regarding the Award of Service Contracts within the Public Administration.
54.	Preparation of a Charter on Employees Rights ⁴⁵ .
55.	Develop the Framework Document for the Control of Work-Related Stress.
No	2015
56.	Free Childcare.
57.	Access to Employment.
58.	Training Aid Framework (2).
59.	Work Programme.
60.	Community Work Scheme.
61.	Two incentives to encourage people with disabilities to seek employment.
62.	
63.	Circular 4/2015 - New Regulations Regarding the Award of Service Contracts within the Public Administration.
64.	Revision of Employment and Industrial Relations Act (EIRA).
65.	Engagement of Inspectors.
No	2016
66.	Investing in skills.
67.	Training pays.
68.	Work exposure and traineeships.
69.	More work-based learning as part of the MCAST apprenticeship scheme.

⁴⁴ Measures 51, 52, 53, 63, 72, 73, 74, 75 and 76 are being implemented by MFIN

⁴⁵ Measures 54, 55, 64, 65, and 77 are being implemented by MSDC.

70.	Community Work Scheme and Document Management.
71.	Work and Training schemes in Gozo.
72.	Circular 4/2016 - Award Criteria With Respect To Security, Cleaning, Clerical and Care Worker Services Contracts.
73.	Circular 6/2016 - Duration of Contracts And Conditions Of Work With Respect To Security, Cleaning, Clerical And Care Worker Services Contracts.
74.	Procurement Policy Note 25 - Award criteria with respect to Security, Cleaning, Clerical and Care Worker Services.
75.	New Public Procurement Regulations.
76.	Reserved Contracts.
77.	Publishing and distribution of Your Employment Rights Charter.

ANNEX C

Education - List of measures/initiatives and projects (including EU co-financed projects) introduced/enhanced/ongoing during 2014, 2015 and 2016 contributing to the implementation of the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion, and which are being implemented fully or partially by the Ministry for Education and Employment

No	2014
78.	Free childcare centres.
79.	Breakfast clubs.
80.	Incentives for employers who offer work placements and apprentices.
81.	Tablets for Year 4 students.
82.	Professional Staff Development, Training and Quality Assurance for Adult Educators in the Community.
83.	Students' stipends increase to include Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) pro-rata.
84.	Stipends for students who repeat an academic year.
85.	The Aqra Miegħi programme to encourage reading.
86.	Government-run childcare services.
87.	Klabb 3-16 and Skola Sajf.
88.	Alternative Learning Programme (ALP).
89.	Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta.
90.	Publication of 3 workbooks for year 4, 5 and 6 regarding growing up topics in the primary for PSCD teachers.
91.	One to one career guidance sessions.
92.	Setting the stage for Budding Rockstarts.
No	2015
93.	Students' stipends increase to include Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) pro-rata as from 1st January 2015 as well as the additional bonus pro-rata.
94.	All students' maintenance grants are exempt from income tax.
95.	Higher Priority to Mathematics, Science and ICT in secondary schools.
96.	New vocational subjects.
97.	Introduction of Design and Technology, Home Economics, Art and Music to Year 7 (Form 1) students.
98.	An increase of Physical Education lessons.

99.	MCAST will continue to strengthen and widen the scope of the apprenticeship scheme whilst introducing new forms of work based learning at different levels.
100.	The establishment of the Youth Village.
101.	A workbook for all Form 5 students, where objectives and outcomes related to sexual relationship education (SRE) are also highlighted.
102.	Four day training course organised in collaboration with the Health Promotion Unit for Education Officers and Heads of Department of Science, Religion and PSCD of both state and non state schools.
103.	A day seminar for the general public on issues related to sexuality in collaboration with the Health Promotion Unit.
104.	Training regarding sexuality and relationships issues for State and non state heads of school.
105.	Ongoing training for PSCD and Religion teachers in the form of in set courses on different issues related to SRE, such as, the serialization of children, pornography, masturbation, sexual orientations, sexuality and the Church.
106.	Career Exposure.
107.	Increase in Personnel in Student Services Department (SSD).
No	2016
108.	Child Care centres.
109.	Paid Study Leave for teachers (Sabbatical leave).
110.	Continuation of the development of the Youth Village.
111.	Outreach and Detached Work for Youths.
112.	Stipends to students applying under the maturity clause.
113.	Screening programme entitled 'Lenti fuq l-lżvilupp ta' Wliedna'.
114.	Agreement with University of Cambridge.
115.	Prince's Trust Programme.
116.	Revision of Klabb 3-16 programmes.
117.	New School in Gżira - Ġem 16+.
118.	Transformation of the Foundation College, Technical College and University College at MCAST.
119.	Sports facilities in Youth Village.
120.	Updating the curriculum through the Learning Outcomes Framework with special emphasis to sexuality even in relation to internet use, eg. sexting.
121.	Training for Church primary teachers who are obliged to teach SRE at primary level of education.

No	EU co-financed projects
122.	Core Competencies Online Assessment Tool [European fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals (TCNs)].
123.	Reading and Spelling Software [European fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals (TCNs)].
124.	Language Learning and Parental Support for Integration [European fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals (TCNs)].
125.	Design of Learning Outcomes Framework (LOF), associated Learning and Assessment programmes and related Training (ESF 1.228).

ANNEX D

Health and Environment - List of measures/initiatives and projects (including EU co-financed projects) introduced/enhanced/ongoing during 2014, 2015 and 2016 contributing to the implementation of the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion, and which are being implemented fully or partially by the Ministry for Health.

No	2014
126.	The opening of two acute wards by the end of 2015. These wards will accommodate 68 new beds by the end of 2015.
127.	An action plan was formulated to improve the services offered by Mount Carmel Hospital, the Young People's Unit and other mental health services. Some mental health services will be extended in the community.
No	2015
128.	Further increase the efficiency in the use of operating theatres to ultimately increase the total number of operations performed.
129.	A plan to deal with the exigencies in the health sector by increasing the number of beds in our acute hospital. The formulation of protocols and other systems will ultimately increase efficiency. Inter-sectoral work with the private sector will help to overcome the challenge of an ageing population.
130.	New stock control practices which will decrease the fragmentation of stocks that characterises the current process, hence improving stock management.
131.	Development of a Health System Performance Assessment Framework.
132.	The Food and Nutrition Policy and Action Plan for 2015-2020.
133.	National Strategy for Diabetes 2016-2020.
134.	Cervical cancer screening will be introduced in 2015. This is one of the action plans set in the National Cancer Plan.
135.	Healthy weight programmes will be offered for those overweight persons suffering from diabetes.
136.	The government will invest in the modernization of existent health centres and the building of a new health centre for the residents of Żurrieq and nearby villages.
137.	Opening of the new Sir Anthony Mamo Oncology Centre.
138.	Investment in equipment and services as recommended by the experts from various specialities.
139.	Three national surveys are being conducted by different entities: the European Health Interview Survey (together with a food consumption survey), a study about diabetes and a survey about sexual health.
140.	Increase the number of surgical procedures to be able to perform various surgical procedures during the weekend.
141.	Develop a plan to extend secondary and tertiary care services in the community, outside Mater Dei Hospital.

No	2016
142.	Implement the National Health System Strategy.
143.	Reduction of waiting lists for operations.
144.	Introduce new systems with regards to bed management at Mater Dei Hospital.
145.	Renovation at Karen Grech Hospital.
146.	Develop a new rehabilitation hospital.
147.	A new dermatology centre with 12 beds (inpatient).
148.	Address the out of stock medicines issue.
149.	Renovation will be carried out at Kirkop Health Centre.
150.	Enhance the services at Mount Carmel Hospital.
151.	Develop a Charter of Patients Rights and an Act on Organ Donation.
152.	Provide primary healthcare through ACCESS Centres.
153.	Upgrade the Paola Health Centre through ERDF Funds.
154.	Free medicines for diabetic patients.
155.	Free medicines for patients with rare conditions.
156.	Introduce a Mobile Sexual Health Unit.
157.	Implement the National Strategy for Diabetes 2016-2020.
158.	Launch a National Cancer Plan.
159.	Conduct research on obesity.
160.	Setting up an Inter-sectorial Advisory Council on healthy lifestyles and wellbeing for the prevention of non communicable diseases.
161.	ESF Project in collaboration with WHO to determine the socio-economic determinants of health.

ANNEX E

Social Services - List of measures/initiatives and projects (including EU co-financed projects) introduced/enhanced/ongoing during 2014, 2015 and 2016 contributing to the implementation of the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion, and which are being implemented fully or partially by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity.

No	2014
162.	Publish a Green Paper for consultation regarding a national strategy against poverty and social exclusion. After that, in 2014, the strategy would become Government Policy.
163.	Launch of the National Standards for Residential Services for Persons with Disability.
164.	Reform in long-term care assessment.
165.	LEAP Media interventions.
166.	Measures taken at Aġenzija Appoġġ to tackle waiting list.
167.	Measures taken at Aġenzija Sedqa to tackle waiting lists.
168.	Promoting the professionalism of social welfare employees and encourage their retention and progression.
169.	Re-evaluate Public Private Partnerships and other forms of market based welfare systems.
No	2015
170.	Setting up the Inter-Ministerial Administrative Committee on Disability (IACD) for a more holistic approach with regards to Disability Services offered by the State.
171.	Capacity building (6 new assessors, 2 research officers and 1 research analyst were recruited) within the Department for Social Welfare Standards.
No	2016
172.	Developing a Hub for Persons with Disability.
173.	Setting up of an Inter-Ministerial Inter-Disciplinary Professional Board on Disability (IIPBD).
174.	Enrichment of community services.
175.	Forecasting, budgetary planning and allocation.
176.	Provision of respite services at Casa Leone XIII in St. Julian's, Villa San Lawrenz in Gozo, and St. Elizabeth Home in Mtarfa.
177.	Provision of night shelter services at Dar Padova in Ghajnsielem, Gozo and Casa Francesco in Santa Venera.
178.	Setting up the Dementia Day Care Centre at Dar Padova in Ghajnsielem, Gozo.
No	EU co-financed projects
179.	LEAP - Building the future together: Promoting Social Mobility (ESF3.234).
180.	Capacity Building in Care for the Elderly and Persons with Disability (ESF4.242).
181.	Enhancing Human Capital through the Regulation of Social Care (ESF4.249).

ANNEX F

Social Welfare Services (Children and Young People) - List of measures/initiatives and projects (including EU co-financed projects) introduced/enhanced/ongoing during 2014, 2015 and 2016 contributing to the implementation of the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion, and which are being implemented fully or partially by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity.

No	2014
182.	Embark for Life Programme - This programme envisages the integration of young people into the labour market. It empowers young persons in acquiring skills, which would enable them to get into mainstream education and/or employment.
183.	Implementation of the Be Smart Online service.
184.	Various projects at the Cottonera LEAP Community Service.
185.	Improvements in the Kids Point project.
186.	The 12 to 14 Project and 12 to 14 Summer Project to offer a space for young people between the age of 12 and 14 years to express their creativity and feelings and attain social skills.
187.	Outreach within the community by LEAP Centres.
188.	The Colours of Life project at the Cottonera LEAP Community Services.
189.	Proġett Tagħlim at the Cottonera LEAP Community Services.
190.	Proġett Familja at the Cottonera LEAP Community Services.
191.	The Qawsalla project at the Cottonera LEAP Community Services.
192.	Homework clubs at various LEAP Community Centres.
193.	The project We Are Young at the Msida/Birkirkara LEAP Community Services.
194.	The Literacy Club in partnership with the Third World Group (TWG) at the Valletta LEAP Community Service.
195.	The Pre-Teens and Teens project at the Valletta LEAP Community Service.
196.	Mentoring at the Valletta LEAP Community Service.
197.	The Butterfly Centre at the Qawra LEAP Community Service.
198.	The project Dawra Durella at the Qawra LEAP Community Service.
199.	Sessions at Summer Schools at St. Paul's Bay (including Qawra and Burmarrad).
200.	The opening of a residential home for teenage girls.
201.	Informative sessions at St. Paul's Bay (including Qawra and Burmarrad).
202.	The opening of two Youth Hubs ⁴⁶ .
No	2015
203.	The benefit of leave days granted in case of adoption of children will be extended to be the same length as that granted to cases of maternity.
204.	Implementing a more efficient Child Protection Service (CPS) system in working with high-risk children and youth.

⁴⁶ Being implemented by MEDE.

205.	The Youth Exchange project at the Cottonera LEAP Community Services.
206.	The project Prima Klassi at the Cottonera LEAP Community Services.
207.	The project Primi Passi at the Cottonera LEAP Community Services.
208.	The Community Workshop at the Cottonera LEAP Community Services.
209.	Youth Forum at the Valletta LEAP Community Service.
210.	Home Based Family Therapy at the Qawra LEAP Community Service.
No	2016
211.	The Children's Project at the Valletta LEAP Community Service.
212.	The project Alternative Youth Entertainment (AYE) at the Msida/Birkirkara LEAP Community Services.
213.	The Mums & Tots project at the Qawra LEAP Community Centre.
214.	Mental health support group at the Qawra LEAP Community Centre.
215.	Marital separation support group at the Qawra LEAP Community Centre.

ANNEX G

Social Welfare Services (Elderly) - List of measures/initiatives and projects (including EU co-financed projects) introduced/enhanced/ongoing during 2014, 2015 and 2016 contributing to the implementation of the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion, and which are being implemented fully or partially by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity.

No	2014
216.	To pay the full pension to the elderly who choose to continue working beyond retirement age.
217.	Allocation of funds for the extension of the Home Help service.
218.	The opening of two new day centres for the elderly in Birgu and Balzan.
219.	The government in partnership with the private sector will improve the Telecare service through new technology.
No	2016
220.	The Carers Pension and the Social Assistance for Carers are to be revised and amalgamated within one framework.
221.	Increase the number of credited years entitlement for pension purposes to those who had to stop working due to child/ren bearing and rearing.
222.	Encourage people to strengthen their competencies, skills and knowledge as much as possible without the impact of not having enough contributions paid which may affect negatively their entitlement of a retirement pension.
223.	Incentivise gainfully occupied persons to stay as long as possible in the labour market
224.	Increase the rate of pension of a number of persons who used to pay a high rate of social security contributions when they were employed but then became self-occupied with a lesser income with the consequence of having a lesser rate of pension.
225.	Increase the rate of the Retirement Pension by including another €200 to be deducted from the original service pension.
226.	Live in carer Pilot Project - A fund will be set to help families who care for an elderly dependent who needs constant supervision so as to subsidise the wages payable to qualified carers employed on a full-time or part-time basis.
227.	Setup an Authority to implement minimum standards in residential homes for the elderly.

ANNEX H

Social Welfare Services (Other Vulnerable Groups) - List of measures/initiatives and projects (including EU co-financed projects) introduced/enhanced/ongoing during 2014, 2015 and 2016 contributing to the implementation of the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion, and which are being implemented fully or partially by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity.

No	2014
228.	Launch the National Policy for the Rights of Persons with a Disability.
229.	Enforcement of the Persons with a Disability (Employment Act) - Cap. 210.
230.	Major amendments made in the Equal Opportunities (Persons with a Disability) Act - Cap. 413.
231.	Guidelines regarding Access for All Design Standards in the Built Environment.
232.	Amend the Equality Bill so as to enforce such forms of abuse through the establishment of a Commission for Human Rights ⁴⁷ .
233.	Rehabilitation and re-integration of released offenders through social work services offered by the Intake and Family Support Services (IFSS) and Community Services within FSWS.
234.	Providing individualised guidance and empowerment programmes for lone parent households.
235.	Developing new forms of deterrent measures against any form of abuse on the elderly. These were later incorporated in the Maltese Criminal Code through the Commissioner for Older Persons Act, 2016.
No	2015
236.	Strategy for the Reception of Asylum Seekers and Irregular Migrants ⁴⁸ .
237.	Reception Conditions Regulations under the Refugees Act (Cap. 240).
238.	Strengthen the integration of TCNs in Malta through: i) a dedicated website and publications; ii) the launch of a Framework Document entitled Towards a National Migrant Integration Strategy 2015-2020; and iii) the setting up of an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Integration and the a Forum on Integration Affairs.
239.	Addressing addictive behaviour through the consolidation of preventive, outreach and rehabilitative services.
No	2016
240.	Agreement between Jobs+, the Chamber of Commerce and Malta Employers Association so that companies would be more committed in employing persons with a disability.
241.	Introduce the Bill of Rights (19 new rights for persons with a disability).
242.	Launch the Maltese Sign Language Act.
243.	Launch the Persons within the Autism Spectrum (Empowerment) Act.
244.	Launch the National Strategy on the Rights of Persons with a Disability.
245.	Combat violence against women/gender based violence.

47 Measures 232, 238 and 245 are being implemented by MSDC.

48 Measures 236 and 237 are being implemented by MHAS.

ANNEX I

Housing - List of measures/initiatives and projects (including EU co-financed projects) introduced/enhanced/ongoing during 2014, 2015 and 2016 contributing to the implementation of the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion, and which are being implemented fully or partially by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity.

No	2014
246.	The Housing Authority will put on the market a number of apartments in shell or semi finished form at subsidised prices.
247.	The Housing Authority is undertaking an exercise to revise social leases in line with clear criteria and a rental index which the Authority will establish for families and individuals.
No	2015
248.	In partnership with the Ministry for Transport and Infrastructure, the Housing Authority will be carrying out repair works in housing estates. General improvements and maintenance will also be carried out in residential property rented by the Government or the Authority.
249.	The Housing Authority will resume the project of installing lifts in government-owned blocks.
250.	Embellishment work in eleven blocks within three areas (St. Paul's Bay, Paola and Senglea) by the Housing Authority.
No	2016
251.	Embellishment works to be carried out in Hamrun Housing Estate by the Housing Authority.
252.	Embellishment works to be carried out in Ta' Ġiorni Housing Estate by the Housing Authority.
253.	Embellishment works to be carried out in Pembroke Housing Estate by the Housing Authority.
254.	Building of new Housing Estates by the Housing Authority.
255.	The Housing Authority will be increasing the grant given to residents who are entitled to be beneficiaries of two existing schemes - 'Subsidy on adaptation works in residences occupied by owners or tenants' and 'Subsidy on adaptation works related to dangerous structures in private dwellings held on lease or emphyteusis'.

ANNEX J

Culture - List of measures/initiatives and projects introduced/enhanced/ongoing during 2014, 2015 and 2016 contributing to the implementation of the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion, and which are being implemented fully or partially by the Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government.

No	Projects by Heritage Malta
256.	Reduced Rates for local groups and local councils, and assistance for local cultural heritage displays.
No	Projects by Arts Council Malta
257.	Creative Communities Fund.
258.	Kreattiv.
259.	Happy Jam.
260.	President's Award for Creativity.
261.	L-ikla t-tajba.
262.	Create 2020 Strategy.
263.	Curatorial School.
264.	MCAST projection mapping.
265.	Darba Wahda.
266.	KantaKantun.
267.	The Box.
268.	Audit on Theatre Spaces.
269.	National Cultural Participation Survey.
270.	Culture Pass (in collaboration with the Culture Directorate).
No	Projects by Valletta 18
271.	Valletta Forum.
272.	Ondamarela.
273.	Naqsam il-MUŻA.
274.	Kultura TV.
275.	Sounds Out Loud.
276.	Ohloq Kultura.