Country Report Malta

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A. Key data sources and responsible institutions

The main institution responsible for the collection and dissemination of data related to migration is the National Statistics Office of Malta (NSO). The NSO conducts the 2005 Census of Population and Housing as well as several surveys, including the Labour Force Survey (LFS), the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) and the survey Tourstat. The NSO also derives data from administrative registers conducted by governmental authorities. The NSO maintains databases with details on all births and deaths registered in Malta since 1996. The former is based on information provided by the Public Registry while the latter is updated through annual inputs from the Health Information Department within the Ministry of Health, Elderly and Community (MHEC). Data on returned migrants and foreign settlers collected by the customs department are forwarded to the NSO. However, the data cover only a relatively small share of returning citizens and foreign nationals intending to permanently settle in Malta and therefore it was not used anymore for statistical purposes in 2008. The NSO also produces Education Statistics which provide annual information on the number of teaching staff and school children in Malta.

The NSO is the authority in charge to provide the data requested by the EU Regulation on migration statistics and for this reason has to co-operate closely with the governmental departments managing registers for their administrative purposes.

The Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs (MJHA) is responsible for several registers, which are maintained by different departments: The Department of Citizenship and Expatriates Affairs (DCEA) keeps, the Resident Permits Database, as well as the Naturalisation Register while the Office of the Refugee Commissioner (REFCOM) holds a database with all applications for subsidiary and refugee status. The Police Headquarter keeps the ID card database including data on all ID card holders. The Immigration Unit within the Police Headquarter collects and compiles CIREFI statistics. The data are only available as aggregate statistics. The Public Registry, which is under the responsibility of the Civil Registration Department also in the MJHA, records all births, marriages and deaths occurring in Malta for both Maltese citizens and foreigners.

The Common Database (CDB) is maintained by the Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA), a semi-private IT company that works closely with Ministries and the Government. This database combines the information held by several governmental registers.

The Electoral Register, which is completely linked to the ID card register, is kept by the Electoral Department of the Office of the Prime Minister.

The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) is in charge of issuing work permits for foreigners who intend to work in Malta, and keeps the related Work Permits Database.
B. Historical evolution of the national data collection system/ data collection practices and policies on data collection

Data collection practices in Malta have undergone considerable change in the last decade or so, due mainly Malta’s accession to the European Union in 2004: EU accession implied compliance with European data collection standards, including regular provision of certain key data to Eurostat, establishment of new datasets and participation in European survey programmes and harmonisation of national definitions with common European standards. These changes affected data collection in general. In regard to data on migration, accession implied major changes of relevant legislation in regard to the position of citizens of EU member states which in turn has implications for migration estimates based on disembarkation cards and statistics on residence and work permits.¹ In addition, the establishment of an asylum procedure in the early 2000s and the collection of detailed statistics on asylum applications and decisions were also linked to the Malta’s accession to the EU. Finally, with accession, Malta also started to collect statistics on apprehensions, refusals and returns (CIRIFI statistics).

In the past, all foreigners arriving in Malta were obliged to fill in disembarkation cards, which contained variables such as sex, age, nationality, country of residence, purpose of visit and length of stay. With Malta’s accession to the European Union, EU-citizens have been exempted from filling in these forms.

Until 1995 the Department of Labour collected reliable data on emigration (differentiated by age, sex, occupation, socio-economic group, month, locality of previous residence and country of future permanent residence), returned migrants (differentiated by age, sex, month, locality of settlement, country of last residence, duration of stay in previous country), and foreign settlers (differentiated by age, sex, locality of settlement, nationality and country of last residence). After 1995 the data were no longer available and the NSO requested the data from certain countries and received full collaboration from the British and Australian High Commissions which are the main sending countries to Malta. However, these data are not available anymore since 2000 and 2003 respectively (NSO, 2007: 6-7).

In response to the increased demand for comprehensive, up-dated and accurate administrative information on the population for administrative purpose, a common database (CDB) was established in 1996, which is based on the information from a series of administrative registers. However, it exclusively serves administrative purposes (see in more detail below). Thus, there is no comprehensive immigration database as such in Malta and information and statistics on migration have to be drawn from different types of databases.

To fulfil Malta’s obligations for the statistical data provision under EU legislation several new databases are currently being developed and existing databases re-organised in order to comply with EU requirements. A database on Residence Permits was established in 2008. Similarly, the database on refugees and asylum

¹ The Maltese government, however, negotiated a 7 year moratorium on access of EU citizens to the Maltese labour market. Hence, EU citizens remain subject to work permit requirements (Thompson 2006: 5)
seekers kept by the Refugee Commission is currently re-organised to be able to produce additional variables currently not extracted from the database such as age and sex of asylum applicants (see also below, section 5). Finally the NSO has started to develop a Statistical Population Register derived from individual data taken from the 2005 Census and updated by collecting information from a large set of administrative registers. This tool has been exclusively developed for statistical purposes.

C. Coordination and linking

The most important identifier for persons residing in Malta is the ID number. This number is issued to persons by the Public Registry either at birth for every newborn in Malta or when registering for an ID card for those born abroad. The ID number contains two digits for the person’s year of birth or first registration preceded by a sequential number composed of four digits. When the ID card is issued between age 14 and 16 or six months after arrival in Malta a letter is added after these 6 digits. Letters M and G were given to those born in Malta or Gozo, the two main islands, before 2000. Since 2000 these letters are replaced by L and H respectively. The letter A is attributed to all persons not holding the Maltese citizenship. When a person is naturalised, he or she will be attributed a new ID number with a link to the previous one.

This unique identifier allows for the linkage of different administrative registers, such as the ID card database, the Electoral Register, and the Work Permits Register. The link with the Residence Permit Database cannot be ensured as the ID number is missing for a large number of foreigners in that database. This problem is currently investigated jointly by NSO and DCEA. The DCEA has introduced a specific file number for identifying foreigners and linking data within the Residence Permit database.

The CDB, first introduced in 1996, aims to produce a repository for commonly used information in the Public Domain, to be shared between government departments and to facilitate the one-stop shop concept in government departments. The CDB is designed as a basic reference tool and can be integrated in other database systems (e.g. the social security database, policy records). One major effect of the CDB is the promotion of common data collection standards across different administrative datasets. The CDB is accessible for governmental departments only but is considered as not fully reliable by the NSO, which does not use CDB data to update its Statistical Population Register.

The database kept by the Refugee Commissioner (REFCOM) does not include the ID number of persons, although asylum applicants and refugees are eligible to obtain an ID Card. The REFCOM uses its own unique reference number which is retained for subsequent applications.

The Statistical Population Register kept by the NSO is updated annually with information collected from several administrative databases by using the ID number.\(^2\)

\(^2\) The linkage with the Residence Permit database by using the ID number is not always possible.
D. Concepts and definitions

In the last recent census (2005) the NSO used the concept of usual place of residence which is defined as the geographical place where the enumerated person usually resides, which is the same as, or different from, the place where she/he actually is at the time of the Census; or it may be his/her legal residence. A person’s residence should be that at which she/he spends most nights (NSO, 2007b: xvi).

A long-term international migrant is defined as a person who moves to a country other than that of his/her usual residence for a period of at least 12 months so that, in effect, the country of destination becomes his/her new country of residence (NSO, 2007b: xvi).

In the census 2005 Maltese residents were defined as all persons who have been living in Malta, or intended to reside in Malta, for a period of at least twelve months (as on the census reference date 27 November 2005). This includes all Maltese citizens who are permanent resident in Malta, all foreign citizens (including returned migrants) who have been living in Malta for at least twelve months, Maltese residents who are temporary absent (for less than 12 months), persons who normally reside in Malta and who are studying or undergoing treatment abroad, military, naval and diplomatic personnel residing abroad, as well as refugees. In turn the definition of Maltese residents does not include emigrants, persons who have been living abroad and do not satisfy the conditions mentioned above, foreign military, naval and diplomatic personnel temporarily residing in Malta, asylum seekers and other foreign civilians who are not listed in the categories above (NSO, 2007b: xvi – xvii).

In the Census 2005 citizenship and nationality are used similarly, and defined as the legal affiliation of an individual to the population of a sovereign state (NSO, 2007b: xvii), even if the terms citizenship and nationality are often used differently in Malta where nationality could have a wider meaning than citizenship.

A frequently used concept in Maltese statistics is the concept of returned migrants which refers to persons of Maltese descent who emigrated from Malta. This concept of returned immigrants reflects the importance of emigration in recent Maltese history: Between 1945 and 1979 about 140,000 persons emigrated from Malta. Beginning in the 1970s, thousands of the emigrants started to return to Malta (Amore, 2005: 6 – 8).

E. Availability of data

E.1. Core demographic data on immigrants and migration control

E.1.a Population Stocks and General Demographic Characteristics

In Malta there are different databases which give information about the population stock, however, the methodologies of data collection as well as the appropriate variables differ from source to source and each database is subject to certain constraints as described in the following.
The last **Census of Population and Housing** carried out in 2005 is a very reliable source for information on population stocks including a broad range of demographic characteristics. The census aims to include all persons with usual residence in Malta (see section 4). Asylum seekers are explicitly not meant to be counted, irrespective of the length of stay, while persons with a humanitarian status might have been covered by the census. According to the NSO the census attained coverage of 98 per cent, and hence, can be seen as very comprehensive. The information gathered through the census also serves as a basis for the Statistical Population Register managed by the NSO for statistical purposes only. The census collected data on **citizenship and country of birth** of the respondents. If a respondent holds the Maltese citizenship the person also has to state how it was acquired. Furthermore, the census included a question about the **place of residence of the respondents one year ago and five years ago respectively**, which could be an indicator whether a person has immigrated to Malta. Moreover, a broad range of demographic and socioeconomic information such as education, occupation, gender and marital status were also collected.

Since 1996 the NSO maintains a database on all **births** occurring in Malta based on information received from the Public Ministry. It includes information on name, ID number, date of birth, sex, as well as the ID number and nationality of the parents, the maiden surname of the mother, occupation of the father, legitimacy and locality of the residence of the parents (NSO, 2007: 15).

The NSO also maintains a database on **deaths** registered since 1996 which is updated annually with information from the Health Information Department within the Ministry of Health, Elderly and Community (MHEC). This register has a very good coverage and is linked to all major registers for updating purposes. The register contains the following personal information: ID number, name, surname, date of birth, sex and residential address of the deceased (NSO, 2007: 15).

The **Public Registry** records all births, deaths and marriages occurring in Malta and assigns an ID number to every newborn or new registered person. This civil registration is in place since 1863 and the data are available in electronic format since 1973.

The **ID card database** was established in 1976 following the ID Card Act. According to the act, all persons aged 14 or over who have been residing in Malta for at least six months are entitled to hold an ID card but it is compulsory only for all Maltese citizens aged 16 and over. Asylum applicants and persons granted a humanitarian status (which includes many asylum applicants) don’t necessarily have an ID card but are eligible to apply for an ID card after six months. The ID card pin is identical to the ID number assigned at birth or at first registration by the Public Registry. However, as indicated above, an additional letter indicates whether the person has been born in Malta (letter M or L) or Gozo (letter G or H). For foreigners, the letter “A” indicates that the holder is not a Maltese citizen. The ID card gives its holder access to various government and private services in Malta such as health, banking, postal deliveries and all government services. Therefore, the number of persons not holding an ID card is likely to be negligible. The ID card database includes all information needed for issuing an ID card, comprising name and surname of the holder, ID
number, portrait photo, residential address, date of birth, place of birth and nationality (NSO, 2007: 12).

As the ID card database is not systematically linked to usual residence in Malta, the number of ID card holders registered in the database is likely to be higher than the actual number of residents in Malta, due to the fact that Maltese emigrants keep their ID card. However, in regard to non-nationals, differences between census data and data from the ID card register may also have different reasons: According to the information obtained from the Electoral Office the number of foreigners in the ID card register is about 19,000, while the number of foreigners according to the Census 2005 (NSO, 2007b: 85) was about 12,000. To some degree, the difference between census data and data from the ID cards register of about 7,000 is likely to be due to undeclared departures, not least since the ID card is generally valid for six years by which time many foreigners only temporarily staying in Malta but in possession of an ID card may have left. However, to a significant degree the difference may also be due to asylum seekers and persons with a humanitarian status who have obtained an ID card and thus are recorded in the ID card register but not counted by the census.

The Electoral Register holds a list of all persons who possess a Maltese ID card and who are eligible to vote in national or local elections in Malta. This leads to another incentive for persons not to de-register because emigrants (who reside abroad for more than 12 month) would lose their right to vote in general elections. The register is updated twice a year, in March and October, and made available publicly for checking purposes. Persons are deleted through court intervention if they have not stayed in Malta for at least six months during the last two years (Cantisani and Greco, 2006: 541).

The Common Database is intended as a comprehensive population reference system for administrative purposes and is accessible for government services only. It is updated on a daily basis. The CDB contains personal information, information on family relationships, and information on organisations. The core information in the database concerns persons and their addresses and mirrors the information contained in the ID card and electoral registers. In addition, it takes into consideration data provided by the Public Registry and the Department of Local Authority (notably for addresses). Information on occupation and education of persons is not available. The CDB most likely approximates the requirements of a population register. There are future plans to include more registers (including the Residence Permit Database and the naturalisation database). However, as the CDB is not a population register with continuous registration of the place of residence, but a database including all ID card holders, its interest for population statistics is rather limited.

Beyond registers and the Census there is the possibility to gather information about the population stock by extrapolating the results of surveys like the LFS.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS), which is conducted quarterly since May 2000, contains demographic variables such as sex, civil status, country of birth, primary citizenship, locality/country were the person resided one year ago, age, educational

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3 Maltese residents "temporarily" abroad are eligible for subsidised return flights to Malta to exercise their vote.
level, occupation (classified according to ISCO) and economic activity (classified according to NACE). The sample of the LFS includes all persons (aged 15 and over) living in private households in Malta. The systematic random sample includes 3,200 private households per quarter, with a 50 per cent overlap between two consecutive quarters.

The LFS is not a useful source of information on the foreign resident population, as Malta has approximately 400,000 inhabitants and the (legal) foreign resident population is about 12,000 or 3% of the total population. Thus, only a relatively small number of non-nationals are included in the sample.

E.1.b Migration flows and characteristics of migrants at the time of migration

None of the existing databases in Malta provides reliable information on migration flows. Paradoxically, the most robust and comprehensive information on migration flows (discussed in one of the next sections) are statistics on irregular migration. By contrast, little information exists on legal immigration of third-country nationals, even less on EU nationals and none on Maltese citizens which could be used as a basis for migration statistics.

The Census database holds only limited information about migration flows by asking the place of residence one and five years ago. If the answers are reliable the question may help to characterise immigrations of returning Maltese citizens.

The Labour Force Survey in 2006 (with 2005 as a reference year) included a module on emigration and therefore, asked the respondents whether any of the households’ members have left the country for a period of at least 12 months. For these persons the following information was requested: Sex, age, nationality, country of birth, country of destination, occupation in Malta before leaving the country and any intention of returning to Malta. In addition, the LFS collects data on persons who came to live in the interviewed household after a long stay abroad for a period of at least 12 months but according to the NSO this question has failed and is not used anymore.

Until Malta’s accession to the European Union in 2004, disembarkation cards provided a comprehensive and reliable source of information on international mobility of non-nationals (including tourism). The cards were collected under the responsibility of the Immigration Police and contained information on sex, age, nationality, country of residence, purpose of visit and length of stay (NSO, 2007: 6). Since, all non-nationals entering Malta were obliged to complete a disembarkation card, the system effectively amounted to a complete count of foreigners entering in Malta. Since 2004 this data collection has not been carried out anymore for intra-Schengen flights and for flights from outside the Schengen area only third-country nationals have to fill in this form.

In 2001, a passenger survey (Tourstat) was introduced for producing tourism statistics. It has been used by the NSO in collaboration with Eurostat to complement disembarkation cards in order to identify international emigrations among all
departures. The survey collects information on persons leaving Malta by air or by sea\(^4\) and is mainly intended to provide information on tourists coming to Malta. 6,000 passengers are randomly selected each month. Between 2001 and May 2004 based on disembarkation cards and the Tourstat survey ran in parallel. A comparison of the two data sources, thus arrivals compared to departures, show relatively minor deviations and thus suggest that the survey is a relatively reliable source of information on overall (legal) border crossings (Zammit Saliba/Grech 2003). However, persons who are leaving Malta for a longer period than 12 months are underrepresented (around 20 to 30 persons between 2003 and 2006)\(^5\). Due to the underrepresentation of non-nationals staying for longer periods of time, Tourstat is less useful as a basis for estimates on migration and mainly may be used to indicate broad trends (NSO, 2007: 18).

Data produced by the department for Labour, another reliable data source for emigrants, returned migrants and foreign settlers until 1995, is however no longer available. Similarly, emigration data provided by two major countries of origin of immigrants (including return migrants), namely Australia and the UK, which the NSO used to estimate immigration after 1995, are no longer available since 2000 and 2003, respectively.

Data on immigration differentiated by citizenship and sex, which are demanded by the EU Regulation on Community Statistics on Migration and International Protection, are partly derived from the Work Permits Database, which will be discussed in the next part of this section.

Generally, the availability of data concerning migration flows is very limited and many statistics demanded by the EU Regulation are not available currently (cf. NSO, 2007: Annex B).

**E.1.c Residence Permits**

Generally, foreigners are only allowed to obtain a residence permit when they are in possession of a work permit, generally issued for the period of one year. Through the accession of Malta to the European Union the legislation had to be adapted in accordance with the EU legislation, both regarding third-country nationals and EU citizens. However, the access of EU citizens to the labour market is subject to a 7 year transition period, during which EU citizens are still required to apply for work permits (Thomson 2006: 5). In general, Maltese authorities see immigration as an exceptional phenomenon, which is reflected in the legislative framework governing migration.

Until the establishment of the Residence Permit Database, no reliable statistics on residence permits were available. The residence permit database was introduced on 1st December 2006 and is maintained by the Expatriates and Foreign Citizenship Division within the MJHA. It holds information on all persons holding a residence permit. Besides work permit holders and their dependents, non-employed EU citizens who are obliged to prove financial independence, students as well as refugees and persons under subsidiary protection are included in the database. The database

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\(^4\) Sea departures have been taken into account since 2004.

\(^5\) The same problem applies for stays between 6 and 12 months, thus temporary migration.
includes all data collected through the different application forms, comprising amongst others name, present nationality/nationalities, former nationality/nationalities, date of birth, gender, place of birth, country of birth, marital status, foreign permanent address and Maltese address. The ID number is not always available as it is not yet attributed at the time of application for the residence permit and may not be updated afterwards.

As the database is still in development due to the recent launch, not all information collected in the forms is included in the database. About 4,500 permits are issued per year.

The Work Permits Database contains data on all persons in possession of a work permit in Malta and is maintained by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC). This database covers all foreigners holding a work permit in Malta until 2011, including EU citizens. Then the existing derogation involving immigration of EU nationals ceases to exist and the database will only contain information on third-country nationals. A current inaccuracy of the database to be used for migration flow statistics and its general reliability is that it cannot be taken for granted that persons whose work permit expires are subsequently leaving the country. Furthermore, data on dependents of the persons included are not collected (NSO, 2007: 14).

At the end of 2002, 2,913 foreigners (predominantly men) held a Maltese work permit (cf. Amore, 2005: 15).

E.1.d Change of citizenship

The Naturalisation database is kept by the Department for Citizenship and Expatriates Affairs (MJHA) and the aggregate statistics are sent to the NSO annually. The main variables included in the database are age, type of acquisition and previous citizenship.

The Maltese law for naturalisation has undergone several changes since Malta became an independent country in 1964. Until 1st August 1989 Maltese citizenship was strongly based on *ius soli* principles and every person born in Malta had the possibility to acquire Maltese citizenship. However, since then the balance has shifted towards the *ius sanguinis* principle. For immigrants, there are two modes of acquisition of Maltese citizenship, namely by naturalisation and by registration (cf. Buttigieg, 2007: 251-256).

Registration is considered for persons who previously were Maltese citizens and for persons who are related to a Maltese citizen. By contrast naturalisation is possible for persons who meet certain requirements (notably five years of minimum residence) (Amore, 2005: 12-13).

Registration is more important quantitatively than naturalisation in Malta and targets returned migrants. Since the year 2000 registrations have increased strongly with a peak of over 1,000 in 2001. Naturalisations have never exceeded 200 cases per year (Buttigieg, 2007: 258). Malta tolerates dual and multiple citizenships.
E.1.e Asylum seeking and refugees

Since the early 2000s, irregular migration and asylum have become major issues in public debate. As virtually all irregular immigrants are intercepted on sea while crossing the Mediterranean en route to Italy (the preferred destination), irregular migrants are also colloquially known as ‘boat people’. In 2002, a total of 1,686 irregular immigrants arrived on the Island, 502 in 2003 and 1,388 in 2004 (quoted after Thomson 2006: 5). In 2006, some 2,000 irregular immigrants arrived in Malta (Adam/Devillar 2008: 352). This influx varies from time to time and has peaked in the last years. The ‘boat people’ are perceived as a problem and a threat, and this discourse is often linked to the purported fact that there is “not enough space” in Malta, as it is the most densely populated country in the EU (see Amore 2005).

Persons who apply for asylum in Malta are first of all detained in closed centres for asylum seekers, however, it is not allowed to keep persons in detention centres for a longer period than 18 months. In the beginning of 2008, approximately one thousand persons were kept in detention. After this period, persons are brought to open centres and are issued temporary residence permits for humanitarian stay (valid for 3 to 6 months). Vulnerable persons, including pregnant women, children, elderly and sick persons, are not put into detention and are accommodated in separate centres.

Due to the importance of asylum migration to Malta, the data of the Refugee Commission (REFCOM) are central for migration research in Malta. REFCOM collects information on asylum seekers, persons granted humanitarian stay, recognised refugees as well as rejected refugees. In early 2008, the information which can be extracted from the database is limited to a) number of new applications by nationality; b) positive decisions by nationality; b) negative decisions by nationality; c) grants of humanitarian status by nationality; d) withdrawals by nationality; and e) number of unaccompanied minors by nationality. Additional breakdowns by sex and age will become available in 2009. All persons are identified by a unique registration number which is retained in subsequent applications. REFCOM reports statistics on a monthly basis to the NSO which is responsible for the distribution of the aggregate statistics derived from the REFCOM database.

The REFCOM database is an Excel-based database, in which each single case and relevant procedural information on the case is entered. Two main databases are kept: a database for applications and a database on the asylum procedure.

Information on name and nationality of individual persons are derived from police records. In addition to personal and procedural information, the database contains the police number issued to irregular migrants arriving in Malta upon arrival. However, for its own purposes, REFCOM uses a separate PIN code issued once a formal application is filed. Once a REFCOM number has been assigned to the asylum applicant, the police issue an immigration certificate. Recognised refugees receive a refugee certificate which is valid three years and which is automatically renewed. Certificates for humanitarian status are valid one year and are usually also automatically renewed. The database records the number of certificates issued, and, in the individual records, the date of issue and the date of renewal of these certificates.
E.1.f Irregular migration

Considering the EU Regulation on Community Statistics on Migration and International Protection, the most important sources are data collected by the Immigration Unit within the Police Department regarding to irregular migration. The unit is responsible for the compilation of the CIREFI statistics in Malta. These data include:

- refused aliens by citizenship and type of border
- apprehended aliens illegally present by citizenship and point of entry by type of border
- removed aliens by citizenship and type of border
- apprehended facilitators by citizenship
- apprehended facilitated aliens by citizenship and type of border.

(NSO, 2007: 17)

The data are reported for each case separately, however, the statistics are available only in an aggregate form. Sex and age have been introduced as variables in the individual reports but no aggregate statistics are available as yet by sex and age. The Immigration Unit reports that irregular migration to Malta via air has dropped to almost zero since the introduction of carrier sanctions.

The Maltese police indicate that there is an increasing number of rejected asylum applicants liable to be deported who cannot be deported for a variety reasons, notably lack of ID documents. In practice, Maltese authorities thus issue an expulsion order together with a suspension of deportation.

E.2. Measuring integration, discrimination and diversity

Generally, only little has been done in Malta on immigrants’ integration due to the reason that Malta was considered to be a transit country to the rest of Europe mainly to Italy (Amore, 2005: 18), and according to a statement of a government official, Malta is not considered to be an immigration country at all. Due to the small number of foreigners in Malta (app. 12,000), which constitute only three per cent of the whole population of Malta (app. 400,000), surveys are not a good instrument of measuring the integration of foreigners because even in large samples the number of foreigners would be too small to statistically differentiate this group by several variables.

However, as the Maltese registers almost exclusively contain the unique ID number, differentiations by citizenship should in principle be possible for several covariates. These registers, in turn, lack of variables which would be interesting for integration research, such as detailed data on income, employment and so forth.

E.2.a Employment

Since 2001, Malta participates in the programme of the European Labour Force Survey (LFS), which aims to collect thorough information on the labour status of the whole Maltese population. The effective sample for the LFS covers about 2,000 households in Malta (app. 5,000 persons). Due to the small size of the foreign
resident population and the resulting small number of persons theoretically contained in the sample (around 150 persons) as well as undercoverage of non-nationals, the LFS is of limited use for making statements on employment of non-nationals. The Census 2005, which includes app. three per cent foreigners and app. six per cent of foreign-born persons, collected data on employment and is therefore a possible instrument to investigate the integration and/or discrimination of foreigners and foreign-born.

E.2.b Incomes, Transfers and Social Benefits

Although Malta participates in the EU-SILC, which thoroughly examines the income situation of the respondents, this survey faces the same problems as the LFS, namely the low number of foreigners, leaving not many possibilities for statistical calculations. The EU-SILC sample is considerably smaller than the LFS sample – the average sample includes about 50 foreigners which is far too low to conduct any statistical calculations.

The Census 1995 contained a question on the weekly and monthly income of the respondents.

The tax register theoretically would provide the best information on incomes and transfers, but is not accessible for statistical purposes.

E.2.c Housing and Residential Patterns

The Census of Population and Housing carried out in 1995 and 2005 included a long section on housing and residential patterns, together with questions on the equipment of dwellings.

E.2.d Health and Access to Healthcare

The NSO (2007c: 11 - 12) has published statistics on social benefits derived from the Department of Social Security, however, it is not known whether those statistics are available by citizenship or country of birth.

The Census in 1995 gathered information on the health insurance of persons as well as on smoking and drinking habits of the population.

E.2.e Education

Under the responsibility of the NSO, Education Statistics are carried out annually with the aim to collect data on teaching staff, non-teaching staff and students/pupils in different school levels. For all persons included data on the nationality/nationalities are available.
The Census 1995 and even more the Census 2005 included questions on the educational qualifications.

Until now, Malta has not participated at the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

**E.2.f Family and Household**

Due to the linkage of addresses, the Census results should be able to give information on household compositions. The samples of the LFS and the EU-SILC are both organised to collect data on whole households and therefore, would be very useful to examine family and household issues. However, for the reasons stated above (low sample sizes for non-nationals and immigrants, underrepresentation of non-nationals), the surveys are of limited use for migration research. The Common database aims to provide general information on households, as it links addresses with individual data. Furthermore, the database links persons with their parents and children.

**E.2.g Political participation**

The electoral register provides information on all persons who are eligible to vote in local or national Maltese elections. Thus, the number of foreigners and foreign born Maltese citizens who are eligible to vote in Malta is available.

**E.2.h Crime and Justice**

There is no known source of crime statistics which would provide information related to migration and integration.

**F. Accessibility of data**

General aggregate statistics are available at the website of the National Statistics Office of Malta (NSO); however, the availability of tables is limited. Additionally, the NSO publishes reports on several surveys and programmes on their website. Micro data for the EU-SILC and the LFS are only available from Eurostat\(^6\), but not as national datasets from the NSO.

Most registers maintained by different Maltese government departments as well as the statistics produced by the police are not directly available. Data for statistical purposes (e.g. the available statistics demanded by the EU Regulation on migration statistics) are sent to the NSO, which is responsible for dissemination of national statistics to Eurostat.

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Government registers are not accessible on privacy and data protection grounds, and there are no comprehensive publications available on data compiled from Ministerial databases.

G. Quality and scope of data collection

Malta’s accession to the European Union in 2004 implied a major adjustment of existing data collection practices, including the development of new datasets. Although several of these new datasets, for example the database on asylum seekers and refugees have been launched prior to accession, some databases are still in development, while others, like the residence permit database, have only been launched very recently and are not yet fully operational.

In the absence of an instrument to measure migration, no reliable and comprehensive data on migration flows are available.

Although there are efforts to build a general population register, the information stored in existing registers do not provide sufficient information to measure migration to and from Malta. Measuring migration with surveys has also proven to be insufficient due to under-coverage or biased information in sample-based surveys.

H. Conclusions - Recommendations

Since Malta has acceded the European Union efforts have been made to improve data collection in various areas. Clearly, the major challenge in regard to statistics on migration is the lack of reliable data on migration flows. In principle, two options are available, namely 1) to develop the Common Database into a fully fledged population register, which, however, would require the development of clear residence rules that would allow to distinguish between residents, temporary residents and non-residents; and 2) refine estimation methods based on survey tools, i.e. Tourstat.

Although the establishment of a residence permit database in 2006 can be expected to lead to better data on the size and changes of Malta’s foreign resident population, so far no data are available and it is as yet unclear whether the database will eventually cover all foreign residents (including EU citizens). Although Malta has reasonably good data on irregular migrants/asylum seekers, efforts should be made to further improve data. Thus, data on stocks of persons on humanitarian permits should be systematically collected and those in the asylum procedure distinguished from others not or no longer in the procedure. In addition, these data should be systematically linked to data on returned migrants.

Recommendations for researchers that intend to use the proposed dataset

Researchers may choose between different datasets, given that access is provided. For legally resident non-nationals the residence permit database, which was still in development at the time of writing and which is linked to the work permit database, is the most promising and up-to-date source for of information on current stocks of non-nationals. Another reliable and comprehensive data source is the census lastly carried out in 2005 which includes information on country of birth and citizenship of the persons enumerated. For researchers interested in irregular migration, good
information is available on apprehensions. Because of its insular location and small size, apprehension statistics provide good information on inflows. Data on stocks (e.g. on humanitarian residence permits) and outflows, by contrast, are much more problematic and should be treated with great care, although in principle comprehensive information, even though not published, should be available.
Bibliography


Amore Katia, 2005: Active Civic Participation of Immigrants in Malta. Country Report prepared for the European research project POLITIS. Available at: http://www.uni-oldenburg.de/politis-europe/9812.html, (15 April 2009)


### Annex 1 - Datasets on migration/integration in Malta

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible Institution</th>
<th>Dataset</th>
<th>Type of dataset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSO</td>
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<td>Census</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Census 2005</td>
<td>Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Births database</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deaths database</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education Statistics</td>
<td>Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETC</td>
<td>Work Permits Database</td>
<td>Register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Data on irregular migration (CIREFI)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental Ministries</td>
<td>Public Registry</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Residence Permit Database</td>
<td>Register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Naturalisation Database</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Common Database</td>
<td>Register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ID Cards Register</td>
<td>Register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electoral Register</td>
<td>Register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asylum Statistics (REFCOM)</td>
<td>Register</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>