

Topical Factsheet: Malta Migration Facts & Figures



March 2025, update from October 2024

Population Malta	<p>From 2012 to 2022, Malta’s population grew by 28.6 % from 421,464 to 542,051,¹ 563,443 by end of 2023.² Population growth is due to natural growth (births minus deaths - 1.4%) but mainly by net migration (immigration minus emigration – 3.7%).</p> <p>The share of foreign nationals increased from 5.5 % in 2012 to 25.3 % (137,400 persons) in 2022.³ As of 31 December 2023, there were 43,698 (7.8%) EU/EEA citizens and 114,670 (20.3%) TCNs living in Malta. The total number of non-Maltese was 158,368, or 28.1 %. Of these, 64.7% were men. ⁴</p>																														
Immigration trend	<p>In 2022, Malta received 34,964 immigrants. Of these, 1,600 were Maltese, the others were non-nationals: 7,100 EU (20.4 % of all immigrants), and 26,000 non-EU (74.4 % of all immigrants). About 65 % were male, and 35 % were female.⁵ In 2023 Malta received 42,239 new immigrants, while 21,279 emigrated). So the net migration (immigration minus emigration was 20,960 in 2023 (3.7% increase). ⁶</p> <p>Relative to the size of the population, in 2022 Malta recorded the highest rate of immigration in the EU (almost 66 immigrants per 1,000 residents). (The largest absolute number of immigrants went to Germany - 2.1 million). ⁷ ¹</p>																														
Emigration trend	<p>In 2022, Malta recorded the second highest rate of emigration in the EU: 25 emigrants per 1,000 residents (i.e. about 13,300 persons),⁸ mostly non-Maltese persons (in 2022: 4,521 EU, 7,865 non-EU, 780 Maltese).⁹ Emigration in 2023 was the highest since 2014: 21,279. ¹⁰</p>																														
Asylum migration	<p>Applications for asylum (international protection) decreased from 913 in 2022¹¹, to 600 in 2023¹² and 438 in 2024¹³. The recognition rate (grants of refugee status or subsidiary prtotection) was 6% in 2022, 15% in 2023 and 8% in 2024. ¹⁴</p> <p>Recognition rate by nationality in 2023: Syria 84.6 %, Somalia 34.1 %, Pakistan 12.5 %, Sudan 3.4 %, Nigeria 2.7 %, Libya 1.3 %, Bangladesh 0,9 %.¹⁵</p> <p>Highest recognition rate by nationality in 2024: Syria, Colombia, Bangladesh.¹⁶</p> <p>Nr of Ukrainian temporary protection (2022 to 2024): 2,953. ¹⁷</p> <p>The number of sea arrivals (following rescue in the Mediterranean) to Malta decreased:¹⁸</p> <p>2024: 238 2023: 380 2022: 444 2021: 832 2020: 2,281 2019: 3,406 2018: 1,445</p> <p>Nationalities of sea arrivals (80 % adult men, 19% unaccompanied boys, 1% women) in 2024: Bangladesh 47 %, Syria 20 %, Pakistan 13 %, Egypt 13%, Eritrea 4 %, others 4 %.¹⁹</p> <p>2023: Bangladesh 62 %, Syria 14 %, Guinea 7 %, others 17 %.</p>																														
Labour migration	<p>The number of labour migrants, particularly of TCN, has increased over the years:²⁰</p> <table><tr><td></td><td>2019</td><td>2020</td><td>2021</td><td>2022</td><td>Mid-2023</td></tr><tr><td>Total employed</td><td>262,630</td><td>264,897</td><td>274,780</td><td>296,110</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Total TCN+EU/EEA</td><td>68,036</td><td>70,375</td><td>76,395</td><td>96,970</td><td>104,439</td></tr><tr><td>Total TCN</td><td>30,973</td><td>38,610</td><td>42,559</td><td>61,515</td><td>67,531</td></tr><tr><td>Total EU/EEA</td><td>37,063</td><td>31,765</td><td>33,836</td><td>35,455</td><td>36,908</td></tr></table>		2019	2020	2021	2022	Mid-2023	Total employed	262,630	264,897	274,780	296,110		Total TCN+EU/EEA	68,036	70,375	76,395	96,970	104,439	Total TCN	30,973	38,610	42,559	61,515	67,531	Total EU/EEA	37,063	31,765	33,836	35,455	36,908
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	<p>Most EEA workers are employed in the arts & entertainment sector (incl. gaming), also professional/scientific, administrative, accommodation and trade.</p> <p>Most TCN workers (13,000 India, 9,000 Philippines, others: Nepal, Serbia, Albania, Colombia a.o.) have low-skill, low-paid jobs in transport, hospitality and construction.²¹</p>
Gender statistics of migration	<p>Men account for the highest share of immigrants, at 57.6% in 2014 rising to 64.7% in 2023. The ratio of males to females is going up progressively. In 2020, the ratio of foreign males to foreign females (both EU and non-EU) was 1.44, going up to 1.46 in 2021, 1.53 in 2022 and 1.57 in 2023.²²</p> <p>Over 90% of the sea arrivals are (young adult) men.²³ This might be due to the dangerous sea crossings for families with children, and the much higher risk of abuse and sexual violence for women.²⁴ Migrants may hope for family reunification after a permit is granted.</p>
Motivation/reasons for migration into Malta	<p>The motivation of asylum seekers or applicants for international protection in general is fleeing civil wars and human crisis, persecution and serious human rights violations.²⁵</p> <p>During interviews by the NGO 4Mi, 74% of migrants reported violence, insecurity and conflict as the main reason for migration, while others mentioned rights of freedom, corruption and economic reasons.²⁶</p> <p>Non-asylum seekers (TCNs and EU/EEA-nationals) usually migrate to seek employment and a better life (see Labour migration above).</p>
Why do people leave their countries? ²⁷	<p>“There are many reasons why it might be too difficult or dangerous for people to stay in their own countries. For example, children, woman and men flee from violence, war, hunger, extreme poverty, because of their sexual or gender orientation, or from the consequences of climate change or other natural disasters. Often people will face a combination of these difficult circumstances.</p> <p>People who leave their countries are not always fleeing danger. They might believe they have a better chance of finding work in another country because they have the education or capital to seek opportunities elsewhere. Others might want to join relatives or friends who are already living abroad. Or they might seek to start or finish their education in another country. There are lots of different reasons for people to start a journey to build a life in a new country.</p>
Who is a refugee?	<p>A refugee is a person who has fled their own country because they are at risk of serious human rights violations and persecution there. The risks to their safety and life were so great that they felt they had no choice but to leave and seek safety outside their country because their own government cannot or will not protect them from those dangers. Refugees have a right to international protection.</p>
Who is an asylum seeker?	<p>An asylum seeker is a person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country, but who hasn't yet been legally recognized as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim. Seeking asylum is a human right. This means everyone should be allowed to enter another country to seek asylum.</p>
Who is a migrant?	<p>There is no internationally accepted legal definition of a migrant. Like most agencies and organizations, Amnesty International understands migrants to be people staying outside their country of origin, who are not asylum seekers or refugees.</p> <p>Some migrants leave their country because they want to work, study or join family, for example. Others feel they must leave because of poverty, political unrest, gang violence, natural disasters or other serious circumstances that exist there.</p> <p>Lots of people don't fit the legal definition of a refugee but could nevertheless be in danger if they went home.”²⁸</p>

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- ¹ <https://nso.gov.mt/intercensal-population-revisions-2012-2021/>
- ² <https://nso.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2024-Gender-Analysis-based-on-sex-disaggregated.pdf>
- ³ <https://nso.gov.mt/intercensal-population-revisions-2012-2021/>
- ⁴ <https://nso.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2024-Gender-Analysis-based-on-sex-disaggregated.pdf>
- ⁵ [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migration and migrant population statistics#Migrant population: 23.8 million non-EU citizens living in the EU on 1 January 2022](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics#Migrant_population:_23.8_million_non-EU_citizens_living_in_the_EU_on_1_January_2022)
- ⁶ <https://nso.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2024-Gender-Analysis-based-on-sex-disaggregated.pdf>
- ⁷ [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migration and migrant population statistics#Migrant population: 23.8 million non-EU citizens living in the EU on 1 January 2022](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics#Migrant_population:_23.8_million_non-EU_citizens_living_in_the_EU_on_1_January_2022)
- ⁸ [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migration and migrant population statistics#Migrant population: 23.8 million non-EU citizens living in the EU on 1 January 2022](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics#Migrant_population:_23.8_million_non-EU_citizens_living_in_the_EU_on_1_January_2022)
- ⁹ <https://nso.gov.mt/intercensal-population-revisions-2012-2021/>, see also https://nso.gov.mt/themes_publications/census-of-population-and-housing-2021-final-report-population-migration-and-other-social-characteristics-volume-1/
- ¹⁰ <https://nso.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2024-Gender-Analysis-based-on-sex-disaggregated.pdf>
- ¹¹ https://www.unhcr.org/mt/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2023/02/Malta-Factsheet_2022_update-2.pdf
- ¹² <https://ecre.org/aida-country-report-on-malta-2023-update/>; https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/AIDA-MT_2023-Update.pdf
- ¹³ <https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/21467921/>
- ¹⁴ <https://www.unhcr.org/mt/figures-at-a-glance>; https://www.unhcr.org/mt/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2025/02/Malta-Factsheet_2024-Q4.pdf
- ¹⁵ <https://ecre.org/aida-country-report-on-malta-2023-update/>; https://asylumineurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/AIDA-MT_2023-Update.pdf
- ¹⁶ <https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/21467921/>
- ¹⁷ https://www.unhcr.org/mt/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2025/02/Malta-Factsheet_2024-Q4.pdf
- ¹⁸ <https://www.unhcr.org/mt/figures-at-a-glance>; https://www.unhcr.org/mt/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2025/02/Malta-Factsheet_2024-Q4.pdf
- ¹⁹ https://www.unhcr.org/mt/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2025/02/Malta-Factsheet_2024-Q4.pdf
- ²⁰ <https://theshiftnews.com/2023/11/29/migrant-workers-account-for-a-third-of-maltas-labour-force-up-23-in-ten-years/>; [https://pq.gov.mt/PQWeb.nsf/7561f7daddf0609ac1257d1800311f18/c1257d2e0046dfa1c1258a7000427f94/\\$FILE/13600%20papers%20laid.pdf](https://pq.gov.mt/PQWeb.nsf/7561f7daddf0609ac1257d1800311f18/c1257d2e0046dfa1c1258a7000427f94/$FILE/13600%20papers%20laid.pdf)
- ²¹ <https://theshiftnews.com/2023/11/29/migrant-workers-account-for-a-third-of-maltas-labour-force-up-23-in-ten-years/>; [https://pq.gov.mt/PQWeb.nsf/7561f7daddf0609ac1257d1800311f18/c1257d2e0046dfa1c1258a7000427f94/\\$FILE/13600%20papers%20laid.pdf](https://pq.gov.mt/PQWeb.nsf/7561f7daddf0609ac1257d1800311f18/c1257d2e0046dfa1c1258a7000427f94/$FILE/13600%20papers%20laid.pdf), see also <https://cdn-others.timesofmalta.com/d8d6192212c032a346cd3dea964c659fb623013e.pdf>
- ²² <https://nso.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2024-Gender-Analysis-based-on-sex-disaggregated.pdf>
- ²³ https://www.unhcr.org/mt/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2024/08/Malta-Factsheet_2024-Q2.pdf see also https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glosom/GLOSOM_2018_web_small.pdf
- ²⁴ [https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2021/Aggravated SOM and Gender.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2021/Aggravated_SOM_and_Gender.pdf)
- ²⁵ <https://migrants-refugees.va.it/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/12/2020-CP-Malta-EN.pdf>; <https://aditus.org.mt/understanding-the-difference-between-an-asylum-seeker-a-refugee-and-a-migrant/>
- ²⁶ <https://mixedmigration.org/resource/chasing-safety-destination-selection-and-onward-movement-among-recent-arrivals-in-greece/>
- ²⁷ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/>
- ²⁸ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/>

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This factsheet was compiled by Adri van den Berg for BDE. Adri worked for many years as a Country of Origin Information (COI) researcher, her final post before retiring being with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO, now EUAA) in Malta.