



## Malta

### National developments in 2024



For a fifth year in a row, the number of applications for international protection lodged in Malta decreased (439), to the lowest since 2010. Nonetheless, asylum and migration continued being an important theme in public debates and policy discussions.

The position of an Ambassador for Migration was established to enhance collaboration on issues of migration internationally, in particular with countries of origin. The ambassador is also responsible for formulating Malta's positions at an EU level and coordinating among entities dealing with migration and asylum.

Throughout 2024, Malta was vocal at the European level in highlighting the importance of effective border management, impeding irregular journeys and strengthening strategic cooperation with third countries, with an emphasis on returns and fighting smuggling networks.<sup>1</sup> Collaborative efforts continued with Libya in law enforcement and sea rescues, with the aim of curbing organised crime, including human trafficking, in the Mediterranean.<sup>2</sup>

At a technical level, legislative amendments were initiated to introduce changes in a number of areas, including the second instance authority having access to an applicant's file in cases involving national security;<sup>3</sup> medical examinations to determine the age of unaccompanied minors, after which if there are still doubts authorities assume minority;<sup>4</sup> further clarification of the distinction between unfounded and manifestly unfounded applications;<sup>5</sup> the expansion of the profiles of applicants that could potentially be subjected to detention;<sup>6</sup> and the revocation, ending or refusal to renew subsidiary protection when there was misrepresentation or an omission of facts which were decisive for granting subsidiary protection.<sup>7</sup> UNHCR in cooperation with the government created material for refugees and asylum seekers to ensure that applicants receive information in a language they understand.<sup>8</sup> The IPA issued a public tender to increase interpretation capacity.<sup>9</sup>

Civil society organisations continued to voice concern about detention and search and rescue matters, publishing several statements and opinions throughout 2024.<sup>10</sup> A number of UN Human Rights Treaty bodies identified and shared key areas for improvement with the Maltese authorities, including preventing arbitrary detention, adhering with the prohibition of *refoulement*, facilitating prompt search and rescue activities, ensuring safe and rapid disembarkations, and supporting humanitarian rescue operations.<sup>11</sup> The government provided detailed replies to these observations, rebutting allegations of possible violations; expressing its strong commitment to upholding its international obligations; highlighting that in the past 20 years the country has hosted a significant community of refugees and beneficiaries of international protection when compared to the size of the population; and emphasising that, over the past years, Maltese authorities have contributed to the rescue of thousands of lives.<sup>12</sup> In addition, they indicated that detention orders are not issued arbitrarily but following an individual assessment and are used as a last resort, after having established that other less coercive alternative measures cannot be applied effectively.<sup>13</sup>

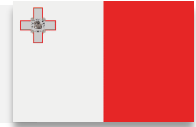
Relocations from Malta to other Member States continued through the Mechanism for Voluntary Solidarity in collaboration with the IOM and the EUAA.<sup>14</sup>

#### More input from civil society:

- [aditus foundation](#)
- [European Council on Refugees and Exiles](#)
- [European Network on Statelessness](#)
- [Jesuit Refugee Service Europe](#)

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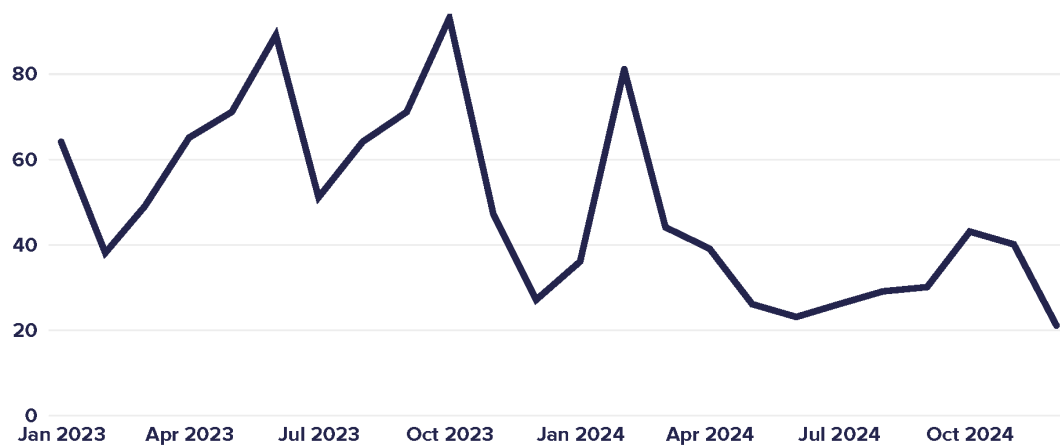
## Key indicators for 2024



Rank by number of asylum applications <b>26</b>	Rank per capita (applications per 1M inhabitants) <b>18</b>	Share of applications in EU+ <b>0.0%</b>	Recognition rate <b>40%</b>
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Indicator	2024	2023	% change	Top 3 countries of origin
Asylum applications	438	729 ↓	-40%	Syria (44%), Colombia (6%), Bangladesh (5%)
Pending cases (Dec '24)	507	832 ↓	-39%	Syria (23%), Ukraine (18%), Sudan (11%)
First instance decisions	471	951 ↓	-50%	Syria (37%), Pakistan (7%), Libya (5%)
Refugee status	50	18 ↑	178%	Palestine (18%), Syria (16%), Iran (14%)
Subsidiary protection	140	243 ↓	-42%	Syria (89%), Eritrea (5%), Ukraine (2%)
Negative	281	690 ↓	-59%	Syria (19%), Pakistan (11%), Bangladesh (9%)

Evolution of asylum applications, 2023-2024



For more developments, please consult the [Asylum Report 2025](#) and the [National Asylum Developments Database](#).





## Sources

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- <sup>2</sup> Government of Malta | Gvern ta' Malta. (2024, March 9). [Il-Ministru Byron Camilleri jmexxi delegazzjoni Maltija fl-oqsma tas-sigurtà fil-Libja](#) [Minister Byron Camilleri leads a Maltese delegation in the fields of security in Libya] [PR240381]. Government of Malta | Gvern ta' Malta. (2024, May 7). [Stqarrija mill-Ministeru għall-Intern, is-Sigurtà u x-Xogħol: Il-ministru Byron Camilleri f'taħditiet f'Benghazi mal-field marshal Khalifa Haftar](#) [Press release by the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, and Employment: Minister Byron Camilleri in Talks in Benghazi with Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar] [PR240769].
- <sup>3</sup> [Act No. 104 of 2024 - Procedural Standards for Granting and Withdrawing International Protection \(Amendment\) Regulations, 2024](#), 26 April 2024.
- <sup>4</sup> [Act No. 104 of 2024 - Procedural Standards for Granting and Withdrawing International Protection \(Amendment\) Regulations, 2024](#), 26 April 2024.
- <sup>5</sup> [Act No. III of 2025 to amend the International Protection Act, Cap. 420](#), 18 February 2025.
- <sup>6</sup> [Act 87 of 2024 - Reception of Asylum Seekers \(Amendment\) Regulations, 2024](#), 12 April 2024.
- <sup>7</sup> [Act No. III of 2025 to amend the International Protection Act, Cap. 420](#), 18 February 2025.
- <sup>8</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2024). [Help Malta](#).
- <sup>9</sup> Government of Malta | Gvern ta' Malta. (2024, December 4). [CT3028/2024 Framework Agreement for the Provision of Interpretation Services for the International Protection Agency Malta Re Issue of CT3023/2023](#).
- <sup>10</sup> aditus foundation, & Jesuit Refugee Service. (2024, February 24). [Joint NGO Statement: Survivors of traumatic incidents at sea need support, not detention!](#) aditus foundation et al. (2024, April 11). [NGO Press Statement: Malta must stop illegally pushing back people to Libya!](#) aditus foundation. (2024, September 13). [\(The lack of\) Search and Rescue Operations in Malta](#).
- <sup>11</sup> United Nations, Human Rights Committee. (2024, July 4). [Experts of the Human Rights Committee Commend Malta on Political Quotas for Women, Raise Questions on Measures to Combat Corruption and Obligations Under Maritime Law in Search and Rescue](#). United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2024, October 9). [Observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review](#).
- <sup>12</sup> United Nations, Human Rights Council. (2024, June 4). [Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Malta. Addendum: Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments. A/HRC/56/17/Add.1](#).
- <sup>13</sup> United Nations, Human Rights Council. (2024, June 4). [Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Malta. Addendum: Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments. A/HRC/56/17/Add.1](#).
- <sup>14</sup> Government of Malta | Gvern ta' Malta. (2024, April 13). [Stqarrija mill-Ministeru għall-Intern, is-Sigurtà u x-Xogħol: 20 immigrant ieħor rilokati f'pajjiż ieħor](#) [Press release by the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security and Employment: 20 more immigrants relocated to another country] [PR240578]. Government of Malta | Gvern ta' Malta. (2024, October 7). [Stqarrija mill-Ministeru għall-Intern, is-Sigurtà u x-Xogħol: Aktar immigranti irregolari jiġu rilokati f'pajjiżi oħra](#) [Press release by the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, and Employment: More irregular immigrants to be relocated to other countries] [PR241609].