

**Malta National Action Plan on Poverty
and
Social Exclusion 2004-2006**

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I. MAJOR TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

There is evidence of continued improvement in living standards of the Maltese population at large. Between 1994 and 2002, disposable income of Maltese households increased by 50 per cent. The mean deprivation index stood at 0.23, much less than in any other country that recently joined the EU (AC10 average 1.4, twice as high as in the EU15). However, despite of the signs of increased well being, continuing changes in Maltese society such as further individualisation and secularisation, as well as more frequent processes of family dissolution, are exposing certain strata of the population (e.g. unemployed, single mothers and children) to the problems of poverty and social exclusion. By compiling the Laeken indicators in the measurement of poverty, Malta has established a rather clear picture of the current situation related to this issue. It was estimated that 15 per cent of the general population are at the risk of poverty. The at-risk-of-poverty rates for the other population sub-groups were estimated at 55 per cent - single parents, 50 per cent - the unemployed, 29 per cent - persons in rented accommodation, 21 per cent - children (0-15 years), 18 per cent - retired persons.

1.1 Economy

Malta's major economic challenges in the medium term include the reduction of the excessive government deficit, the creation of productive employment and guaranteeing the sustainability of public finances. The Government deficit stood at 6.2 per cent in 2002, increased to 9.7 per cent in 2003 and is set to drop to 5.4 per cent of the GDP in 2004. The public gross debt has been following an upward trend from 61.7 per cent of the GDP in 2002 to 72.0 per cent of the GDP in 2003 further projected to 72.4 per cent in 2005 but then it is expected to fall to 70.4 per cent of the GDP in 2007.

The uncertain international economic situation, geopolitical tensions and the volatility in international oil prices have affected the local economy, by dampening economic activity and slowing down economic recovery. After registering a real growth rate of 2.3 per cent in 2002, the Maltese economy contracted by 1.7 per cent in 2003. The current signs of an economic recovery are being mitigated by the above-mentioned countervailing circumstances (Annex 1, and more specifically Tables 1 to 6 refer).

A relatively low and stable inflationary environment has characterized the Maltese economy for several years now. In 2003, the inflation rate slowed down significantly to 1.3 per cent from 2.2 per cent and 2.8 per cent in 2002 and 2001 respectively.

1.2 Labour Market

The employment rate of 54.5 per cent (March 2004 data¹) remained stable since December 2003 and is substantially lower than the 64.4 per cent in the EU15, and the 62.9 per cent in the EU25. (Annex 1, Table 2).

From a gender perspective, the specific character of the Maltese labour market becomes even more salient: only 32.8 per cent of all women are in formal employment (January-March 2004 data), in comparison to the 56.0 per cent and the 55.1 per cent in the EU15 and EU25 in 2003 respectively. At around 76.0 per cent, the male employment rate is higher than in either the EU15 or the EU 25, where male employment rates stood at 72.6 per cent and 70.8 per cent respectively in 2003.

In Malta, women tend to get employment on a temporary basis or under fixed-term contracts more frequently than men, with figures of 5.0 per cent and 3.2 per cent for female and male employment respectively as of June 2003.

Women in Malta are less often self-employed than men, reaching 6.5 per cent (January-March 2004) of all employed women (8.0 per cent in December 2003), an increase from 5.4 per cent as of December 2002 (Annex 1, Table 3). The share of self-employed men is twice and half as much that of women, hovering around 17.8 per cent in January-March 2004 (17.1 per cent in December 2003).

The total unemployment rate stood at 8.2 per cent in 2003, an increase from 7.5 per cent in 2002 (EU15, 8.1 per cent and EU25, 9.1 per cent in 2003). In the first quarter this year, female unemployment averaged 8.0 per cent; a drop from the increasing trend of 9.6 per cent and 11.3 per cent registered in 2002 and 2003 respectively (EU15, 8.9 per cent and EU25, 10.0 per cent). The male unemployment rate has been increasing from 6.5 per cent in 2002 to 6.8 per cent in 2003 (EU15, 7.4 per cent and EU25, 8.3 per cent) and 6.9 per cent in the first quarter of 2004.

The long-term unemployment rate stood at 3.3 and 3.5 per cent in 2002 and 2003 respectively, which compares favourably with the 3.1 per cent and the 3.9 per cent averages for the same year in the EU15 and the EU25 respectively (EU15, 3.3 per cent and EU25, 4.0 per cent, 2003 figures). The female long-term unemployment rate was lower than that of men. It stood at 2.5 and 3.0 per cent in 2002 and 2003 respectively, EU15, 3.6 per cent and EU25, 4.5 per cent (EU15, 3.7 per cent and EU25, 4.5 per cent in 2003). Men's long-term unemployment

¹ The methodology applied in the Labour Force Survey January-March 2004 is in a transitional stage. Till January-March 2004 LFS, the survey was carried out mainly on a quarterly basis with a specific reference week representing the whole quarter. Since the beginning of 2004, NSO has started to carry out the survey on an ongoing basis. The objective is to have a continuous assessment of labour market trends given that reference weeks are evenly spread throughout the 13 weeks of the quarter. March 2003 and March 2004 data are not comparable on a like with like basis. All January-March 2004 data refer to persons 15 years and over.

rate remained constant at 3.5 per cent in 2001-2003 period. However, in the same year it was higher than the EU15's 2.7 per cent and EU25's 3.4 per cent (EU15, 2.9 per cent and EU25, 3.6 per cent in 2003).

The employment rate of older workers stood at 30.1 and 32.5 per cent in 2002 and 2003 respectively, which was less than the EU15's 40.1 per cent and the EU25's, 38.7 per cent (EU15, 41.7 per cent and EU25, 40.2 per cent in 2003). Females got engaged in formal employment at a rate of 10.9 and 13.0 per cent in 2002 and 2003, far less than their European counterparts EU15, 30.6 per cent and EU25, 29.1 per cent in 2002 (EU15, 32.2 per cent and EU25, 30.8 per cent in 2003). Male averages are much closer to the EU ones, 50.8 and 53.8 per cent in 2002 and 2003 respectively, EU15, 50.0 per cent EU25, 48.8 per cent in 2002 (EU15, 51.6 per cent, EU25, 50.3 per cent in 2003).

The Maltese labour force is relatively less educated/skilled than their EU counterparts, with some 69.5 per cent of the labour force having completed secondary or lower education. A further 28.1 per cent were at the post-secondary diploma or first-degree university level, while the remaining 1.5 per cent of the labour force were at the post-tertiary level of education.

Although the indicator for early school-leavers in Malta is the highest among the EU25, significant drops are evident in both genders in the period 2002 to 2003. There were 53.2 per cent and 48.2 per cent early school-leavers, with a lower secondary education at most, respectively EU15, 18.5 per cent, EU25, 16.5 per cent in 2002 (EU15, 18.0 per cent and EU25, 15.9 per cent in 2003). Among women 49.7 per cent and 46.8 per cent were in this category in 2002 and 2003, EU15, 16.1 per cent, EU25, 14.2 per cent in 2002 and EU15, 15.9 per cent and EU25, 13.9 per cent in 2003), and 56.5 per cent and 49.7 per cent of all employed men were not in further education in the same period, EU15, 20.9 per cent and EU25, 18.7 per cent in 2002 (EU15, 20.2 per cent and EU25, 17.9 per cent in 2003).

During 2001, only 4.6 per cent², EU15, 8.5 per cent and EU25, 8.0 per cent³, (EU15, 9.7 per cent and EU25, 9.0 per cent) were engaged in lifelong learning in Malta. This was further reduced to 4.4 per cent and 4.2 per cent in 2002 and 2003 respectively (EU15, 9.7 per cent and EU25, 9.0 per cent⁴ in 2003). Women were involved in lifelong learning to a lesser extent than men; 3.8 per cent and 3.6 per cent in 2002 and 2003 respectively and are still far behind the EU15, 9.2 per cent and EU25, 8.6 per cent in 2002 (EU15, 10.4 per cent and the EU25, 9.7 per cent in 2003). The male rate stood at 4.9 per cent in 2002 and 2003 and lagged behind the EU15, 7.9 per cent and EU25, 7.4 per cent in 2002 (EU15's 9.9 per cent and the EU25's, 8.3 per cent in 2003).

² Number of persons aged 15 and over participating in education as a percentage of the total population aged 15 and over.

³ Eurostat: Estimated value

⁴ Eurostat: Break in series

1.3 Demographic and social conditions

The past decade saw a continued low population growth (0.6 per cent a year). Two major demographic processes are evident; longevity in old age resulting in an aging population (the dependency ratio stands at 45.8 and the aging index stands at 59, 2003 data), and a gradual decline in total fertility rate (TFR) towards below replacement level (TFR 1.5 in 2002).

As a result of changing social attitudes, the share of births out of wedlock rose from 2.2 per cent (of all births) in 1992 to 14.9 per cent in 2002. It is worrying that births out of wedlock to mothers aged 20 years or less have been continuously increasing from 0.6 per cent of all births in 1992 to 4.2 per cent of all births in 2002.

As a result of increased individualization, the further nuclearisation of the Maltese family and the increase in the number of marital breakdowns, the index of marital separations went up to 429.5 in 2002 from 100 in 1995.

1.4 Public welfare

Public welfare has been characterised by a continuous increase of social expenditure in the period 1998-2002 (Annex 1, Table 9). With social security expenditure absorbing around one sixth of GDP in 2000-2002, increasing from 17.9 per cent in 2000 to 18.5 per cent in 2002, and given the wide-ranging system of social protection, poverty has not up to now been a major issue in Malta. The well-developed social welfare system in Malta substantially attenuates the incidence of persons near the poverty line, affecting men and women in equal measure.

1.5 Income Disparities and Poverty

Income in Malta is distributed relatively evenly among the population. Indeed, the last measure of this distribution in respect of the year 2000 gave a Gini coefficient of 30.4 per cent. This is only slightly different from the EU15 average of 29.0 per cent (2000 data). In fact, it is estimated that, excluding all social transfers, the at-risk-of-poverty rate for Malta in 2000 was 30.0 per cent (EU15: 40.0 per cent in 2000). The tax rate on low-income earners⁵ stood at 15.8 per cent in 2003, a reduction from 18.1 per cent in 2002 (EU15, 37.2 per cent and EU25, 37.4 per cent).

⁵ The tax rate on labour cost measures the relative tax burden for an employed person with low earnings.

Moreover, at 4.5 the gap between the lowest income earners and the highest income earners is marginally different from the EU15's 4.4 (2000 and 2001 data) and the EU25's 4.4⁶.

It must be noted that the share of persons living in jobless households in Malta in 2002 and 2003 was lower than the respective EU15 averages (Annex 1, Table 11); however the at-risk-of-poverty of the unemployed in Malta (50.0 per cent, 2000 data) is substantially higher than in EU 15 (38.0 per cent, 1998 data).

The gender pay gap in Malta is showing signs of gradual contraction; from 82.0 per cent in December 2002 to 85.0 per cent in December 2003. The adjusted gender pay gap stood at 10.0 per cent in 2001 (EU15, 16.0 per cent⁷ in 2001).

The distribution of income among those at the at-risk-of poverty and as measured by the relative at-risk-of-poverty gap⁸ is relatively better in Malta, 17.0 per cent as against the EU15's 21.0 per cent in the year 2000.

The impact on deprivation of the labour force status (unemployed / employed) of the main earner is highest in Malta 4.45 when compared to other former acceding countries (AC10 average 1.93 data) Malta has the lowest mean deprivation index of 0.23 in 2002 of all former acceding countries (AC10 1.4 in 2002).

1.6 Regional disparities

In terms of regional employment differentials, Malta's regional cohesion index of 27.0 per cent in 2001 is better than most EU15 countries. In view of the size and make-up of the country, disadvantaged pockets rather than disadvantaged regions, show incidence of higher illiteracy, unauthorised primary school absenteeism and higher exposure to long term unemployment. Malta and Gozo, the two sister islands, differ in terms of poverty related indicators: 15.1 per cent of households are rated as poor in terms of economic status in Malta, and 12.7 per cent in Gozo.

⁶ Eurostat estimate.

⁷ Eurostat estimate.

⁸ The difference between the median income of persons below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold and the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, expressed as a percentage of the at-risk-of-poverty threshold.

II STRATEGIC APPROACH, MAIN OBJECTIVES AND KEY TARGETS

In view of the analysis outlined in Chapter 1 and the study undertaken in the Joint Inclusion Memorandum, the main challenges of social inclusion in Malta are the high levels of illiteracy, adults with low skills and other labour market shortcomings. Therefore, addressing the educational and labour market weaknesses is a high political priority to prevent poverty in Malta. Apart from the unemployed, the groups most at risk of poverty and social exclusion in Maltese society, include disabled people (particularly those without adequate education or skills), disadvantaged children (i.e. those living in low income or families in difficulty), and single parents (particularly those with dependent children and paying market rents as tenants). Poverty and social exclusion is encountered also among low skill adults, persons with mental health problems, persons with addictions and some segments of low-income elderly (namely women) and immigrants.

The strategic approach of the Maltese Government in tackling poverty and social exclusion has as its main tenets:

- increasing the overall employment rate – namely female – and develop policies to make work pay while promoting more and better jobs for both women and men, who are currently inactive or who are recipients of social benefits;
- combating illiteracy and improving the educational attainment of both young students as well as adults in advanced age, and
- strengthening the welfare system so as to cater for the most needy and increasing social and affordable housing conducive to well-being.

The following are the key national priorities corresponding to this approach:

Key priority 1: To increase employment and employability of vulnerable groups (including persons who are unskilled, who have been inactive for a significant period of time, unable to work a full time-table and parents with dependent children and disabled persons).

Key data:

- The unemployed persons are at 50 per cent risk-of-poverty which is considerably higher than the EU15 average of 39 per cent;
- The poverty risk arising from unemployment appears to be far greater for men 57 per cent, (EU15, 43 per cent) than for women 31 per cent, (EU15, 33 per cent).

Targets:

- Reduce the early school leaver share of youth unemployment by 8.5 per cent to reach 10 per cent by 2010 and
- Increase the employment of persons with disability to four fifths of the national employment rate.

Key priority 2: To increase the current low female employment rate.

Key data:

- Inactivity⁹ for women carries a greater risk of poverty (19 per cent) than for men (10 per cent);
- 44.8 per cent of inactive women surveyed by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) said that they would be willing to work, whilst 50.9 per cent stated the opposite. Half of all inactive women cited personal or family responsibilities as the reason for their inactivity (September 2001 Labour Force Survey);
- Unemployed women below the age of 35 years represent 79.6 per cent of all unemployed women while unemployed men below age of 35 years represent 61.8 per cent of all unemployed men;
- Only 8.1 per cent single mothers hold full time employment in contrast to 35.6 per cent single fathers¹⁰ and
- The adjusted gender pay stood at 10 per cent in 2001 (EU15, 16 per cent¹¹ in 2001).

Targets:

- Raising the female employment rate by 12 percentage points to 45 per cent by 2010.

Key priority 3: To raise the current, low employment rate of persons aged 55 years and over.

Key data:

- Low participation of older workers 55-64 years 30.1 and 32.5 per cent in 2002 and 2003 respectively, EU15, 40.1 per cent, EU25, 38.7 per cent, (EU15, 41.7 per cent; EU25, 40.2 per cent in 2003);
- In Malta only 10.9 and 13.0 per cent of the older female workers were employed in 2002 and 2003, compared to 30.6 per cent in the EU15 and EU25, 29.1 per cent (EU15, 32.2 per cent and EU25 30.8 per cent in 2003) and
- The employment rate of older men stood at 50.8 and 53.8 per cent in 2002 and 2003 respectively, EU15, 50.0 per cent and EU25 48.8 per cent in 2002, (EU15, 51.6 per cent and EU25, 50.3 per cent respectively in 2003).

⁹ The inactive population comprises those who are not working and not seeking employment.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Eurostat estimate.

Key priority 4: Making work pay.

As identified in the Joint Assessment Paper on Employment Policy Priorities, it is government policy to make work as attractive as possible for men and women, and in particular those from disadvantaged groups, while ensuring a minimum income for those unable to work. A strategic approach will be taken to this issue, whereby between 2006 and 2010, a number of reforms will be designed and introduced to ensure that the tax and benefit interaction have a favourable impact on those furthest from the labour market.

Key priority 5: Ensuring that literacy and numeracy skills are acquired by all members of society, reducing school absenteeism and promoting life-long and life-wide opportunities at all levels and in a wide range of areas.

Key data:

- The rate of illiteracy stood at 11.2 per cent (1995 Census of Population and Housing data);
- The overall average raw scores for Maltese and English tests of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils were quite high (32.9 and 29.9, respectively; maximum score was 40, 1999 National Literacy Survey);
- There is a statistically significant difference in attainment between girls and boys, where girls achieved significantly higher average scores than boys in both languages (2002 National Literacy Survey), and
- During the first 118 school days between 19 September 2001 and 31 March 2002, some 55,963 pupil days were lost to absenteeism. The overall absence rates stood at 9.07 days/pupil, that for boys being 10.0 days/pupil and for girls 8.11 days/pupil.

Targets:

- Decrease school absenteeism by 25 per cent (6.8 days/pupil) of the overall absence rate (9.07/pupil), registered in scholastic year 2001-02, by the end of 2006 and
- Increase the share of 18-24 year olds with higher secondary education or above by 24 per cent, to stand at 75 per cent of this cohort.

Key priority 6: Ensuring further inclusion and equal opportunities for students with disabilities or learning difficulties in primary and secondary schools.

Key data:

- In 2003, 4 per cent of all primary school pupils were students with a disability;

- Students with disability represent 1.3 per cent of all pupils in secondary schools (disabled children, especially those with intellectual disability, stay on in the primary school beyond age of 11 and/or start attending special schools);
- The percentages of disabled persons in higher education were: 0.05 per cent of all students at University; 0.84 at the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology, 0.11 per cent of the students at the Junior College, and 0.16 per cent at the Higher Secondary level and
- The lack of more detailed data and particularly time series showing trends related to illiteracy and educational qualifications or professional skills of the disabled persons and their relative participation is a huge obstacle to measuring the intensity of their integration in society.

Key priority 7: To further support families in need and families at risk of social exclusion, particularly victims of domestic violence.

Key data:

- Social protection expenditure on family and children outlays equaled to 6.3 per cent and 6.2 per cent of the total social expenditure in 2001 and 2002 respectively;
- 30 per cent (75,000 individuals) of Maltese¹² believe that domestic violence against women in Malta is very common whilst 40 per cent (100,000) think it is fairly common;
- 21 per cent (almost 60,000 individuals) of women and men in Malta know of a woman who is a victim of domestic violence within their neighbourhood;
- 70 per cent (175,000) of Maltese believe that all forms of domestic violence are very serious;
- Between August 1994 and June 2003, the Domestic Violence Services provided by Appogg intervened with 2717 individuals who were victims of domestic violence. In 2002, 327 cases were reported to these services and
- The number of cases reported to the Police Vice Squad has increased from 127 in 1998 to 205 in 2002. The figure for January – October 2003 stands at 227.

Key priority 8: To promote public awareness of children's rights and to provide services to protect and empower children/youth.

Key data:

- The at-risk-of-poverty of children 0-15 years of age in Malta is 21 per cent (EU15, 19 per cent).

¹² Respondents were over the age of 15. Data taken from National Survey on perceptions about Domestic Violence in Malta carried out by National Statistics Office on behalf of the Ministry for Social Policy, 2002.

Key priority 9: To ensure adequate and affordable housing to vulnerable groups by providing a wider range of services and schemes.

Key data:

- Persons in rented housing have 29 per cent risk-of-poverty which is 2.5 times more than the home owners 11 per cent, (EU15, 24 per cent and 12 per cent, respectively);
- 75.8 per cent of all single parents in rented tenure are single mothers;
- 42.1 per cent of all single mothers are in rented tenure, 56.5 per cent are home owners and 1.4 per cent are using premises free of charge;
- Only 22.4 per cent of households live in rented accommodation. The distribution by rent paid is highly uneven, with 51.3 per cent and 28.6 per cent of all households in rented accommodation paying only MTL1-50 and MTL51-100 respectively¹³;
- 75.8 per cent of all single parents in rented tenure are single mothers and
- 42.1 per cent of all single mothers are in rented tenure, 56.5 per cent are home owners and 1.4 per cent are using premises free of charge.

Key priority 10: Promoting the access to services faced by disadvantaged groups (persons with mental health problems, single mothers, victims of domestic violence, substance abusers, refugees and illegal immigrants).

Key data:

- The at-risk-of-poverty-rate of single mothers in 2000 stood at 55 per cent (EU15: 35 per cent in 1998);
- During the January-March 2004 the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women received 41 submissions for assistance (regarding mainly employment, dismissal, sexual harassment, maternity, parental issues, marital separations, domestic violence, social benefits and child care), and
- As from January 2002, Malta has assumed full responsibility for the management of asylum seekers. The level of illegal immigration into Malta was quite high throughout 2002, which saw the unprecedented arrival of some 1686 illegal immigrants; in 2003, 502 new cases were registered and 355 new cases were registered by 20 July 2004.

Key priority 11: Ensuring adequate and sustainable pensions.

Key data:

- The pensions are funded by contribution of 10 per cent each by employer and employee, with an additional 10 per cent coming from the Government;
- The self-employed persons pay 15 per cent, with 7.5 per cent coming from Government;

¹³ 1995 Census of Population and Housing

- The current system is running a moderate deficit of 1.2 per cent of GDP in 2003 and
- Based on projections from the World Bank, the deficits accelerate to 3.5 per cent of GDP by 2015 and to 4.7 per cent of GDP by 2030.

Target:

The pension regime is to be reviewed by January 2006, so as to ensure adequate and sustainable pensions.

Key priority 12: Regeneration of Grand Harbour Area so as to increase access to housing, employment and community care and social facilities.

Key data:

- 19.5 per cent of all dwellings in the Grand Harbour area are vacant, 38.6 per cent are dilapidated and only 3.3 per cent were built between 1991 and 1995;
- Higher incidence of long-term unemployment in Cottonera area in comparison to the national level;
- 35.2 per cent and 27.6 per cent of all unauthorised school absences accounted for by 23.5 per cent of all public primary school pupils in the Southern and Northern Harbour districts;
- 15.9 per cent and 11.6 per cent of men and women in South–Eastern district are illiterate;
- Pupils attending schools in the Inner Harbour region, had significantly lower average scores in Maltese and English language than pupils in other regions, even when home background was controlled for (2002 National Literacy Survey), and
- Malta’s regional cohesion index was 27 per cent in 2001.

III POLICY MEASURES

In the light of the analysis undertaken in this plan as well as in the Joint Inclusion Memorandum, and in view of the first three common objectives endorsed at Copenhagen, the most immediate policy priorities in relation to tackling poverty and social exclusion are:

- to provide appropriate incentives to take up work for target groups such as women, disabled persons, persons coming out of rehabilitation or institutional care (notably those without adequate education, skills or employment), persons engaged in the informal sector, etc. by putting in place re-training and up-skill courses as part of the employment routine in order to avoid risks of being low-paid;
- to raise the provision of vocational education, training and lifelong learning, and to increase the number of the respective students in order to improve employability and favour better jobs;
- to reform the social protection system to ensure its sustainability, adequacy and comprehensiveness in order to stimulate work culture and minimise welfare dependence;
- to reinforce the welfare of those who are dependent by setting up additional programs to: (i) address and prevent childhood poverty; (ii) assist further the disabled persons in their access to education, training, employment and housing in order to secure their welfare both in the short- and long-term, and (iii) provide support for the unemployed, the elderly, pensioners, persons with mental health problems and other groups, and
- to increase the housing supply and affordability for the most needy and target groups and, in particular, disabled persons, single parents, persons with mental health problems, victims of domestic violence and persons coming from rehabilitation or institutional care.

3.1 FACILITATING PARTICIPATION IN EMPLOYMENT

The key priorities are to increase:

- the current low female employment rate,
- employment and employability of vulnerable groups and
- the employment rate of persons aged 55 years and over.

Policy Instruments and Measures:

The “Empowerment Skills Programme” provided by Employment and Training Corporation helps women who wish to return to the labour market acquire those skills that are necessary to re-enter the world of work. At present those women who complete the course are not being traced, so as to assess if they have actually returned to the labour market or not. “Technology Skills for Women Returning to the Workforce” is a future project submitted for ESF funding by Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology. Its aim is to provide women returnees with new and transferable skills relating to the Customer Service Sector, leading to internationally recognised qualifications in ICT and Customer Service as well as entrepreneurship and employability skills.

The “Part-time Employment Register” provides assistance to those individuals, women in particular, who wish to take up part-time employment. However, the Register is still not set up officially by law. Job matching is done manually. These administrative obstacles lead to a slow and inefficient manner of tackling the problem.

The “Gender Equality Action Plan”, drawn up by Employment and Training Corporation, outlines initiatives that target female employment in a comprehensive way. However, the fact that this plan requires full collaboration from other entities, which at times is minimal, could be considered as its major weakness. “Increasing Female Participation through Childcare Services at the Workplace” is a future project aimed as an accompanying measure for all Structural Fund projects in order to prevent the loss of human potential and undue family stress as well as unemployment especially that of women with young children.

The Technical Committee on Child Day Care was set up in 2002 with the remit to develop and implement a national child day care policy and to draw up regulations and standards for child day care centres. The legislative framework which regulates the work of childcare services has not been yet established. A consultation process on the policy document and ensuing regulations is currently being conducted. The Ministry for Education, Youth and Employment is also planning to draw up an early childhood education policy which would complement the 0-3 policy. Legislation to support the regulatory framework for child day care centers for children under 3 will be drawn up by June 2005. The Department of Family Welfare is being restructured to assume the new functions of regulator.

The Employment and Training Corporation is embarking on a project called “Empowerment of disadvantaged groups”. This activity targets various disadvantaged groups, in particular women. This activity will be conducted between 2004 and 2007. The aim is to facilitate the entry to the labour market

and/or pursue the related training to improve skills and eligibility for employment and advancement. The specific target is to increase effective utilisation of available labour power, whilst promoting the self development and financial security of both women and men and their families. This activity will be financed by the European Social Fund.

To achieve this objective the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women will be co-ordinating an EQUAL project for "Promoting Equal Opportunities through Empowerment" which targets mainly women, and which is designed to reconcile work and family life. The target groups of this project are individuals from and stakeholders from all sectors including the social partners.

"Studies Related to Measures Aimed at Improving Gender Equality", is a project that has been submitted for ESF funding. It is co-ordinated by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women, and it is to be undertaken over the period 2004-2006. The project will focus on: research into the introduction of family-friendly measures at the workplace, a gender pay review, a tracer study to follow the career path and conditions of work of graduates in the labour market and a tele-working pilot project.

The "Bridging the Gap" scheme exposes the disadvantaged groups (disabled persons and persons with mental health problems in particular) to real work situations and provides temporary financial assistance to employers. Co-operation agreements with NGOs provide more individualised training to disadvantaged groups who are seeking work. Training is geared towards the taking up of a job.

The "Supported employment scheme for persons with disability" is a new Employment and Training Corporation scheme submitted for ESF funding which aims at providing incentives to employers to recruit disabled persons through financial assistance. The strengths and weaknesses of this activity are still early to be determined.

"On-the-job training" organised by the Employment and Training Corporation for long-term unemployed and other workers provides individualised training to workers who have specific problems in finding employment. However, the major weakness is that the training provided, may not be in line with the labour market needs.

"Foundation Training Programme for Adults", "Retraining and Reskilling of Workers for the Building and Construction Industry", "Preservation of traditional Maltese crafts" and "Retraining and Reskilling of Engineering and Electronics Workers" are five more projects submitted by MCAST for funding from the ESF. These projects are all aimed at vocational training for youths and adults in several areas designed to match candidates to a trade/skills for which he or she is best suited, leading to a recognised qualification in a specific area of

specialisation. The projects are also aimed at unemployed from the building, construction, electronics, crafts and engineering sectors to provide them with new skills for the expanding building industry and new and transferable engineering skills for domestic and commercial environments.

“Supported Employment Programme” co-ordinated by the Richmond Foundation provides on-going support to persons with mental health problems at the place of work. This programme is beneficial as it is introducing the concept of diversity at the place of work and helps reduce the dependency that persons with mental health problems have on social benefits. The major weakness of this programme is that it lacks human resources.

The Business Promotion Act grants tax incentives for the recruitment of persons belonging to particular groups. These incentives have been launched in February 2003, but have not yet been fully utilised.

The Employment and Training Corporation’s “Youth Outreach Programme” provides training in job-searching skills to youths living in deprived areas. At present, the frequency of visits by youths to employers is rather low. It is expected that the visits will increase following the evaluation of the programme.

The Employment and Training Corporation is organising courses which are all open to persons who are 55 years and over and it also focuses particularly on persons who are 40 years of age and over. These courses aim to offer incentives to both employers and inactive older persons. In the period October 2002 to September 2003 almost 400 persons who were 40 years and over were placed in work, while 800 persons over 50 years of age attended Employment and Training Corporation courses. As regards employment schemes, the Employment and Training Corporation has not yet developed any schemes for persons 55 years of age. However, the introduction of the “Training Employment Exposure Scheme” to assist unemployed who are 40 years of age to enter the labour market and to prevent their long-term unemployment is planned and this project has been submitted by Employment and Training Corporation for funding by the ESF.

In 2002, a Profiling System was introduced (due to be finalised by the end of 2004), to identify the aptitude and motivations of the registered unemployed. It is evident that the employers’ prefer to engage younger people. Older inactive persons tend to have outdated skills, thus making it harder for employers to recruit them; at the same time they often find it difficult to train in areas that are different to those they work in, and they tend to resist training or to believe it is inappropriate for them.

In view of the Employment and Training Corporation’s future policy to strengthen and extend current services, “Personalised Action Plans”, due to start by beginning of 2005, will be developed to target all socially excluded groups while

a working group will be set up in October 2004 to define the disadvantaged groups in the labour market. The Personalised Action Plans will offer preventive measures i.e. job-search and guidance, to youths and adults at an earlier stage. Target groups include all youths unemployed for up to four months and all adults unemployed for up to eight months.

The social welfare agency Appogg is encouraging service users to seek employment, linking them to resources and to employment programmes by working hand in hand with the Employment and Training Corporation which is developing specific training programmes for vulnerable target groups. Such target groups include: adolescents and vulnerable persons including victims of domestic violence, single parents and persons with mental health difficulties. Agenzija Appogg has submitted a project proposal for the “Training and Support for Labour Market Integration of Socially Excluded Persons” for ESF funding. The aim of this project is to train staff in monitoring and support services for social welfare and community services, youth work, disabled and abused work, domestic violence, addicted persons, correctional inmates case management, evaluation systems, and for persons in care who need social work support, in order to integrate in the labour market while targeting young registrants at their fourth and fifth month of unemployment with preventive and active measures respectively, encouraging them to take up a traineeship or apprenticeship should help them to avoid long-term unemployability.

A project under EQUAL has been submitted and it aims to meet the housing and employability needs of young persons leaving care. This is quite an innovative approach on the local scene involving Housing Authority and Employment and Training Corporation and it is hoped that it will serve as a pilot project on a larger scale or for other types of synergies.

The “National Basic Skills Strategy and Plan”, targeted to be ready by end 2005, involves strengthening the forum of basic skills providers in Malta currently coordinated by the Foundation for Educational Services through a European Union Reprise Project led by the UK-based Basic Skills Agency. This project aims to target students at risk of school failure, youth dropouts needing a second chance, women who wish to gain such skills in support of their children’s learning and unemployed and underemployed adults lacking basic skills.

In regard to the future policy of gender mainstreaming all Employment and Training Corporation services, one of the Gender Equality Action Plan Measures that will be conducted in the future is “Lone Parents Pilot Project” which involves co-ordination of provision and purchase of services to enable 12 lone mothers to train and work. The target group involves 12 lone mothers, and the activity is due to start in 2005.

3.2 PROMOTING ACCESS TO RESOURCES, RIGHTS, GOODS AND SERVICES

The main priorities are to:

- ensure the sustainability and adequacy of the social protection system in view of future socio-demographic changes;
- to tackle illiteracy and educational underachievement;
- to increase the housing supply and affordability for the most needy, and
- to promote disadvantaged groups' access to services.

Policy Instruments and Measures:

A wide range of contributory and non-contributory social benefits and allowances are available to the most needy persons and families. A universal social assistance scheme, aimed at guaranteeing a minimum income is also in place for Maltese citizens. Given socio-demographic pressures, ensuring sustainable adequate pensions is a national priority. A White Paper aimed at fostering a national discussion on the issue will be published after mid 2004. It is expected that the necessary steps will be taken over the following months.

The Department for Social Security intends to expand further its activities within the Fraud and Investigations Section against Benefit Fraud. It plans to conduct a training activity together with the Employment and Training Corporation in conjunction with the UK Department of Works and Pensions. The Employment and Training Corporation's Law Compliance Unit has been set up in order to ensure that persons registering for work are not found working while registering. Services offered by this Unit will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure better performance levels in detecting law infringements. The aim of this joint activity is to ensure the transfer towards formal (official) employment. The activity is planned to be conducted in October 2004.

"NWAR" is a secondary prevention after-school family literacy programme. This programme has proved to be successful since students, whom schools and teachers had given up for un-teachable, learned to read and write in a few weeks using innovative methodology. Moreover, parents are involved throughout the whole process.

National Literacy and Numeracy Surveys are conducted by Education Division and University of Malta. These surveys provide schools with indicators of their students' attainment and provide national benchmark.

"Literacy for Employment Programmes" set up by Employment and Training Corporation in collaboration with Local Councils, the University of Malta, employers and Paulo Freire Institute provide individualised training to illiterate

persons at different locations in Malta. Continuous monitoring of the programmes needs to be done in order to achieve good results. Training has to be geared towards finding suitable employment, so as to make the effort productive. In some instances additional training (in terms of added number of hours) is necessary. The Employment and Training Corporation has also submitted an ESF application for a project entitled “Literacy Programme for Those Seeking Employment” which is targeted to those unemployed lacking basic literacy and numeracy skills

The Foundation for Educational Services has submitted project proposal entitled “Initiating and Managing Community-based life-long learning Centres” for ESF funding, which will be an innovative way of tackling Malta’s illiteracy problems through outreach centres that will be established in the local communities, while the same Ministry has submitted another ESF project application entitled “Training of Inclusion Co-ordinators” in order to produce specialised teachers who may identify and assist vulnerable students from an early stage to be integrated with the least difficulty into society.

“Assist” programme offers technical assistance to secondary schools in order to develop effective in-school literacy strategies and resources. This service is co-ordinated by the Foundation for Educational Services.

The Education Division currently provides classroom learning support by facilitators to students with a disability. This service promotes inclusion in the mainstream education however this service is not attracting the number of professional trained personnel required and the cadre of facilitators lacks an effective central co-ordination mechanism. The Ministry for Education, Youth, and Employment will conduct a review of inclusive education and special education sector with the aim of analysing current service provision in both sectors and to make concrete proposals to meet better current emerging needs. This Review is planned to be conducted by the end of 2006.

An “Information and Communication Technology Training Programme” has also been submitted for ESF funding by the Ministry for Education, Youth and Employment, focusing on the ICT educational skills training and certification for teachers throughout the Maltese Islands.

The social welfare agency Appogg, through a subsidiary organisation named Access, has submitted an application for ESF funding of a project designed to provide an employment, training and information centre for disadvantaged women in the south of Malta, in conjunction with the Malta Association for Women in Business.

Programme “Ghozza” (previously known as School Mothers’ Unit) provides a specialised programme for young mothers who still attend school. This programme provides a support service and educational programme to single,

pregnant young minors. The programme is intended to help service-users adopt a positive attitude towards motherhood whilst empowering them to pursue their education and career path. Its major weakness is lack of clear policy regarding transition from this programme to re-insertion in school.

The publication of Career Guidance Policy for Schools (by October 2005) aims at creating an operative and conceptual framework to the area of career guidance. It will particularly pay attention to the students at risk of dropping out and school failure in order to equip them with the necessary skills for self-managing their educational and occupational paths; a gender mainstreaming approach will be adopted.

A Malta Enterprise lead Development Partnership has presented an EQUAL funded project for Entrepreneurship of persons suffering discrimination and inequality and will be designed specifically to assist the start-up of businesses by vulnerable groups, particularly women.

Furthermore, EQUAL will also fund a project designed to assist Asylum Seekers with status to integrate into the Maltese labour market and this project, lead by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity will form a partnerships of leading NGOs who are actively involved in the refugee sector.

The Housing Authority offers a number of schemes and initiatives with the aim of providing a more holistic service to its clients. They involve subsidized newly built units for sale, rental subsidy, grants to repair one's home, care and repair scheme. Ongoing evaluation takes place to rationalize Housing Authority schemes and to make them more relevant to the emerging needs of its clients. There is a need for more outreach approach, and targeting of those in greatest need. The vision is to create more pro-active approaches/activities from the Authority's part. The plan of this activity is due to be drawn up by spring 2005 when it will be submitted to the Housing Authority Board for consideration and possible implementation. Given the population aging in Malta, the need to target elderly people who are often the least informed about the current HA schemes, goes hand in hand with the Government's policy of supporting independent living in the community.

The "Rent Subsidy Scheme" is utilised by a number of vulnerable clients who cannot purchase property. However, its weakness is that sometimes it is insufficient to render affordable rental properties on the private market today. The housing costs contribute in part to this situation given that they are considered to be one of the main factors giving rise to poverty in Malta and single parents (who are mainly women) pay the highest average annual rent of all types of households.

Two shelters for homeless persons are currently available. These are run by two NGOs and are partially funded by Government. The major problem is that

homelessness is usually coupled with unemployment and often stems from families with difficulties. In this area there is room for further networking and wider use of resources and the project proposal involving Housing Authority and Employment and Training Corporation (mentioned above) is a pioneer example of a strategic approach to this problem.

The agency Sapport provides a number of residential and community-based services to persons with disabilities. "Community Services" in the form of individualised personalised assistance and intervention services allow service users greater levels of support and independence. Residential Services provide alternative accommodations with individualised support. This service promotes deinstitutionalization and community inclusion.

A number of NGOs, including the Jesuit Refugee Service, Peace Laboratory Kummissjoni Emigranti and the Malta Red Cross, work with asylum seekers both in detention as well as in the community. A unit was set up to co-ordinate services that are provided by NGOs working in the field while a national policy on asylum seekers will be drawn up. Further initiative will be taken to consolidate the services to asylum seekers living in open centres to help them integrate in the community.

The "Access Complex" provides a one-stop-shop for employment and social services to individuals living in the Cottonera region. The project named "Youth@Risk Project" will target young persons living in the Inner Harbor Region. This project is due to be conducted in the period 2004-2005 and the Youth Section of the Ministry for Education, Youth and Employment.

A campaign to increase the awareness of children's rights, in accordance to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, co-ordinated by the Commissioner for Children in collaboration with Appogg, Ministry for Education, Youth and Employment and the Foundation for Educational Services, will be launched by the end of 2004 and will last up to July 2007. Several children, parents, educators and youth leaders will be included in this project. The aims include increasing awareness of children's rights, giving children a voice, and enhancing children's participation.

For the first time Malta has a National Youth Policy that has been endorsed by the Cabinet of Ministers which makes the approach towards this stratum of population more structured than the previously adopted method of improvisation. This policy will be implemented in phases during the coming years.

During 2005, Government will roll out its plan to safeguard the sustainability of quality health, whilst ensuring equity in the provision and access of these services. Moreover, health promotion will target in a more focused manner lower socio-economic groups, including individuals with low disposable income, low level of education, low standard of living and unemployed and the chronically ill

who may be more at risk of poverty. This activity will be carried out by Ministry for Health, the Elderly and Community in collaboration with other entities including the Education Division. The policy orientation of the health care reforms aims towards an integrated approach, a client-centered policy, an outcome driven (evidence based) health sector and financial sustainability.

The Institute of Health Care of the University of Malta has launched the first degree programme in psychiatric nursing. The direct-entry degree course was set up due to the shortage of qualified mental health nurses in Malta.

Government is currently working on a restructuring exercise of the social housing sector in Malta. This exercise is aimed to rationalize the services already offered and to provide a more flexible structure to respond to the emerging needs within this sector.

3.3 PREVENTING THE RISK OF EXCLUSION

The main priorities are to:

- To enhance rights and safeguard equal opportunities in a scenario of both spouses participating in working life, through further support stemming from gender-based policies;
- To improve the preventive aspect of the current and future programmes ensuring the alleviation of risks of poverty and social exclusion occurring from early / school age through an early identification of children and youth at risk and
- To set up educational activities, programmes and projects offering guidance on issues such as allocation of family responsibilities, prioritisation of means among all family members.

Policy Instruments and Measures:

Aiming to safeguard the right to equal opportunities the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women acts upon complaints and requests for assistance and has a power to take concrete action, including legal action, which ensures greater compliance to the provisions of the Act to Promote Equality for Men and Women. The Commission monitors calls for application, advertising and other promotional material, so as to avoid discrimination between men and women is identified and redress obtained. However, since the concept is new, some resistance is met and reparation is prolonged. A national media campaign regarding the Act on the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women is being planned by National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women.

The Student Services (psychologists, social workers, counsellors) within the Education Division provide individualised and professional service to students who are in need of guidance, care, protection and support. Its major limitation is that it is difficult to find trained personnel to provide such service. "School Social Work Service" is provided by professionals that facilitate home-school link. The main limitation is that it is difficult to find trained personnel.

Youth Section of Ministry for Education, Youth and Employment will be conducting a project aimed at evaluation of crime and violence prevention measures and crime rehabilitation programmes in the context of social exclusion of youth. Projects conducted by youth organisations with this theme will be given priority over other projects assisted financially in the Youth Support Programme. This project will be conducted in 2006 under the Youth Support Programme.

Caritas (Malta) is planning to set up an in-house vocational training, education and guidance service for drug users in residential rehabilitation. This service would also target employers in Malta increasing the information and awareness of this disadvantaged group and the importance of employment in fostering the social inclusion of ex-drug abusers. The target groups are drug users with and without a criminal record in the Caritas New Hope drug rehabilitation programmes, but also the employers (key stakeholders in social inclusion), the general Maltese public (to address the discrimination of this particular group) etc. The time frame is between 1 July 2004 to 31 December 2005. An application for funding available from the European Union National Awareness Raising Actions on Social Inclusion fund has been submitted in June 2004.

3.4 HELPING THE MOST VULNERABLE

The main priorities are to:

- Further promote child welfare;
- Develop comprehensive legal framework for children's services and
- Focus attention on particular groups of children who are at highest risk of poverty: children of single parents, parents who are in institutional care of prison, children suffering abuse at home, children in care or leaving care.

Policy Instruments and Measures:

Agency Appogg offers a host of services aimed at children in need; these include:

Child Protection Service: This service provides a procedural framework for the protection of children who are suffering, or are in danger of suffering from child abuse and/neglect. A team of professionals carries out investigations,

assessments and follow-up sessions children and families facing problems of child abuse/neglect. A multi-disciplinary and inter-agency approach is adopted when delivering such a service.

Looked After Children Service: This service aims to enhance the welfare of children in care, whether in foster or residential placements, through assessing the individual needs of the children and intervene in their best interest. The unit coordinates the intervention of professionals, promote children participation and include the family in planning the best care for the looked after child. The High Support Service and the Weekend Support Service are support services which are offered to looked after children who are require particular attention.

Fostering: The aim of this service is to create opportunities for children requiring short or long-term care to be placed in safe and nurturing families that will address the child's needs. Support services are offered to the fostering family, the family of origin and the children themselves.

Supervised Access Visits: Supervised parent-child contacts are carried out in those circumstances where separated parents encounter difficulties related to custody and access arrangements.

Supportline 179 operates 24 hours a day throughout the week including weekends and public holidays. It serves the society at large and provides information and support service, and the option of seeking professional help through referrals made to units within 'Appogg' and other agencies.

The Coordinated Response Team within Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity was set up to co-ordinate better the existing services available to victims of domestic violence and to identify other services that may be needed. It has drawn up guidelines for police officials on how to deal with cases related to domestic violence. Discussions on how these guidelines will be implemented are currently being held with the Police Commissioner.

The Coordinated Response Team is also studying the problem of domestic violence from a regional perspective. Research related to the prevalence of domestic violence in Gozo is currently underway.

The Domestic Violence Service offered by Appogg offers psychological and social work services to victims of domestic violence. The government through Appogg has opened an emergency shelter and partly funds three shelters for domestic violence which are run by NGOs. Parliament will be discussing legislation with regards to domestic violence.

The "Adolescent Outreach Programme" aimed specifically at adolescents with behavioural difficulties is to start by the end of 2004 and it will be run by Appogg

conjointly with Sedqa, Probation Services and the Ministry for Education, Youth and Employment.

“Homestart” is a new prevention project of the agency Appogg, with a specific target at families with children at risk under age of 5 years. This community based project would promote the work of volunteers and will be launched by the end of 2004 in a deprived community.

Sedqa’s main objective is to provide professional assistance to persons experiencing problems related to substance misuse and their families. The agency facilitates the re-entry of such persons in society through activities such as community based interventions and residential rehabilitation. “Methadone maintenance” has achieved high success rate of harm reduction and stabilization of the clients. Social acceptance and the reintegration of the clients in the society remain two of the major challenges.

San Blas Programme is one of the drug rehabilitation programmes, run by New Hope Foundation (Caritas Malta) and heavily subsidised by Government. This programme is for self-referred clients and offers a safe environment. The management of clients, who also experience problems of mental health nature, and the programme’s retention rate, remain two of the major problems. There is a need to offer specific treatment to women and increase the amount of educational classes. This foundation also offers another drug rehabilitation programme known as the Prison Inmates Programme. This programme caters for clients referred from the Corradino Correctional Facility.

The National Commission Persons with Disability has decided that over the next two years, it improves on the efficiency of the present activities, namely information to disabled persons and their families about their rights, especially in the light of the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act, rather than conducting new activities. It will continue fostering awareness of existing opportunities, support services and other available resources whilst ensuring the necessary collaboration between various educational and training institutions as well as disabled people and their representative organisations.

The Housing Authority will be presenting a report by the end of August 2004 with proposals on how to increase accessibility to affordable rental housing. The target groups include: separated parents and those leaving domestic violence; young people leaving institutions; persons with disability and mental health problems; persons on low income and social assistance; persons seeking housing at an advanced age where they cannot afford to purchase.

Suret il-Bniedem and YMCA are two NGOs, both of which partially funded by Government, that provide shelter to a number of individuals who would otherwise remain homeless. The main client groups of these shelters include, refugees,

persons with mental health problems, persons with a history of drug abuse, amongst others.

Department of Family Welfare is changing its role from being a social work service provider to a regulatory body. This initiative is intended to address existing lacunae in regulations, establishing care standards in welfare services, licensing, monitoring and inspecting services. Priority is being given to Children services, with special emphasis to Children's Homes and to Child Day-Care Centers. It is anticipated that through regulation the quality of services will be improved and that children's rights will be better safeguarded.

A Social Work Board has been appointed by the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity in accordance with the Social Work Act to regulate the social work profession and ensure the necessary professional standards and ethics. The process of warranting the social work profession would be initiated in the coming months.

A new bill discussing the regulation of the psychology profession is currently being discussed in Parliament. Once the proposed bill is enacted by the Parliament, the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity would be responsible to implement the legislation.

The Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity would continue to promote the involvement of NGO's in providing social welfare services. The Ministry intends to continue to offer financial support to NGO's who provide social welfare services. Every year, NGO's are asked to submit project proposals and evaluation reports to a Selection Committee who would recommend the necessary funding for the different projects. The Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity would draw up proposals for legislative measures to register and regulate the operations of non-governmental organizations.

The Ministry for Health will resume the reform in health services so as to insure continued quality health care services to those who are least able to afford it.

IV INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The work on Malta's National Action Plan 2004-2006 was conducted within a framework encompassing all interested parties so as to ensure a strategic and multi-dimensional approach, typical of a coherent national action plan process. The mainstreaming of gender, disability and mental health issues within the wider framework of fight against poverty and social exclusion has been dominant throughout the process.

A large number of government departments, voluntary organisations, trade unions and religious organisations have been involved in the consultation and development process of the NAP/Inclusion, which consisted of three key phases.

Consultation Phase 1 involved research, preliminary consultation through focus group workshops and initial drafting. A questionnaire was distributed to all stakeholders during this phase, which served for an early drafting of the NAP/Inclusion. However, not all questionnaires were returned to the NAP working team and a number of them arrived at a very late stage. Moreover, there was a lack of a focused and centered approach in provision of information, which created a need for further consultations and amendments of the inputs. This has exacerbated further the initial problem of lack of time, and pressure on the team.

During the Consultation Phase 1 all the stakeholders were divided into four relatively homogeneous groups. The meetings were organized between 17 and 21 May 2004, the latter date also being a deadline for the submission of the questionnaires. Below is the list of focus group participants:

Focus Group 1: Disadvantaged Groups

Probation Services
Corradino Correctional Facilities
National Mental Health Commission
Emigrants' Commission
Jesuit Refugee Service
Discern-Malta
Caritas-Malta
Malta Gay Rights Movement
Foundation for Social Work Services
Richmond Foundation
Dar Merhba Bik
Youth Section – Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment
Paulo Freire Institute

Focus Group 2: Family Life

National Family Commission
Employment and Training Corporation
National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women
Department for Community Services and Elderly
National Commission Persons with Disability
National Council for Disabled Persons
Commissioner for Children
SOS-Malta
Agenzija Appogg
Department of Family Welfare
Foundation for Educational Services

Focus Group 3: Labour Market and Welfare State

Education Division
Department for Economic Policy
Union Haddiema Maghqudin
Employment and Training Corporation
Malta Employers Association
Budget Office - Ministry of Finance
Paulo Freire Institute
General Workers' Union
National Commission Persons with Disability
National Statistics Office
Department for Social Security
EU-Directorate – Ministry of Family and Social Solidarity
DISCERN - Malta
Foundation for Educational Services
Centre for Faith and Justice
Ministry for Education, Youth and Employment

Focus Group 4: Housing and Living Conditions

Malta Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise
Malta Environment and Planning Authority
Housing Authority

Consultation Phase 2 started with the Seminar on NAP/Inclusion, which was held on the 11th June 2004. The Seminar consisted of plenary sessions and four working group sessions. The discussions in working groups were evaluated as very useful, focused and constructive. The rapporteurs to the plenary session expressed their wish that similar type of gatherings should be repeated in the future.

List of Invitees to the Seminar:

Agenzija Appogg
Agenzija Sapport
Agenzija Sedqa
Caritas-Malta
Co-ordinated Response Team on Domestic Violence
Commissioner for Children
DISCERN – Malta
Corradino Correctional Facility
Dar Merhba Bik
Department of Family Welfare
Department for Social Housing
Department for Social Security - Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity
Department for Economic Strategy
Employment and Training Corporation
Emigrants' Commission
Federation of Industry
Foundation for Social Welfare Services
General Retailers and Traders Union
General Workers Union
Jesuit Refugee Service
Jesuit Faith and Justice Centre
Malta Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise
Malta Council for Economic and Social Development
Malta Employers' Association
Malta Environment and Planning Authority
Malta Federation of Industry
Malta Gay Rights Movement
Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment
Ministry for Gozo
Ministry of Finance
National Association of Pensioners
National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women
National Commission Persons with Disability
National Council of Women
National Family Commission
National Statistics Office
Opposition's Spokesperson for Social Solidarity
Probation Services Office
Richmond Fellowship of Malta foundations
SOS-Malta
Suret il-Bniedem
Union Haddiema Maghqudin
YMCA

On the 15 June 2004, another special focus group was held at the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity with those representatives of disadvantaged groups who did not take part in focus groups and seminar activities, namely: victims of domestic violence, illegal immigrants, persons with mental health and

unemployed parents with several children living in poverty. Meetings were also envisaged with children, homeless and persons with substance abuse problems; however these did not materialize due to organizational and time constraints. One of the major problems envisaged here was how to rope them in for future meetings, activities and collaboration. It was obvious that while some of the disadvantaged groups in Malta were very well organized (Malta Gay Right Movement in particular, with clearly defined objectives and plan of action) others groups were very much left alone without clear vision how to help themselves. It has been remarked that with closer collaboration with Local Councils, parish priests and NGOs already working in the field a lot more could be done to access the disadvantaged groups and conduct more frequent dialogues at the local level.

Focus Group 5: Representatives of Disadvantaged Groups (Persons experiencing Poverty and Social Exclusion)

Young men seeking refugee/humanitarian status
Victims of domestic violence
Unemployed couple with 9 children living in sub-standard housing
Middle-aged women experiencing mental health problems

This Focus group has been organized in collaboration with EAPN-Malta which is currently being set-up.

Consultation Phase 3: Review of NAP/Inclusion - July 2004

The Consultation Phase 3 started with an in-depth look at the NAP/Inclusion first draft by three Maltese experts in this field (a university lecturer, a statistician and a government officer). Once their feedback was received and amendments included all the stakeholders irrespective whether they have submitted the NAP/Inclusion questionnaire or not were invited to review and comment on the first outline version of the NAP/Inclusion.

Consultation Phase 4: Review by the Cabinet of Ministers – July 2004

The final draft version of the NAP/Inclusion was reviewed by Cabinet on the 26 July 2004.

It has been recognized that there is a greater need for wider utilisation of media to convey the message regarding the equality. However, it has been pointed out that the media might sometimes take a biased angle when portraying the disadvantaged groups and recently the Guidelines Regarding Participation in Media Programmes of Vulnerable Persons have been proposed.

The NAP/Inclusion development process was also an opportunity to shed some light on the need for improvement in written policy skills at all levels and within all

involved departments. Also, it has been recognised that efforts should be made to ensure that all involved institutions should avoid duplication in the provision of their services and instead offer a holistic approach to the well-being of their clients.

There is great need for an enhanced overall inter-departmental co-operation in gathering the information provided by the field operators on service users' views and unmet needs, in order to be used in policy formulation and decision making processes.

It is envisaged by several participants that further outreach need to be achieved in the future and a key priority is the fostering of dialogue and more involvement of the target groups themselves. The National Commission Persons with Disability is one such commission which could serve as an example of a continuous, systematic and comprehensive approach that would lead to visibility and final results leading to improvement of the position of the disabled persons. Focused groups involving respective NGOs as well as workshop based gatherings are also suggested. The creation of EAPN-Malta is currently underway. It is hoped that EAPN-Malta will be in a position to give their evaluation of the NAP as well as to participate in future NAP/Inclusion seminars.

Government will entrust the Department of Family Welfare and the Foundation for Social Welfare Services with the prime responsibility to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plan and how the various actors will be involved in this process.

V. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. ACCESS Community Resource Centre

“ACCESS” is a government run entity which brings together various entities to work closely within the Cottonera Area, addressing the various needs of persons within the locality. The complex includes the Cottonera Community Service and Smart Kids of Appogg, Employment Training Corporation, Social Security Department, Adult Training Centre and Housing Authority. Moreover various activities and involving other community entities are run in the centre, while through the Cottonera Community Service other community development projects are initiated and/or supported, enabling and empowering various community resources and members of the community to actively participate in addressing various emerging needs within their own community.

2. Improving literacy amongst children

The programmes coordinated and managed by the Foundation of Educational Services (Hilti, NWAR, etc) are a good example of multi-disciplinary action being taken within the Education sector. The programmes involve the students, professionals and parents. There is also involvement of teachers and other school staff. Some local councils are also being involved in the learning process. The aim is to improve literacy especially amongst those at risk. Improving literacy increases ones chances of finding productive employment and thus moving out of the poverty bracket and enhances further social inclusion.

3. Employment and Training Initiatives

The Employment and Training Corporation signed a series of co-operation agreements with a series of non-governmental organisations. The organisations include: the Eden Foundation; the Literacy Unit of the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta and the Paulo Freire Institute; Caritas and Richmond Foundation. The Agreements are a source of close collaboration between the Corporation and a number of NGOs and seek to address the employment and training needs of socially excluded groups.

The co-operation agreement with the Literacy Unit of the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta and the Paulo Freire Institute will be highlighted for the purpose of this Section. The aim of this agreement is to provide special tutorship to unemployed trainees, especially adults, by the Literacy Unit at the Paulo Freire Institute in Zejtun. Unemployed trainees can join the programme on a voluntary basis where, in addition to literacy coaching, they receive individual support and encouragement by a number of volunteers.

The Agreement states that both the Institute and the University are responsible mainly for: the administering the project, providing the premises and executing the literacy programme, which including the identification and training of volunteers. The literacy programme, which was developed purposively for this agreement by the Literacy Unit, aims at increasing the employability of participants and thereby open up a number of job opportunities to them on completion of the course. Meanwhile, the Corporation binds itself to pay and provide resources to the project partners and refer a minimum number of trainees per year to the Project.

The course consists of 10 hours of training per week for four months. Training to participants is given on an individual basis. Every participant is monitored with the help of a Learner's Progress Sheet and description of lessons. The Agreement was launched in 2000 and is still in operation to date.

4. Co-Operation Agreement with the Richmond Foundation Malta

The purpose of this agreement is to provide a three-phased programme for Employment and Training Corporation clients with mental health difficulties. The first part of the Programme referred to as the Transition Training Programme aims at increasing the clients' personal development and equips them with the necessary social skills for employment. The Work Exposure Programme trains clients in the proposed job at the place of work while the Job Placement Support Programme places clients in gainful employment and provides them with suitable job support services. The Agreement also provides for the provision of follow-up services after the job-coaching period. The nature and length of these services are agreed upon between the Foundation and the Corporation and are based on the clients' individuals needs. The agreement states that the Richmond Foundation is responsible mainly for: the design and organisation of the three programmes as well as the identification and training of the necessary Project Workers and Job Support Officers. Meanwhile, the Corporation is mainly responsible for paying the Foundation as stated in the agreement.

Annexes

Annex 1

Table 1: Main economic indicators, 1998-2003

Economic Indicator	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
National Income and Expenditure						
GDP at current market prices (MTL million)	1,362.3	1,456.1	1,558.2	1,630.4	1,685.6	1,712.2
% change	5.8	6.9	7.0	4.6	3.4	1.6
GDP at constant prices (MTL million)	1,291.8	1,344.2	1,428.9	1,413.0	1,444.8	1,419.6
% change	3.4	4.1	6.3	-1.1	2.3	-1.7
GDP per capita (MTL)	3,599	3,829	3,981	4,131	4,243	4,282
Consumer expenditure (constant prices) (%)	2.5	6.1	7.4	1.7	2.6	0.3
Government current expenditure (constant prices) (%)	-4	-0.6	4.9	3.0	2.8	6.0
Gross fixed capital formation (constant prices) (%)	-3.4	4.0	17.4	-11.1	-13.3	21.2
Real Labour Productivity Growth	n.a	n.a.	4.3	-1.6	2.3	-0.9
Foreign trade (MTL million)						
Domestic exports (f.o.b.)	664.8	712.5	977.5	790.8	797.3	817.5
Re-exports	47.2	78.5	94.9	89.8	163.4	112.5
Imports (c.i.f.)	1,034.90	1,135.80	1,492.40	1,225.10	1,227.50	1,279.8
Balance of Payments						
Exports of goods and services (MTL million)	1,166.80	1,292.70	1,572.80	1,398.00	1,401.80	1,420.64
Imports of goods and services (MTL million)	1,248.10	1,371.90	1,740.10	1,475.90	1,473.00	1,517.37
Resource gap (MTL million)	-81.4	-79.2	-167.3	-77.8	-71.1	-96.7
Current account balance (MTL million)	-84.5	-49.3	-209.2	-77.3	-78.1	-101.7
Current account balance, % of GDP	-6.2	-3.4	-13.4	-4.7	-4.6	-5.9
Employment¹						
Employed persons (000)	n.a	n.a	145.2	145.6	148.4	148.8
Unemployment rate	n.a.	n.a.	6.5	6.5	7.5	8.2
Tourism						
Tourist arrivals (000)	1,182.20	1,214.20	1,215.70	1,180.10	1,133.80	1,126.60
Gross earnings from tourism (MTL million)	254.6	271.4	268.2	260.7	246.3	261.5
Inflation rate (%)						
	2.4	1.9	1.5	2.8	2.2	1.3
Public finance						
General government balance as a % of GDP	-10.8	-8.2	-6.9	-6.8	-6.2	-9.7

Notes: (1) LFS data: employed persons, Eurostat data: employment rates

Source: National Statistics Office, Employment and Training Corporation, Ministry of Finance

Table 2: Employment indicators, Malta, 2001-2003

Indicator	Malta, Dec. 2002			Malta, Dec. 2003			Malta, Jan-Mar. 2004			EU15, 2002			EU15, 2003		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Employment rate	54.5	74.2	34.5	53.7	74.2	34.5	54.4	75.7	32.8	64.3	72.8	55.6	64.4	72.6	56.0
Unemployment rate	7.5	6.5	9.6	8.2	6.8	11.3	7.2	6.9	8.0	7.7	7.0	8.7	8.1	7.4	8.9

Source: LFS, NSO and Eurostat

Table 3: Self-employment, Malta, 2002-2003

	December 2002			December 2003		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Self employed	14.0	17.8	5.4	14.3	17.1	8.0

Source: LFS, NSO

Table 4: Unemployed persons by duration of job-search, 2002-2004

Duration of job search	December 2002			December 2003			January- March 2004		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
5 months and less	36.9	25.5	55.3	31.1	30.7	32.0	27.2	21.7	37.9
6-11 months	15.1	14.0	16.9	19.9	14.8	29.4	17.7	15.9	21.4
12 months and over	48.0	60.5	27.8	49.3	54.5	38.6	55.1	62.4	40.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: LFS 2002-2003 and January-March 2004, NSO

Table 5: Labour force by educational level and gender, 2001-2003

Educational level	December 2001			December 2002			June 2003		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
No schooling	0.7	0.8	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.8	1.1	0.1
Primary	19.7	23.2	11.3	18.3	21.8	10.7	16.6	19.9	9.4
Secondary (general)	45.2	42.4	51.8	44.1	42.9	46.9	45.3	43.6	49.2
Secondary (vocational)	8.4	10.3	3.8	8.4	10.7	3.4	7.5	9.4	3.5
Post-secondary (general)	9.9	8.1	14.1	10.4	7.9	15.7	9.5	7.4	14.2
Post-secondary (vocational)	5.4	5.9	4.4	5.7	6.0	5.1	7.7	8.2	6.7
University diploma	2.5	2.0	3.8	3.2	2.5	4.8	3.1	2.6	4.3
First degree	7.0	6.0	9.5	7.4	5.7	11	7.7	6.3	10.9
Masters	0.9	1.0	0.7	1.7	1.5	2.2	1.0 ¹	1.0	1.2
Ph.D.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.6	-	0.5	0.6	0.4
Special school for persons with disabilities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note:(1) under-represented

Source: Labour Force Survey, 2001-2003

Table 6: Employed persons by economic activity, 2002-2004 (%)

Economic Activity	December 2002			December 2003			Jan.- March 2004			EU 15
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	2001
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	1.8	2.3	0.4	1.7	2.3	0.4	1.9	2.5	0.8	
Fishing	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.6	-	0.2	0.3	-	3.9
Mining and quarrying	0.5	0.7	-	0.7	0.9	0.2	0.5	0.7	-	-
Manufacturing	19.1	18.6	20.1	19.1	20.4	16.3	19.4	20.1	18.1	19.8
Electricity, gas and water supply	2.5	3.2	0.9	2.8	3.8	0.6	2.1	2.8	0.3	-
Construction	8.1	11.3	1.1	7.6	10.7	0.8	7.8	10.9	0.9	7.9
Wholesale and retail trade, repairs of household goods and vehicles	14	14.7	12.5	15.1	14.2	17.0	14.6	15.2	13.3	14.7
Hotels and restaurants	8.8	8.8	8.9	8.1	7.3	9.7	8.4	8.1	9.0	4.0
Transport, storage and communications	8.6	9.8	6.0	7.7	8.6	5.8	8.5	9.6	6.2	6.3
Financial intermediation	3.9	2.8	6.2	3.6	2.6	5.8	4.1	3.7	4.9	3.4
Real estate, leases and business activities	4.9	5.3	4.1	4.9	5.1	4.7	5.0	4.7	5.7	8.9
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	8.4	9.1	6.9	9.0	9.8	7.3	8.2	9.4	5.7	7.7
Education	7.9	4.6	15.4	7.4	4.0	14.7	7.9	3.7	17.2	6.8
Health and social work	7.2	5.0	12.1	7.1	5.0	11.9	7.1	5.2	11.4	9.7
Other community, social and personal services	3.8	3.4	4.6	4.4	4.7	3.6	3.9	3.0	5.7	4.6
Private households with employed persons	0.1	-	0.4	0.3	-	0.9	0.3	-	0.8	-
Extra-territorial organisations and bodies	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	-	0.3	0.1	0.1	-	-
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	97.7

Note: The national classification is not fully compatible with the EU15 classification, hence some cells are blank and the total does not equal 100%.

Source: NSO-LFS and European Commission 'Employment in Europe 2002: Recent Trends and Prospects' July 2002

Table 7: Early school-leavers with lower secondary education, Malta 2002-2003

	December 2002			June 2003			EU15, 2002			EU15, 2003		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Early school-leavers with lower secondary education	52.7	58.0	51.6	48.2	49.7	46.8	18.8	21.9	16.7	18.0	20.3	15.9

Source: NSO

Table 8: Main demographic developments in Malta, 1995-2002

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total population	378,404	381,405	384,176	386,397	388,759	391,415	394,641	397,296
Age structure in %:								
0-14	21.5	21.4	21.3	20.8	20.4	20.0	19.2	18.7
15-29	21.3	21.4	21.4	21.7	21.9	22.0	22.1	22.1
30-44	22.7	22.0	21.5	21.0	20.8	20.5	20.4	20.1
45-59	18.8	19.3	19.5	19.8	20.1	20.5	21.3	22.0
60+	15.7	15.9	16.3	16.7	16.8	17.0	17.0	17.0
65+	11.2	11.6	11.7	12.1	12.1	12.4	12.6	14.8
Dependency ratio	59.2	59.5	60.3	60.0	59.2	58.7	56.7	55.6
Annual population growth rate (%)	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.7
Net immigration	514	305	380	228	272	400	399	286
Total fertility rate	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.5	1.5
Life expectancy at birth								
Men	73.9	74.0	74.1	74.1	74.2	74.3	76.7	75.8
Women	79.5	79.7	79.1	80.0	80.1	80.2	80.9	80.5
Life expectancy at age 65								
Men	14.3	14.5	14.7	14.8	14.9	15.0	15.4	15.0
Women	17.5	17.7	17.9	18.9	18.2	18.4	18.6	19.0

Note: Calculated as the 0-14 and 60+ age-groups divided by the number of persons aged 15-59

Source: NSO

Table 9: Social protection expenditure by function as a percentage of total social protection expenditure, and as a share of GDP, 1998-2001 (based on ESSPROS)

Function	1998	1999	2000	2001	EU15 2000
Old age, survivors <i>(share of GDP)</i>	50.6 -9.6	51.5 -9.6	51.5 -9.3	53.6 -9.9	46.4
Sickness, healthcare <i>(share of GDP)</i>	23.9 -4.5	23.5 -4.4	25.2 -4.6	25.1 -4.6	27.3
Family, children <i>(share of GDP)</i>	9.0 -1.7	8.2 -1.5	7.7 -1.4	6.3 -1.2	8.2
Disability <i>(share of GDP)</i>	6.0 -1.1	6.4 -1.2	6.2 -1.1	6.2 -1.1	8.1
Unemployment <i>(share of GDP)</i>	5.7 -1.1	6.2 -1.1	5.9 -1.1	5.7 -1.1	6.3
Housing, social exclusion n.e.c. <i>(share of GDP)</i>	3.8 -0.7	3.1 -0.6	2.4 -0.4	2.0 -0.3	3.7
Administration costs <i>(share of GDP)</i>	1.0 -0.2	1.0 -0.2	1.1 -0.2	1.1 -0.2	-
Total <i>(Total GDP)</i>	100 -100	100 -100	100 -100	100 -100	100 -100

Source: NSO and Eurostat

Table 10: At-risk-of-poverty rate by gender and socio-economic category

Category	Malta Total (2000)	EU15 Total (2000)	Malta Women (2000)	EU15 Women (2000)	Malta Men (2000)	EU15 Men (2000)
At-risk-of-poverty rate ¹ (total population)	15.0	15.0	15.0	16.0	15.0	14.0
Rate including pensions but excluding all other social insurance contributions	21.0	23.0	21.0	24.0	21.0	22.0
Relative at-risk-of-poverty gap ² (total population)	17.0	21.0	15.0	23.0	20.0	21.0
Gini coefficient	30.0	29.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
S80/S20 quintile share ratio	4.5	4.4	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
40% of the median	3.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
50% of the median	8.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
60% of the median	15.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
70% of the median	23.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Age groups:						
0-15	21.0	19.0	19.0	23.0	22.0	25.0
16-24	10.0	20.0	10.0	24.0	9.0	23.0
25-49	13.0	13.0	14.0	14.0	13.0	13.0
50-64	12.0	12.0	14.0	15.0	10.0	13.0
65 +	20.0	17.0	20.0	22.0	18.0	17.0
Persons 16 years and over:						
Employed	6.0	6.0	2.0	7.0	8.0	7.0
Self-employed	1.0	16.0	0	13.0	1.0	17.0
Unemployed	50.0	38.0	31.0	33.0	56.7	44.0
Retired	18.0	16.0	18.0	19.0	18.3	17.0
Other inactive persons	18.0	24.0	19.0	27.0	10.3	25.0
Household type:						
One-person household:						
Total	24.0	23.0	28.0	n.a.	16.7	n.a.
Under 30 years	34.0	33.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
30-64 years	23.0	15.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
65 years and over	25.0	26.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Two adults, no dependent children (at least one person aged over 65)	25.0	14.0	n.app.	n.app.	n.app.	n.app.
Two adults no dependent children (both aged under 65)	11.0	10.0	n.app.	n.app.	n.app.	n.app.
Other households with no dependent children	4.0	8.0	n.app.	n.app.	n.app.	n.app.
Single-parent household with at least one dependent child	55.0	40.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Two adults and one dependent child	13.0	10.0	n.app.	n.app.	n.app.	n.app.
Two adults and two dependent children	16.0	13.0	n.app.	n.app.	n.app.	n.app.
Two adults and three or more dependent children	28.0	26.0	n.app.	n.app.	n.app.	n.app.
Other households with dependent children	8.0	17.0	n.app.	n.app.	n.app.	n.app.
Type of housing:						
Total	15.0	15.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Owner-occupied	11.0	12.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Tenancy	29.0	24.0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Gender pay gap (December, 2003 data)			85.0%			

Notes: (1) Percentage of persons whose value-adjusted income is below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold as a percentage of the total population living in such households;

(2) Difference between the median of persons below the low-income threshold and the low-income threshold itself, as a percentage of the low-income threshold.;

(3) n.a. - not available; (4) n.app. - not applicable

Source: Structural, Poverty and Social Exclusion Indicators (NSO, 2003) EU15: (Eurostat) ECHP.UDB version June2003

Table 11 : Persons in jobless households

Persons in jobless households	EU15		Malta	
	2002 ^c	2003 ^c	2002	2003
Children (0-17)	9.9	9.8	7.6	8.0
Adults total (18-59)	9.7	9.6	7.2	7.9
Adult females (18-59)	11.0	10.8	8.6	9.7
Adult males (18-59)	8.4	8.4	5.8	6.2

^c Estimated value

Source: Eurostat

Table 12: Some social benefits¹ in relation to the national minimum wage by type of household (MTL), 2003

Type of household ²	Unemployment assistance (MTL)	Children's allowance (MTL)	As a percentage of the national minimum wage
One person	30.97	-	58.29%
Two persons (one adult and one child)	34.47	8.65	81.10%
Three persons (two adults and one child)	37.97	8.65	87.70%
Four persons (two adults and two children)	41.47	12.98	102.50%
Five persons (two adults and three children)	44.97	17.31	117.22%
National minimum wage	53.13	-	-

Notes: (1) Calculated as a full rate; (2) The types of households were chosen to demonstrate that the difference between social security benefits and the minimum wage are small.

Source: Derived from DSS data

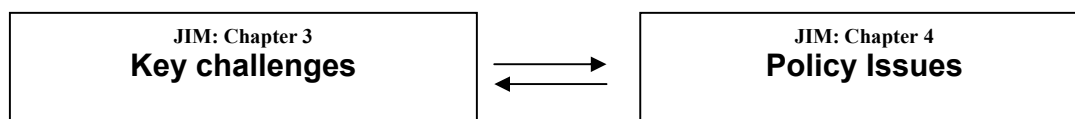
Annex 2

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Focus groups activities

In view of the Nice Objectives (Annex A), please give your input to this exercise following the template below. The template has been designed in order to facilitate the work on the National Action Plan/Inclusion. However, should you deem necessary to add any additional information please feel free to include it where appropriate.

Exercise framework



Question 1. The following is a list of Key challenges in the fight of **poverty and social exclusion** (as established in the JIM). With reference to your own organisation, kindly assign the rank to each of the key challenges.

Rank code: 1=very important ... 7=least important

Key Challenge	Rank						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Employment							
Ensuring adequate income and resources							
Education							
Family solidarity and children's rights							
Equal access to quality services							
Provision of services							
Regeneration of deprived areas							

Question 2: Please list the **key priorities*** in relation to **poverty and social exclusion** of your particular target group.

*However, you may also refer to other key poverty and social exclusion issues that have not been mentioned in the JIM.

The example below is fictitious and its intention is to provide a model which you could follow when developing your own answers.

Key Challenges		
Main Institution	Key Challenge	Key Priority
<i>e.g. Ministry for the Family and Employment / Department for gender equality</i>	<i>e.g. Employment</i>	<i>e.g. Female long-term unemployment</i>

Question 3: Identify the **main institutions and activities / programs** that are currently in place (in your organization) in order to address the existing problems of **poverty and social exclusion**. Please make an assessment of **strengths and weaknesses** of the current activities undertaken by your organisation.

Activities / programs currently in place		
Main Institution	Key Priority	Activity / Program
<i>e.g. Ministry for the Family and Employment / Department for gender equality</i>	<i>e.g. Female long-term unemployment</i>	<i>e.g. Training program</i>

Evaluation of current activities / programs			
Main Institution	Activity/Program	Strengths	Weaknesses
<i>e.g. Ministry for the Family and Employment / Department for gender equality</i>	<i>e.g. Training program for long-term unemployed women</i>	<i>e.g. Regional dissemination of training program</i>	<i>e.g. Insufficient attendance</i>

Question 4: Please outline the **future poverty and social exclusion policy and service developments necessary** (in your organization).

Future Policies / Activities			
Main Institution	Future Policy	Future Activity / Program	Target Groups
e.g. Ministry for the Family and Employment / Department for gender equality	e.g. To increase participation in the training program	e.g. Provide childcare facilities during the training programme and improve transport facilities	e.g. Women living in different localities

Question 5: Please name the **new activities / programs** that will be developed in the future by your organisation and specify **the time targets** (2004-2006 being the prime time-target) and **sources of funding** them.

Future Activities / Programs				
Main Institution	Future Activity / Program	Specific Target	Time Frame*	Sources of Funding*
e.g. Ministry for the Family and Employment / Department for gender equality	e.g. To provide childcare facilities so as to increase participation of women during training and increase accessibility by improving transport facilities .	e.g. To increase the attendance from ___% to ___%.	e.g. By the end of 2005	e.g. Budget funds 50%, external sources 25% etc.

*N.B. It is of utmost importance to show the link between each future activity, time-frame and sources of funding.

Question 6: Please give **one example of good practice** based on a **cross-sectoral perspective** to economic and social vulnerability. It would be appreciated if the selected example would show the involvement, cooperation and partnerships at **local level**.

Thank you for your input in the NAP/Inclusion formulation. Should you require further information or clarification on how to answer this questionnaire, kindly contact us on 2590 3133.

We would highly appreciate if your response, using the above template, would reach us by **Friday, the 21st May 2003, the latest**. We would also be grateful if you submit this questionnaire via email: chiara.borg@gov.mt or maya.miljanic-brinkworth@gov.mt

Annex A

OBJECTIVES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION (Nice Objectives)

1. To facilitate participation in employment and access by all to resources, rights, goods and services

1.1. Facilitating participation in employment

In the context of the European employment strategy, and the implementation of the guidelines in particular:

(a) To promote access to stable and quality employment for all women and men who are capable of working, in particular:

- by putting in place, for those in the most vulnerable groups in society, pathways towards employment and by mobilising training policies to that end;
- by developing policies to promote the reconciliation of work and family life, including the issue of child- and dependent care;
- by using the opportunities for integration and employment provided by the social economy.

(b) To prevent the exclusion of people from the world of work by improving employability, through human resource management, organisation of work and life-long learning.

1.2. Facilitating access to resources, rights, goods and services for all

(a) To organise social protection systems in such a way that they help, in particular, to:

- guarantee that everyone has the resources necessary to live in accordance with human dignity;
- overcome obstacles to employment by ensuring that the take-up of employment results in increased income and by promoting employability.

(b) To implement policies which aim to provide access for all to decent and sanitary housing, as well as the basic services necessary to live normally having regard to local circumstances (electricity, water, heating etc.).

(c) To put in place policies which aim to provide access for all to healthcare appropriate to their situation, including situations of dependency.

(d) To develop, for the benefit of people at risk of exclusion, services and accompanying measures which will allow them effective access to education, justice and other public and private services, such as culture, sport and leisure.

2. To prevent the risks of exclusion

(a) To exploit fully the potential of the knowledge-based society and of new information and communication technologies and ensure that no-one is excluded, taking particular account of the needs of people with disabilities.

(b) To put in place policies which seek to prevent life crises which can lead to situations of social exclusion, such as indebtedness, exclusion from school and becoming homeless.

(c) To implement action to preserve family solidarity in all its forms.

3. To help the most vulnerable

(a) To promote the social integration of women and men at risk of facing persistent poverty, for example because they have a disability or belong to a group experiencing particular integration problems such as those affecting immigrants.

(b) To move towards the elimination of social exclusion among children and give them every opportunity for social integration.

(c) To develop comprehensive actions in favour of areas marked by exclusion.

These objectives may be pursued by incorporating them in all the other objectives and/or through specific policies or actions.

4. To mobilise all relevant bodies

(a) To promote, according to national practice, the participation and self-expression of people suffering exclusion, in particular in regard to their situation and the policies and measures affecting them.

(b) To mainstream the fight against exclusion into overall policy, in particular:

– by mobilising the public authorities at national, regional and local level, according to their respective areas of competence;

– by developing appropriate coordination procedures and structures;

– by adapting administrative and social services to the needs of people suffering exclusion and ensuring that front-line staff are sensitive to these needs.

(c) To promote dialogue and partnership between all relevant bodies, public and private, for example:

– by involving the social partners, NGOs and social service providers, according to their respective areas of competence, in the fight against the various forms of exclusion;

– by encouraging the social responsibility and active engagement of all citizens in the fight against social exclusion;

– by fostering the social responsibility of business.