



New assistance to Maltese nationals who adopt a child from a foreign country

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New assistance to Maltese nationals who adopt a child from another country has been put in place. Maltese wanting to adopt children from outside Malta hitherto had to bear heavy financial expenses in order to complete the procedures. Through this measure they are now supported by the state.

Description

In September 2017, the Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity announced that in the forthcoming budget it was going to implement an electoral promise to assist financially persons who adopt a child from a foreign country. The Minister in charge (Michael Falzon) explained that this was being done as Government was aware of expenses incurred in regard to foreign adoptions, adding that Government would also be paying for part of the travel expenses involved. Minister Falzon explained that up to then, 33 foreign boys and girls had already been adopted, and another 31 were in an advanced stage of finding adoptive parents. By the end of 2017, 44 inter-country adoptions had actually been concluded during that year.

In the meantime, a public consultation process was launched to establish national standards for a child adoption process. The aim of these standards is to serve as an assistance tool for all those involved, such as accredited agencies, the agency responsible for child care, adoptive parents and those in the process of adopting, to make everyone aware of their responsibilities in the adoption process.

The scheme was finalised and formally launched on 22 May 2018, but its implementation was backdated to October 2017. Parents can now claim back reimbursements of expenses

incurred in foreign adoptions up to €10,000. Those requesting the grant must submit documentation to show that the adoption has been finalised. The refunds will cover expenses made on research, documentation, legal fees, the use of interpreters, flights and accommodation.

Outlook & commentary

This measure has been very positively received and did not raise any controversy. In Malta childless couples who seek adoption find it difficult to adopt locally because of the small number of children waiting to be adopted; therefore foreign adoption has become increasingly sought after. However, this process entails huge expenses until it is finalised. The legal fees, and the requirements of foreign countries, often necessitating a lengthy stay in the country by would-be parents, create strong financial pressures on adoptive parents.

In the words of Gerald Cardona, a professional extensively involved in helping parents to adopt foreign children, such a grant could give those still considering adoption the push they needed to take the decision to adopt a child. He added that knowing such a grant is available would make the process much easier for those interested to adopt.

LEGAL NOTICE

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Further reading

Malta Government Adoption - Laws of Malta:

<http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lp&itemid=20444&l=1>

Malta Government 2012. Adoption Administration Act Cap. 495)

Agency Accreditation Regulations, 2012. L.N. 125 of 2012.

<http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lp&itemid=23097&l=1>

Malta Government: Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity. 2016.

“Positive Parenting National Strategic Policy 2016–2024”:

<https://family.gov.mt/en/Documents/National%20Parenting%20Policy%20English%208.02.17.pdf>

Malta Today. 22 May 2018. “Parents to be reimbursed for expenses related to child adoption”:

https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/87037/parents_to_be_reimbursed_for_expenses_related_to_child_adoption#.Wwz0wUiFOM8

The Times. 22 May 2018. “Parents now able to recover money used for overseas adoptions: Refund scheme comes into force”:

<https://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20180522/local/parents-now-able-to-recover-money-used-for-overseas-adoptions.679730>

TVM News. 22 September 2017.

“€10,000 grant by Government for couples wishing to adopt a child”:

<https://www.tvm.com.mt/en/news/e10000-grant-by-government-for-couples-wishing-to-adopt-a-child/>

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