



## Malta – ANED country profile

The information contained in this summary was compiled by the Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) in April 2009.

### Academic networks and resources

No academic networks or resources that are specific to disability issues exist at present.

### Policy and enforcement bodies

The key national bodies with responsibility for disability law and policy implementation include:

[Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Dizabilita](#) (National Commission Persons with Disability, KNPD)

### Organisations of disabled people

The national organisation representing disabled people at the European level (European Disability Forum) is:

[Malta Federation of Organisations Persons with Disability](#)

Other significant national organisations of disabled people include:

Maltese Council of Disabled Persons (MCoDP, [theborg@onvol.net](mailto:theborg@onvol.net))

[Deaf People Association, Malta](#)

Malta Society Of The Blind ([socblindmalta@global.net.mt](mailto:socblindmalta@global.net.mt))

### National law and strategy

Malta has signed the [United Nations Convention](#) and the [Optional Protocol](#).

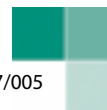
Important national laws, policies and strategies concerning disabled people include:

1969 Employment (Handicapped Persons) Act - legislation aimed at increasing the number of disabled people active in the labour market by establishing that 2% of those employed within private or public entities were on the Employment Training Corporation (the state employment agency) unemployed disabled register.

2000 Equal Opportunities (Persons with a Disability) Act - a law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, including education, employment, housing, the built environment and in access to goods and services.

2000 Inclusive Education Policy regarding students with a disability – a policy consolidating the strategy for inclusion of disabled children in mainstream schools.

2002 Employment and Industrial Relations Act [CAP. 452) - Act aimed to consolidate worker rights, including disabled workers' right to join trade unions, or to receive compensation in case of injury at work.



2002 Arrangements for Candidates with Particular Requirements (Ministry of Education - a document outlining justifiable provisions where disabled applicants need alternative ways of completing their examinations.

### **Facts and figures**

Data on population indicate that:

In 2005, the total Maltese population stood at 404,962. The number of disabled people constituted 23,848 (5.9%) of the total population compared with 381,114 (94.1%) non-disabled people.

In 2005 the gender distribution of disabled people was similar to that of the general population: 49.7% disabled men and 50.3% disabled women compared to 49.6% non-disabled men and 50.4% non-disabled women.. The rate of disabled people was higher in the age range 60+ with 50.4% (12,025) of all disabled people in this age range. Those aged between 20 and 59 constituted 41.9% (10,004) of the entire disabled population while those between 0 and 19 only made up 7.6% (1,819) (NSO 2005).

Data on employment indicate that:

The following data on employment was collected from the results of the 2005 Population Census conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO).

A high percentage of disabled people, when compared to non-disabled people, are beyond working age. 38.9% (8,777) of disabled people aged over 15 reported they were retired, while this rate was only 14.1% (44,276) within the non-disabled population.

The rate of employed disabled people was considerably lower than that of non-disabled people where only 14.6% (3,295) were employed in contrast to 48.0% (150,188) in the non-disabled population. In addition, the unemployment rate of disabled people was 2% (443) compared to that of non-disabled people, which stood at 3.4% (10,740). Such lower unemployment rates within the disabled population might indicate that disabled people are reluctant to seek employment as suggested by a qualitative study conducted by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC 2005).

Disabled people who reported they could not work due to disability or illness constituted 19.4% (4,370) within the disabled population. 1.1% (3,410) within the non-disabled population cited this reason for not working 18.1% (4,089) reported they did not work as they were taking care of house or family. Finally, 1.8% (398) of disabled people reported they were students or trainees.

Disabled people working in similar occupations to non-disabled people, were under-represented in every area in 2005. Moreover, disabled people tended to work in elementary occupations with 20.5% (689) of the working population in this category compared to 11.3% (16,958) within the non-disabled population. The rate for disabled people in crafts and related trade was 14.7% (495) while for non-disabled

people it was 13.5% (20,333). In all other areas, disabled people tended to be under-represented.

Disabled people had a greater presence in public administration, social security and defence with 11.5% (385) working in this area compared to 8.5% (12,716) of non-disabled people. Higher rates of disabled people were found in health and social work with 10.7% (361) and hotels and restaurants with 8.6% (290) compared to rates for non-disabled people of 7.3% (11,000) and 8.3% (12,434) respectively. The majority of disabled people were involved in manufacturing (15.5% or 521 people), wholesale and retail (12.3% or 521 people).

Data on education indicate that:

The following data on education was collected from the results of the 2005 Population Census conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO).

Disabled people are more disadvantaged in the area of education. 9.8% (2,215) of disabled people reported having received no schooling compared to 1.9% (5,886) of non-disabled people. 4.1% (922) of the disabled population attended special schools.

The educational level attained by disabled people is lower than that of non-disabled people with 42.3% (9,532) completing only their primary education in contrast to 24.3% (76,108) of the non-disabled population. The rate of disabled people reaching secondary education level (31.2%, 7,047 people) is also lower than that of non-disabled people (46.3%, 144,797 people).

Compared to a rate of 14.4% (45,097) amongst non-disabled people, only 5.6% (1,274) of disabled people reached post-secondary, non-tertiary and tertiary education. and 0.9% (193) compared to 2.8% (8,824) of non-disabled people completed a non-tertiary level. In addition, the rate of disabled people reaching a tertiary level is less than half of that of non-disabled people completing this level with 4.4% (992) of disabled people as against 10.0% (31,172) of non-disabled people.

Given these findings, the low rate of disabled people with qualifications is to be expected. In fact, 79.3% (17,884) had no qualifications in 2005 while the rate for non-disabled people was 55.3% (173,185). Those having attained an O level constituted 7.3% (1,650) of the disabled population compared to 16.0% (50,091) within the non-disabled population. Disabled people with Intermediate and A Levels comprised 2.4% (549) in contrast to 8.1% (25,222) of the non-disabled population. The rate of disabled people having a certificate or diploma was 7.34% (1565) while non-disabled people are represented by 12.2% (38067).

Disabled people with degrees or equivalent certification were under-represented. Only 1.0% (226) of disabled people had a first degree and 1.1% (256) a professional qualification. Amongst non-disabled people, rates for first degree certification were 3.4% (10509) and 1.3% (4162) for a professional qualification). 0.5% (110) of disabled people had both a degree and a professional qualification compared to 1.3% (3976) of non-disabled people. 0.4% (79) of disabled people and 0.9% (2801) of non-disabled people had a degree and a post-graduate diploma or certificate. Finally, disabled people with a Masters degree totalled 0.4% (98) and those with a doctoral

degree 0.2% (50), while the rates for non-disabled people totalled 1.3% (4028) and 0.3% (877) respectively.

In 2005, 97% (21881) of disabled people reported that they were not studying, compared with 89.5% (279984) of non-disabled people. Of those that were, 2.1% (481) of disabled people were studying full-time and 0.7% (150) part-time. For non-disabled people the rates were 8% (25169) and 2% (6237) respectively.

The fact that 0.2% (46) of disabled people were studying by distance learning compares well with that of non-disabled people: 0.5% (1528). This suggests that this means of studying may be better suited for the needs of disabled people but no data exists to verify this claim.

Although 75.5% (17,465) of disabled people were reported as literate this rate is still significantly lower than the 95% (318790) of literate non-disabled people. This is indicative of the effect of unequal access to educational opportunities and poor quality of education disabled people have received prior to an inclusive educational policy, although the impact of this policy on future generations still needs to be studied.

Data on accessibility indicate that:

No data on accessibility is currently collected. However, the majority of complaints received by the Equal Opportunities Compliance Unit within KNPD relate to accessibility. The total number of complaints received from 2000 to 2008 was 3505 or 43% of all the total. The number of cases decreased between 2006/7 and 2007/8 from 57 (54%) to 44 (45%).

The [MeAC e-accessibility survey results for Malta in 2007](#) showed that:

None of the selected public or sectoral/commercial websites passed the manual evaluation of accessibility.

The main emergency telephone number was not accessible by text.

Neither of the two main mobile telephony operators, but one of the landline operators, provided e-accessibility information via their website.

In 2006, neither of the public TV channels provided national language programs with subtitling or audio descriptions, although there were a very small number of signed programs. A similar picture was evident for the two main commercial TV channels.

Of the two main retail banks, neither had installed talking ATMs although one planned to do so.

Data on poverty and incomes indicate that:

The data found in this section has been collected from the results of the 2005 Population Census conducted by the National Statistics (NSO).

Disabled people and their families are more likely to have a low income or be at risk of poverty. From data relating to the housing of disabled people, it is evident that a significant number of disabled people lack access to a good quality of life.

Census 2005 figures report that 11.8% (2,8087) of disabled people were living in institutions compared with 0.9% (3,539) of the non-disabled population. 34.7% (2,205) of disabled people in institutions were over 60. Disabled people comprised 44.4% of (2,808) of the entire population living in an institutional setting (amounting to 6,347) with the remaining 55.76% (3,539) being non-disabled.

Only 51.7% (10,843) of disabled people owned their property compared to a rate of 57% (214,699) in the non-disabled population. Many disabled people live in rented or free property. Only 46.9% (9,843) of disabled people compared to 62.5% (235,458) of non-disabled people stated they lived in a house with a good state of repair.

Disabled people tended to have fewer household appliances than non-disabled people. Access and ownership rates varied. For example, while 61.2% (230,282) of non-disabled people had access to a computer, only 37.2% (7,796) of the disabled population had such access. In 2005, 71.5% (14,994) of disabled people had no access to the Internet at home in contrast to 50.9% (191,516).

The poorer living conditions of disabled people can be deduced from the availability of a kitchen or a bath. Only 0.4% (1,619) of non-disabled people had no access to a kitchen or kitchenette, the rate amongst disabled people was 1.0% (219). 0.9% (3,400) of non-disabled people lacked access to a bath or shower but the rate for disabled people was 3.2% (663).

Data on attitudes indicate that:

The [2007 Special Eurobarometer on Discrimination in Europe](#), showed that 56% of people knew someone who was disabled) and 75% acknowledged that being disabled tended to be disadvantage in society (both approximately the EU average).

However, disability discrimination was not viewed as widespread (only 34% thought this compared to an EU average of 53%); 27% thought that disability discrimination was more widespread than five years ago. 51% thought that not enough was being done to combat discrimination in general in Malta.

81% thought that more disabled people should be in the workplace (higher than the EU average of 74%) and 85% thought specific measures on equal opportunities were needed in this field.

Data on public spending indicate that:

According to data compiled by the National Statistics Office (NSO) in 2008, Government expenditure on disability and health-related issues stood at €46.8 million, comprising 8% of total Government expenditure on benefits. This marked a decrease in spending from 2006, when it was 9% of the total expenditure.

### **Social protection**

Key features of the national system include (including adapted items from the [MISSOC](#) database December 2008):

Disability benefits



A compulsory social insurance scheme is financed by contributions from the active population (employees and self-employed) and provides earnings-related pensions depending on contributions and the duration of affiliation. (MISSOC, 2008)

Specific payments include:

1957 Pension for Visually Impaired Persons: Non-contributory pension awarded to Maltese citizens over 14 who have a visual impairment.

1965 Invalidation Pension: contributory pension awarded to people who are unable to continue working due to an impairment or illness acquired during working age.

1974 Disabled Pension Scheme: A non-contributory pension awarded to people having a severe impairment over the age of 18.

1988 Disability Child Allowance: Non-contributory pension awarded to parents who have to care for a disabled child.

1992 Carers' Pension: A non-contributory pension awarded to persons assisting adult or elderly disabled people.

Rehabilitation and re-training

Malta has a free medical service, which includes rehabilitation services. The government subsidises purchases of assistive equipment through the Community Chest Fund (CCF), which is a national charity fund to collect money for people in need of financial assistance. In addition, financial assistance is also given through the Assistive Apparatus Service run by the National Commission Persons with a Disability (KNPD).

Financial aid is provided for equipment, such as speech synthesizer software and hearing aids. Training in computer and IT use is provided to disabled people through the Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility (FITA) and the Employment Training Corporation (ETC) assists disabled people in developing their skills and experience to find suitable employment.

Preferential employment and quotas

The Employment (Handicapped Persons) Act of 1969 stipulated that 2% of the workforce in public or private enterprise had to be from the ETC's register of unemployed disabled people. However, this quota system has had little effect on the employment rates of disabled people within the open labour market ([KNPD, 2007](#))

The Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (2000) made it unlawful for employers to discriminate against employing a disabled person solely on the basis of their disability. Various efforts were subsequently made to increase the employment opportunities of disabled people through the assistance of ETC, a training and guidance organisation. The number of disabled people seeking employment is expected to rise since children who benefited from inclusive education have now reached working age (KNPD 2009 forthcoming).

In 2009, the National Commission Persons with Disability (KNPD) will be launching a revised Employment Policy for consultation with all stakeholders.



## Long-term support and care

Apart from state support through the provision of financial incentives and personal assistance, there are various private and church-run houses providing assistance to disabled people. The state agency *Sapport* works directly with disabled people and their families in providing services of personal assistance within the community and in the supported accommodation residences it operates in.

### **Additional information**

Useful sources of more detailed information about the situation of disabled people, and the policies and support available, include:

ETC: Employment Training Corporation (2005) Job search and Persons with Disability - Results of a study among persons with disability and employers, Malta: ETC.

[KNPD: Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Dizabilita.](#)

KNPD: Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Dizabilita (2008) [Annual Report 2007-8](#),

NSO: [National Statistics Office \(2008\) News Release](#): International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2008, Malta: NSO. Available from [NSO: National Statistics Office](#)

KNPD: Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Dizabilita (forthcoming) The Quality of Life of Disabled People in Malta: some answers from the NSO Census