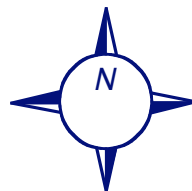


**Achieving the Lisbon Goal:**  
The Contribution of Vocational Education and Training Systems

# Country Report: Malta

Author: Philip Ammerman

This report is one of a series of European country reports. It has been written to support a larger report: **Achieving the Lisbon Goal: the contribution of VET**, prepared by the Lisbon-to-Copenhagen-to-Maastricht Consortium for the European Commission. This report is not intended as an official view. But rather independent insight into specific aspects of National VET systems in Europe.



**NAVIGATOR**  
Consulting Group

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This report was written by Philip Ammerman of NAVIGATOR Consulting Group as part of the project consortium led by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) for the project: *Achieving the Lisbon Goals: The Contribution of Vocational Education and Training Systems* (Contract No. EAC/84/03). Further information can be requested directly from the author at the following contacts: 17, Pentelis Avenue, Athens 15234 GREECE • Tel +(30-210) 640-3098 • Fax +(30-210) 645-3393 • Email: pga@navigator-consulting.com

#### Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and do not represent those of the European Commission.

## List of Acronyms

APEL	Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CVET	Continuing Vocational Education and Training
DFSAE	Department of Further Studies and Adult Education
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
ENQA	European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
ESTS	Extended Skills Training Scheme
ETC	Employment and Training Corporation
ETF	European Training Foundation
FHRD	Foundation for Human Resource Development
FTS	Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRTU	General Retail and Trades Union
ICPLS	Institute for Child and Parent Learning Support
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
IPSE	Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise
ITS	Institute for Tourism Studies
IVET	Initial Vocational Education and Training
KBIC	Kordin Business Incubation Centre
LM	Maltese Pounds
METC	Malta External Trade Corporation
MCAST	Malta College of Arts, Sciences and Technology
MCESD	Malta Council of Economic and Social Development
MCST	Malta Council of Science and Technology
MPVQAC	Malta Professional and Vocational Qualifications Awards Council
MUT	Malta Union of Teachers
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centre
NSO	National Statistics Office
NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
S&E	Science and Engineering
TAS	Technician Apprenticeship Scheme

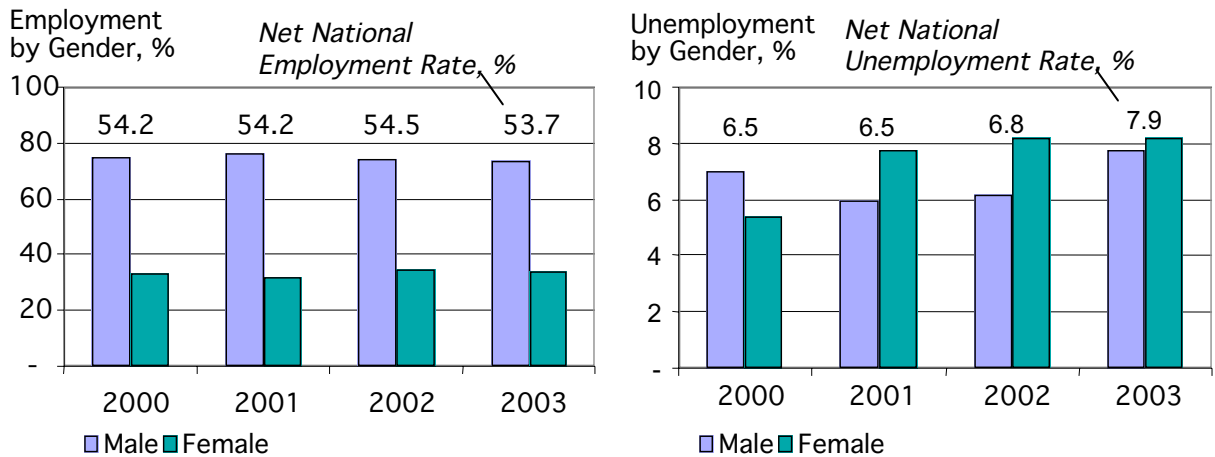
## 1. Introduction

The accession of Malta to the European Union on May 1, 2004 will accelerate a number of changes in the labour market, national competitiveness and economic growth. Formerly protected trades and restrictions on ownership of assets or companies have been liberalised or lifted. Together with emerging technological changes it is clear that increased investment in human resources development and vocational education and training (VET) will be needed in order to adapt to competitive trends. This report examines the policy-driven reforms in Malta's VET system and assess their contribution to meeting the 2010 objectives of the Lisbon Agenda. This report concludes that is important for Malta to sustain the pace of reforms in VET following accession, and to use Structural Funds efficiently and to improve linkages between the national VET system and labour market needs. Critical issues in the Maltese economy, such as the low employment rate of women, the high number of early school leavers and the early labour force departure age, all point to the need for sustaining the pace of reform.

Malta is the smallest of the new Member States, with a population of 399,867 inhabitants. In December 2003 and a GDP of LM 1.712 billion (EUR 4.018 billion). GDP growth has been slowing but is still positive in LM terms; it turned negative in 2003 in Euro terms due to exchange rate movements. Public finances have shown declining trends: in 2003, Central Government debt rose to 73.6% of GDP, while the budget deficit rose to 6.2% of GDP.

In 2003, the total active labour force amounted to 136,234 people, representing a national employment rate of 53.7%. Of this, 120,580 individuals were registered as employees, while 15,654 people were registered as self-employed. The employment rate of males is much higher than females: the male employment rate amounted to 73.3% in 2003, versus a female rate of 33.7%. Unemployment has increased in 2003, to a total of 7.9% of the workforce, versus 6.5% in 2000. At 8.2%, the female unemployment rate is slightly higher than the male unemployment rate at 7.8% in 2003. In 2003, 65.1% of all employment was in the private sector, while 34.2% was in the public sector.

### Employment Rate, 15-64 year olds    Unemployment Rate, 15-64 year olds



ETC Labour Force Survey, 2003

Public education in Malta is compulsory between ages of 6 and 16. Educational activities are regulated by the Education Act XXIV, which emphasizes (among others) the critical nature of education in providing Maltese citizens with skills and vocational qualifications in order to prepare them for the labour market and their future roles as citizens. The Act confirms the role of private institutions in education. At the state level, post-secondary vocational education is provided by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), the Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS) and the Malta College of Arts, Sciences and Technology (MCAST). Higher education is provided by the University of Malta and various MBA providers.

Educational attainment levels are low: based on the 1995 census, some 51.9% of the working age population have not completed secondary schooling and have attained only ISCED levels 0-2. Some 36% of the working age population attained ISCED 3; 3.5% attained ISCED 4; and 7.3% attained ISCED 5-7. Some 60% of the working age population declare a lack of any formal qualification, while 9% of the population is illiterate.<sup>1</sup>

Starting from the mid-1990s, a fundamental policy and strategy review of VET was launched, initiated by 1998 electoral commitments as well as by the wider need to prepare Malta for EU accession. This resulted in major new VET policies, including the National Minimum Curriculum, the Strategy for Lifelong Learning, the development of MCAST as a successor to the trade schools and the development of the Malta Professional and Vocational Qualifications Awards Council (MPVQAC). Cooperation with the social partners has also been enhanced: a number of "bilateral" programmes between governmental organisations and private companies or public-private partnerships has emerged, while the development of consultative mechanisms on a permanent and ad-hoc basis has increased.

The future development of VET will be enhanced by the allocation of Structural Funds. Community co-financing of EUR 63.3 million has been granted between 2004 and 2006, complemented by EUR 22 million in Cohesion Funds. A major component of the Structural Funds is the EUR 8.8 million line allocated for human resources development, which will focus on the provision and enhancement of life long learning,

<sup>1</sup> European Training Foundation: Monograph Candidate Countries: VET and Employment Services in Malta, 2002

employability and social inclusion. Other funding lines will be indirectly allocated to education, community development, the European Social Fund and related measures. In addition to initiatives undertaken directly in the VET field, a number of peripheral events occurred which will play an important part in delivering the Lisbon Agenda. These include the following:

- The Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) was established 2001 to advise the government on issues relating to economic and social development. The Council provides a forum for a number of social and civil society partners, including trade unions, the Employers Association, the Chamber of Commerce, the Hotel and Restaurants Association, and others.
- The Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST) published its Competitiveness Strategy 2003-6, which identifies the low number of Science and Engineering (S&E) graduates as a major competitive disadvantage.

The challenge for Malta will be to deliver on the early promises of policy and institutional reforms undertaken. In particular, it will be necessary to improve key indicators, such as total educational attainment, educational levels of young adults as well as the third age, and the role of women in education and the labour force. Other factors, such as the early departure rate from the labour force, the continual modernization of curricula, the development of the national human resources and employment strategies, and strengthening the links between the social partners and the VET system, will be critical to success. With the 2005 Census approaching, a major new opportunity for measuring and taking stock of results is available.

## 2. Progress of national VET systems towards meeting the challenges of Lisbon

### 2.1 Strategies and barriers for improving the status, flexibility and attractiveness of IVET

The strategic reform of IVET has been a major national priority in the last five years. The strategies being employed are top-down, and are driven by government policy which actively incorporates Lisbon Agenda considerations as well as best practise, but which also takes into account national realities and considerations. Policy is formulated against a background of extensive consultations with social partners and European partners. The European Training Foundation and other European organisations have played an important role in providing technical assistance and support during this time.

Malta's accession to the European Union was undoubtedly a major factor in driving change. It is now necessary to ensure that the reforms implemented at the institutional and legislative levels are implemented in practise. In this respect, the Lisbon indicators will provide a good framework for monitoring progress, and particularly the number of early school leavers: in 2001, the number of early school leavers in Malta was 54.9%, one of the highest in the European Union, and well above the 19.4% EU average.

A short review of the major initiatives undertaken is made here:

- A national consultation process led to the enacting of the new National Minimum Curriculum in December 1999. The Curriculum incorporates many of the policy elements of the Lisbon Agenda, and makes specific references to life long learning, learning adapted to the needs of individuals, science and technology, education, literacy and quality monitoring in learning. To accompany the Curriculum, a number of associated bodies have been established or strengthened, including the National Curriculum Council, the Institute for Child and Parent Learning Support (ICPLS), the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools (FTS), the St. James Cavalier Centre for Creativity, and the European Union Programmes Unit.
- The establishment in August 2000 of the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), which gradually replaces the Trade Schools. Today MCAST operates a total of nine institutes and is the largest VET provider in Malta and Gozo. Institutes under MCAST include Art and Design, Business and Commerce, Building and Construction Engineering, Electronics Engineering, Information and Communication Technology, and others. MCAST also developed a Literacy Support Unit focussing on the needs of young, post-secondary underachievers who could access courses in the Vocational College for literacy, numeracy and communications skills. MCAST is also in the process of introducing a continuous assessment model to internationally-recognised qualifications, and will move away from the emphasis on end-of-year examinations.
- The establishment in 2000 of the Malta Professional and Vocational Qualifications Awards Council (MPVQAC). The MPVQAC is working in consultation with social partners to adapt a competency-based vocational qualifications, and is ensuring that these fit into the wider European frameworks. This includes an Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning (APEL), which will improve the employability profiles of those workers without formal qualifications.
- The Employment Training Corporation (ETC) has launched a revitalised Apprenticeship Scheme as well as training aimed at a number of professions. The Apprenticeship Schemes are in the process of introducing competency-based qualifications in order to formalise the results of "on the job" training, as well as develop individual learning plans for students. Cooperation with the Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS), MCAST and the Education Division is ongoing. The ETC has also strengthened the Labour Force Surveys and the Labour Market Barometer, has completed the National Human Resources Policy and Strategy, and has launched a number of other initiatives.
- The Department of Further Studies and Adult Education (DFSAE) provides training for crafts and artisans, as well as other learning opportunities, and has been strengthened with additional resources.
- The role of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) have been promoted in all areas of the economy. Malta has begun a number of important initiatives in this respect, including the launch of eLearning

In addition to launching new organisations, recent efforts have also focussed on organisational efficiency. The ETC and ITS have been brought under the Ministry of Education, enabling higher synergies and coordination. Efforts have been made to

bring the IVET system closer to its “customers” and to reduce the number of early school leavers. A number of formal and informal barriers remain, however:

- A significant barrier is the small, protected nature of the Maltese economy. Only 46 companies, or 0.2% of the total, employed more than 200 staff in 1999.<sup>2</sup> Some 80% of corporate members of the General Retail and Trades Union (GRTU) employ less than 10 staff.<sup>3</sup> Many of these are family-owned firms. A major reason for many young students leaving the schooling system is to take on a position in their family enterprise. This trend is multiplied by the requirements of tourism sector, which includes a large number of small family firms such as travel agents, dive centres, car rental agencies, concession stands and others, as well as the wider services sector play in the national economy.
- The current IVET system features 6 years of primary education and 5 years of lower secondary school (years 5-16 of age). Channelling of students into different streams following the final primary school exam at 11 years of age exists, and horizontal mobility between different vocational programmes is limited. At the post-16 upper secondary level, there are two apprenticeship schemes, the Extended Skills Training Scheme (ESTS) and the Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS). Transfer between these two schemes is not possible.
- Academic disciplines have traditionally been regarded with higher respect. Law, medicine, teaching and accounting are considered “safe” and socially-respected professions. In contrast, subjects such as mathematics, engineering or vocational professions are seen as less popular or harder to achieve.<sup>4</sup> This creates a preference for entering higher or tertiary academic education.
- The implementation of planned reforms has in some cases been delayed. MCAST and MPVQAC have taken time to develop and implement strategies and policies, and in some cases have faced depleted resources. The post-accession environment, the allocation of structural funds and the impact of time are expected to ameliorate these issues.

## 2.2 Reducing the number of early school leavers

Malta has one of the highest rates of early school leavers in the European Union, at 54.9% of all students. This compares with the 2001 EU average of 19.4% and the average of the three best EU countries of 10.3%. These statistics are confirmed by the declining rate of 18-24 year olds achieving lower secondary education. Total levels of 54% achievement in 2000 fell to 50% in 2003.

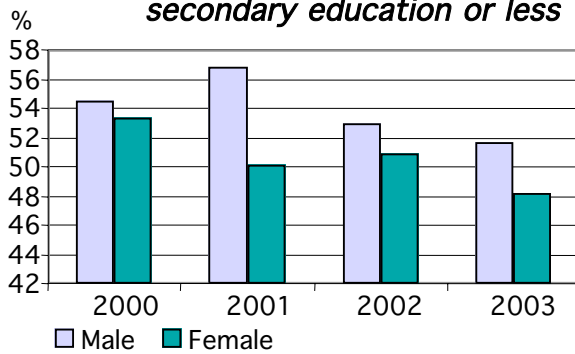
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<sup>2</sup> European Training Foundation: Monograph Candidate Countries: VET and Employment Services in Malta, 2002

<sup>3</sup> European Charter for Small Enterprises, Malta Country Report, 2003

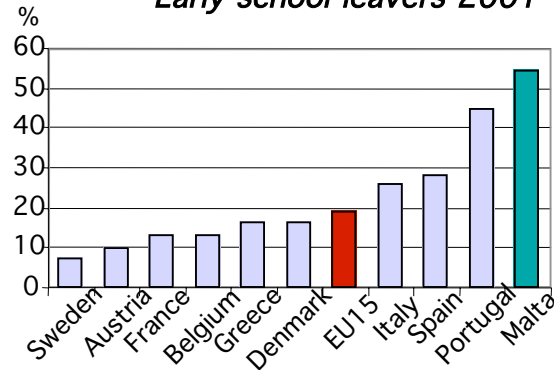
<sup>4</sup> Innovation Policy Profile, Malta, 2003

**Percentage of 18-24 year olds achieving lower secondary education or less**



NSO Educational Statistics, 2004

**Early school leavers 2001**



NSO Structural, Poverty and Social Exclusion Indicators, 2003

A high number of students apply for exemption from study from the Educational Division. In 2000, some 1,686 students applied, and 1,265 approvals were issued<sup>5</sup>. Major reasons for exemption include support for family or family businesses. This reflects the high number of micro- and family-enterprises in Malta.

In response, the Government has streamlined the upper secondary educational system by unifying technical institutes into MCAST. Significant investments have been made in pedagogy, physical plant and curricula. In addition, options for technology and ICT concentrations have been made. MCAST is adopting a competency based “continuous assessment” model that will switch emphasis away from end-of-year examination. MPVQAC has invested in transparency of qualifications on the UK model, and is developing APEL qualifications.

Together with the National Minimum Curriculum as well as improvements in teacher training, it is widely felt that the number of early school leavers will fall. A further major impetus for staying in school will be the demands of employers brought about by increasing competition. The fall of tariff and other barriers to EU investment will create a much more competitive climate, in which the role of VET qualifications as well as life long learning will become much more important.

However, it is also likely that related policy reforms will be needed, such as a review of exemptions policies, the provision of child care and potential reform of labour and employment regulations, particularly for small, family businesses.

### 2.3 Increasing VET at tertiary level

Formal degree offerings at the tertiary VET level are offered in Malta by three main national providers: the University of Malta, MCAST, ITS. Each organisation has made significant efforts to improve their course offerings and adapt curricula to labour market needs. In addition, each organisation is participating in the activities of the MPVQAC, which will increase the transparency of qualifications. The Department of Further Studies and Adult Education (DFSAE) provides continuing VET courses in a number of craft and vocational areas. In addition, a number of other national and

<sup>5</sup> European Training Foundation: Monograph Candidate Countries: VET and Employment Services in Malta, 2002

international providers exist which are recognised as having made major contributions to improving VET and human resources in Malta. The VET supply at the tertiary level had developed rapidly in Malta in recent years, and as a result the traditional availability of tertiary qualifications between “vocational” and “higher educational” has lost some of its importance.

MCAST offers tertiary (post-16) diploma and certificate training corresponding to ISCED 3-5 levels. The nine MCAST institutes include the Institute of Art and Design; Institute of Business and Commerce; Institute of Building and Construction Engineering; Institute of Electronics Engineering; Institute of Information and Communications Technology; The Maritime Institute; Institute of Community Services; Agri-Business Institute; Institute of Mechanical Engineering; as well as the Gozo Centre and the Main Campus. The curricula are based on the UK National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ), and in many cases incorporate internationally-recognised corporate qualifications as well. The Information and Communications Institute, for example, offers certified courses from a number of ICT providers, including Microsoft.

ITS offers a range of tourism-related diplomas and certificates. These include offerings such as the Higher Diploma in Hospitality Management (4 years) as well as Certificates or Diplomas in operations areas such as Accommodation Operations, Food Preparation and Production, Food and Beverage Service, and others. ITS cooperates with the tourism industry in defining VET offerings, as well as with the Malta Tourism Authority. There are other entry-points into the tourism industry, including through the ETC extended apprenticeship scheme for tourism as well as University of Malta offerings.

The University of Malta offers Bachelor’s and Master’s level degrees in 10 faculties (e.g. Architecture, Economics, Engineering) as well as a number of inter-disciplinary Institutes (e.g. Healthcare, Masonry & Construction Research) and Centres (e.g. Centre for Communication Technology; European Centre for Gerontology). The University implemented the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in October 2003, and also participates in the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

In addition to these three providers, a number of other institutions, both Maltese and international, offer VET curricula of various types and durations. Some examples include:

- Henley College and the Maastricht School of Management offer MBA courses in Malta, and are complimented by a number of other MBA providers, including e-MBAs;
- The Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise (IPSE) offers a range of short training courses on entrepreneurial skills, business management and planning, training of trainers, the ISO certification process and other subjects;
- The Malta Chamber of Commerce is a recognised business school: in addition to offering the MBA degree (in association with Henley College, through distance learning), it offers London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations Board Diploma Courses.

- The ETC offers a range of short training courses focussed on small business management and employment promotion, information systems, retail management and others;
- Malta University Services Ltd. (affiliated with the University of Malta) offers courses in innovation, management development, occupational health and safety and other subjects;
- The Foundation for Human Resource Development offers training to improve management development and human resources in enterprises;
- A large number of private training providers and consultancies offer regular and customised training and management development.

Apart from higher education, the main national authority in terms of formal VET qualifications is the work of the MPVQAC. The Council includes a number of Standards Development Boards that include representatives of the social partners: examples include Banking and Financial Services, Food and Beverage, Telecommunications. These Boards have drafted competency-based standards drawing on the UK NVQ system, but there have been delays in implementation between the date of foundation (2000) and the present time. A National Vocational Framework is being developed, utilising competency-based standards, and this is being supported by the National Human Resources and Employment Strategies, which are also in the process of development.

Malta's National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) regulates the implementation and recognition of credit frameworks under Directives 89/48/EEC and 98/51/EEC and works in conjunction with the Malta Equivalence Information Centre, the University of Malta and the MPVQAC.

Evidence from the labour market and employers indicates that equivalency between vocational and higher education qualifications is still not accepted. There is an "academic drift" in terms of preference for higher educational qualifications, at least as reflected in terms of enrolment.<sup>6</sup> The certification of vocational qualifications continues to be based on standards that are mainly British-based, such as the BTEC, NVQ or the Chartered Institute of Bankers. There is also a feeling in the market that human resources continue to require improvement: a number of corporate investments in Malta have failed or been held up by a lack of human resources, while the conclusions of other bodies, such as the Graduate Potential Seminar or the Malta Council for Science and Technology, indicate that critical development needs continue to exist.

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<sup>6</sup> European Training Foundation: Monograph Candidate Countries: VET and Employment Services in Malta, 2002

## 2.4 Incentives for updating knowledge & skills

The Government of Malta has carried out a number of policy initiatives aimed at motivating employees to upgrade knowledge and skills. Many of these relate to increasing and improving the supply, availability and quality of VET services and facilities. In terms of government employees, a number of initiatives have been undertaken for skills upgrading, such as the work of the Swatar Training Centre in ICT training.

Direct government subsidies of training courses do exist, and are offered in some instances to trainees following ETC courses; in other cases, they are offered directly to employers. For instance, employers of trainees that participate in computer training are subsidised at rates of up to 25% of the national minimum wage; this increases to 50% for learners over 40 years of age. Employers are also subsidised when they recruit long-term unemployed that require training: the subsidy is available for up to 52 weeks, for a total of 50% of the national minimum wage. The ETC and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy are also working with various NGOs and local councils to ensure that trainee support resources are available for specific training programmes

Further measures are included the National Human Resources Policy and Strategy as well as the National Employment Strategy, which is under development. The latter will link national policy with European Employment Strategy and the operations of the European Social Fund, increasing the support and resources for VET.

Employers have invested in the overall process of qualifications development, both in terms of investment on corporate training activities but also in terms of their participation in various government initiatives and fora. A number of business organisations are directly offering or supporting VET programmes, including the Malta Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Federation of Industry (FOI), IPSE, Malta Enterprise and others.

Evidence of direct employer support for VET is difficult to quantify. The last comprehensive study of in-company investment in VET was the 2001 CVET Survey, which studied 1,683 companies with over 10 employees. The data dates back to 1999, and given that many companies in Malta number less than 10 employees, it is difficult to extend the results of this Survey to the economy as a whole. Given the extensive regulatory, competitive and technological changes which have occurred since 1999, it is likely that investment has been under-reported. The Survey establishes that almost 991 companies (59%) provided CVET opportunities to their staff, while 237 companies (14.1%) had in-house training centres. Total investment in CVT in 1999 was LM 3.2 million.

Another source of information is the 2002 Labour Force Survey carried out by ETC. This indicated that some 11.3% of the survey population had received training in the previous 4 weeks. Employers also co-finance the apprenticeship schemes of ETC, for instance, by paying a minimum wage to trainees for on-the-job training.

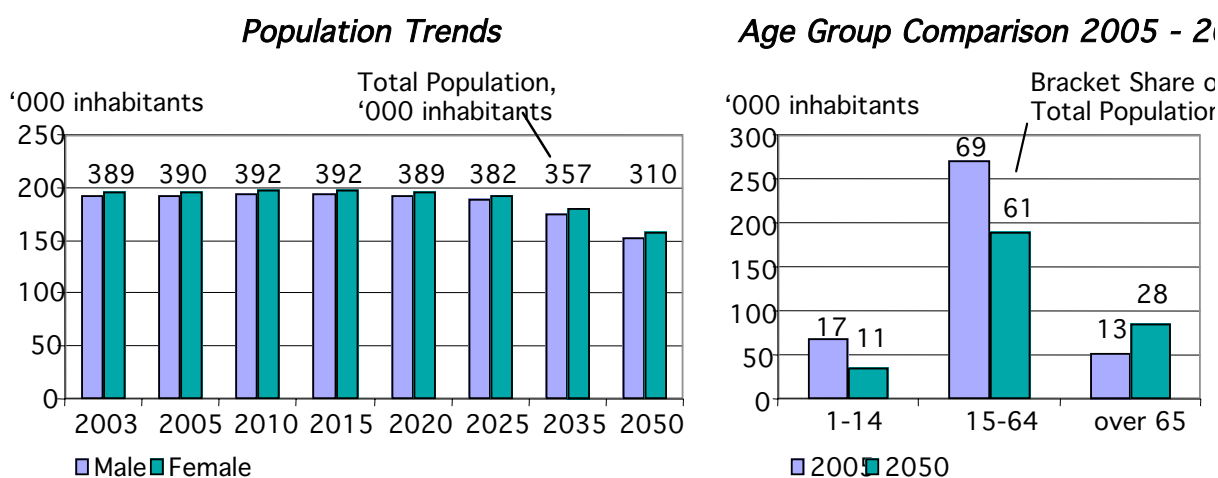
Other stakeholders are also supporting participation in VET. The Foundation for Human Resource Development (FHRD), a sister body to ETC established in 1990 as a non-governmental, non-profit organization to promote training and HR in Malta, coordinates Government-sponsored courses. It is open to members who include

students, individuals, institutions and organizations, and has its own training centre. The Foundation offers the “Quality in People Award” award to organizations that promote the development of human resources.

Promoting inclusion is a major priority of national VET and employment policy. Significant efforts have been made to improve educational attainment at all levels, to increase the employment of women and older age groups and to address the needs of disadvantaged groups, including immigrants. This is seen in all major policies as well as a number of institutions that have been strengthened, such as the Institute for Child and Parent Learning Support (ICPLS) or the St. James Cavalier Centre for Creativity. Other groups, including the National Council of Women, have also stressed the role of VET. However, the data available to the consultants at present do not point to an immediate improvement in the promotion of inclusion as defined by the employment and educational attainment of women. It is likely that other statistical surveys, including the next national Census as well as future Labour Force or CVET surveys may point to an improvement. It is also likely that other policy initiatives will have to be developed, for instance improving the quality and availability of child care and making employment more flexible.

## 2.5 Meeting the challenges of an aging population

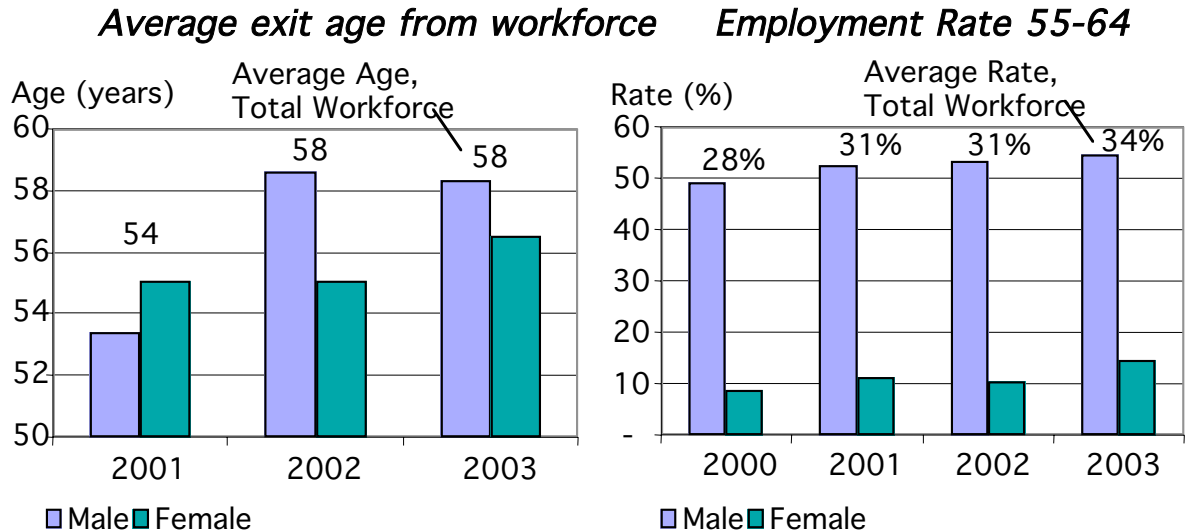
Malta currently has a total population of 399,867 inhabitants (including immigrants) and a growth rate of 0.64% per year. The rate of births to total population is 10.09 / 1,000 people, while the death rate is 7.91 deaths / 1,000 population<sup>7</sup>. The total fertility rate is 1.46 children per woman. Under these conditions, population growth will turn negative in 2020, and by 2050 will fall to 310,200 inhabitants if there are no changes in demographic rates or immigration. This will have a negative consequence on economic growth: At present, the number of potential workers for each pensioner stands at 5.27, whereas in the year 2050 it will decline to 2.20. Furthermore, the share of population 65 years and over will increase from 13% of the population in 2005 to 28% in 2050.



National Statistics Office, 2005

<sup>7</sup> National Statistics Office News Release, Demographic Statistics, 9 July 2004

The declining labour force is exacerbated by (a) the low average exit age of the workforce, and (b) the low employment rate of people in the 55-64 age bracket. The average life expectancy in Malta in 2003 was 76.39 years for males and 80.43 years for females. The average age of exit from the workforce, however, was 58 years in 2003. Males left at an average age of 58.3, while females left at 56.5. years of age. This rate has increased since 2001. The employment rate in the senior age bracket, defined as 55-64 years of age, was also very low at 34% of the total workforce in 2003. For older males, the actual employment rate was 54.4%, while for older females the employment rate was very low, at 14.4%.



*National Statistics Office, 2*

The early retirement ages and low employment rates among the older workforce are critical areas for reform. It appears that unless Maltese citizens are prepared to compromise in areas such as immigration or future pension levels, the country is going to have to increase the supply of labour starting from 2020. Potential policy recommendations could be identified: adjusting the official retirement age; active measures to increase the employment of older workers; active measures to increase the female employment and educational attainment; enhanced flexibility for employment of older workers.

Recent VET policy initiatives have focussed on providing training for older age groups. The National Strategy for Life Long Learning and the National Human Resources Strategy have both emphasized the role of older people in VET and the labour force. Some recent notable initiatives include:

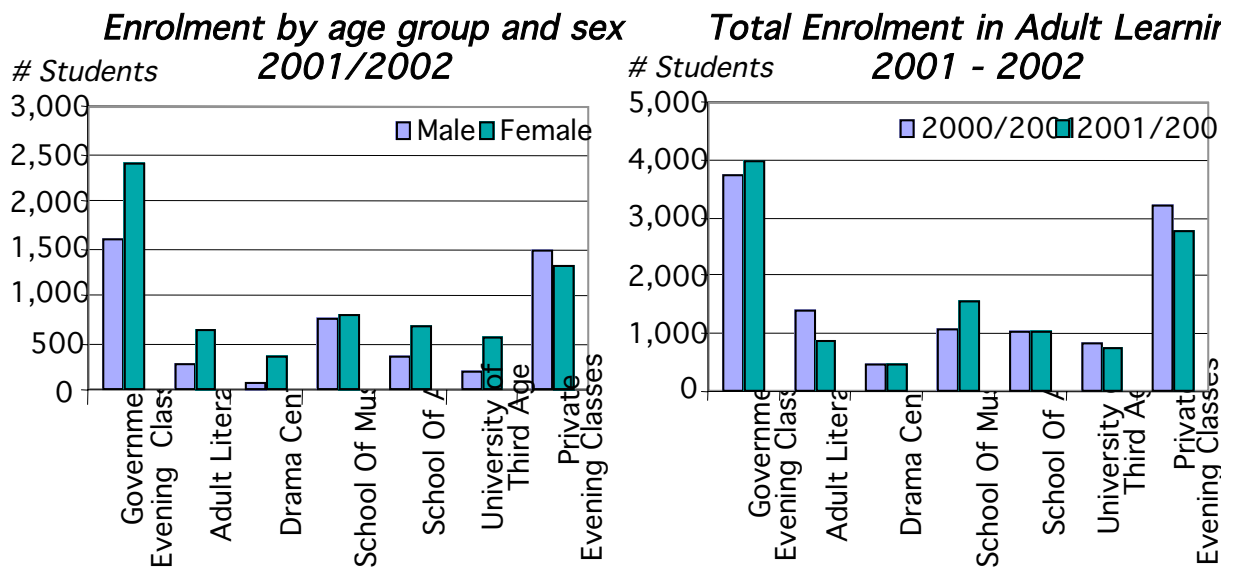
- The Department for Further Studies and Adult Education has established a TV- and media-based adult learning programme which broadcasts short learning programmes.
- The ETC offers work guidance and counselling to workers. The client groups include women returning to the labour market as well as groups with special needs or those in the process of rehabilitation. The activities of the European Social Fund (ESF) will no doubt reinforce these measures in the 2004-2006 funding cycle.

- University of the Third Age offers classroom training to adults. Enrolment in this University fell from 850 students in 2001 to 769 students in 2002.

The Adult Education section of the Division of Education is being strengthened to provide a support system for these initiatives, and future resources will be made available through the Structural Funds.

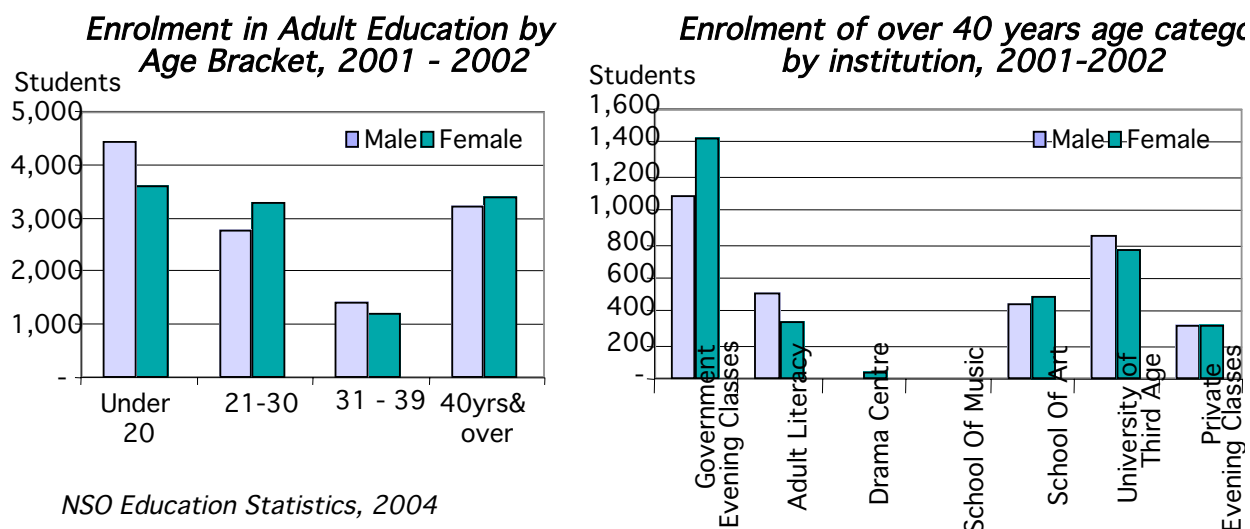
The most recent statistics in the 2004 NSO Educational Survey for adult enrolment in education (defined as age groups from “under 20 years” to “40 years and over”) indicate that enrolment fell between 2001 and 2002. This survey covered 53 adult education centres in Malta and Gozo, of which 23 were run by private companies with the remaining 30 run by the Government. In addition, the survey covered the schools of Drama, Art and Music as well as the University of the Third Age.

The total 2001 academic year enrolment was 11,868 students; in 2002, this fell to 11,501 students, a drop of 367 people. Overall enrolment is dominated by female students: in 2002 there were 6,780 females versus 4,721 males. The main increases in enrolment in 2002 were seen in Government Evening Classes and the School of Music. Major decreases in enrolment were seen in Adult Literacy, University of the Third Age and Private Evening Classes.

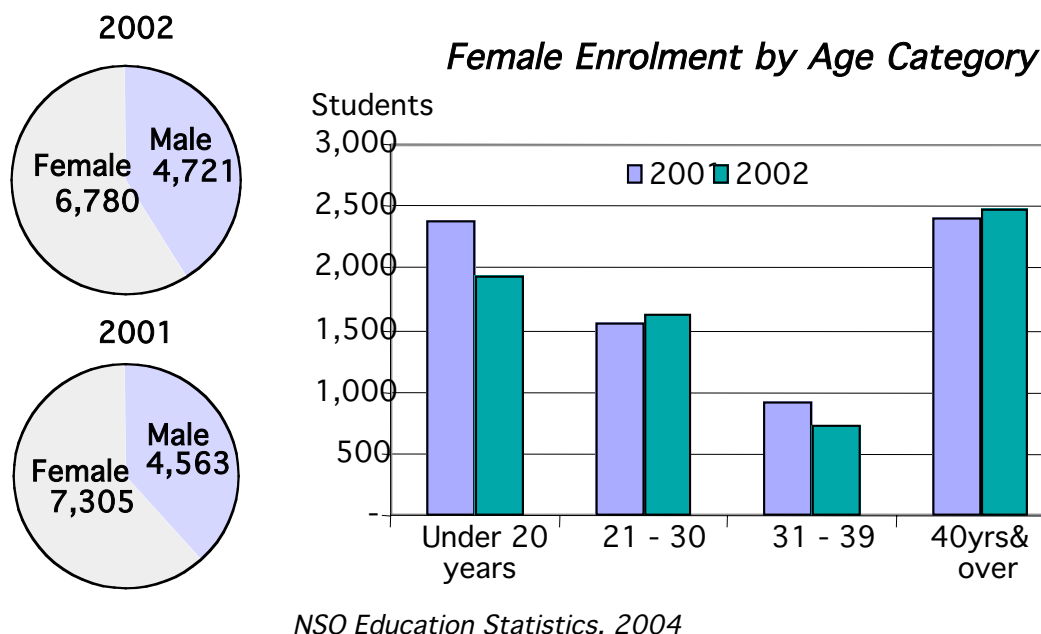


NSO Education Statistics, 200

The “over 40” age cohort saw a net increase of 179 students in the 2002 academic year. In contrast, the age cohorts “under 20” and “31-39” both saw decreases, while the “21-30” cohort saw an increase. In terms of enrolment of the over 40 category by institution, the largest increase in enrolment came in Government Evening Classes and to a lesser extent in the School of Art. Enrolment in Adult Literacy, in contrast, fell by 166 students, while enrolment in the University of the Third Age fell by 81 students.



The largest change in enrolment by gender in 2002 came from female students. Overall female enrolment fell by 525 students between 2001 and 2002, while male enrolment rose by 158 students in the same time frame. The largest falls in female enrolment came from Private Classes, with a drop of 647 students, and Adult Literacy Classes, with a total drop of 265 students. The largest increases in enrolment came from the School of Music, which increased by 271 places, and the Government Evening Classes, by 249 places. In terms of female enrolment by age group, the group "under 20 years" saw a fall of 465 students; "21-30" saw an increase of 64 places; "31-40" saw a fall of 199 places, and "over 40" saw an increase of 45 places.



The main challenges identified in the Maltese context are therefore:

- The need to resolve future demographic problems and the early average age of departure from the labour force. In particular, the low employment rate of females should be addressed.

- The implementation of the various policy initiatives as well as specific plans of the Adult Education Section, the University of the Third Age and other offerings should be monitored to assure a good take-up among older age groups.
- The potential involvement of civil groups or non-governmental organisations dedicated to older citizens should be involved as a means of promoting older adult education.
- The potential design of alternatives to retirement should be reviewed in order to promote inclusion as well as address fundamental issues in employment and labour competitiveness.

## 2.6 Effectiveness and efficiency of VET

Education has traditionally been an important aspect of Maltese society. Social prestige has always been part of certain professions, for instance doctors, lawyers or accountants. Given the recent changes to the Maltese economy, in which the services sector has grown in relation to industry or agriculture, and the demands of the knowledge economy have increased, VET is becoming more important to individuals, enterprises and the wider society. The liberalisation of the Maltese economy and the impact of technology are accelerating these trends. It is also widely accepted that unless Malta invests in VET and the wider knowledge economy, its traditional competitive advantages will be eroded.

Issues of efficiency or value for money for VET do not factor widely in the national debate. The policy priorities in recent years have been to adapt to EU norms. Issues such as return on investment or cost-benefit of VET have not been widely mentioned or adapted. The main objective has been to increase the quality and availability of supply of VET products and services. There has been, however, a significant investment into quality management, as seen for example in teacher training, quality charters, the adaptation of European qualifications standards and similar activities.

The main investment in VET at present is state-provided. Decision-making and policy development tends to be driven by government, which is often an early adopter of VET and wider human resources and employment guidelines and standards. While consultations with social partners remains extensive, the government is often the *avant-garde* of adapting to new labour and educational requirements. This is in no small part due to the small size and resources limitations of most enterprises.

A significant positive factor in recent years has been the supply of higher quality VET products in Malta. The foundation of MCAST, the development of the University of Malta and the growth of a number of other training providers from the public, private and non-governmental sectors has resulted in a beneficial increase of training and educational opportunities. However, there may also need to be further interventions or support required to more successfully link the supply and demand sides of the equation. For example, the 2002 Graduate Potential Seminar, a consultative grouping of the Malta Federation of Industry, the Malta Chamber of Commerce and Employment and Training, Corporation and the University of Malta, found that enterprises were facing key skills gaps in areas such as business education, healthcare and ICT. The 2002 Graduate & Other Qualified Persons Human Resource Needs Survey indicated that the economy will require 50% more graduates in the

coming years, 30% more diploma holders and 8% more supervisors. Over 2,000 graduates a year will be required by the economy in 2005 compared to the 1,400 which graduated in 2003.

It is highly likely that the future success of the VET in the national economy will now depend on the successful implementation of the policy reforms in practise. A major aspect will be the extent to which the private sector will adapt to and invest in VET policies, while at the same time dealing with competitive pressures introduced by changing regulatory, technological and economic factors. The costs of full implementation of some policies, for instance the employment policy, may depend to a large extent on continued government spending and direct public support to enterprises and individuals.

### 3. Theme 2: Innovation in Teaching and Learning

#### 3.1 Improvements in learning processes and contents

Significant progress has been made in improvements in learning processes and contents since 1999. The major policy initiatives include:

- The National Minimum Curriculum focuses on learning adapted to the needs of individuals as well as quality monitoring in learning. It includes: *“Among qualities that should constantly be developed in our students are those of management and leadership, teamwork, time management, communication and so on.”* The Curriculum is supported by organisations, including the Institute for Child and Parent Learning Support (ICPLS) and the St. James Cavalier Centre for Creativity, which focus on individualised services and support for young and disadvantaged learners.
- Students from 27 schools (of 70) chose to participate in the “Scoops” project, organised by the Ministry of Education and the Board of Cooperatives. Students between 13 and 15 years of age organise themselves in co-operatives and produce a product on a pilot basis, which is a major experiential learning event.
- Some 350 upper secondary students (16 to 18 years) participate in Young Enterprise, a programme designed to develop entrepreneurial skills through experiential learning involving a running an enterprise.
- MCAST’s Literacy Support Unit focusses on the needs of young, post-secondary underachievers and is introducing a continuous assessment model, moving away from the emphasis on end-of-year examinations.
- MPVQAC is working in consultation with social partners to adapt a competency-based vocational qualifications, including an Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning, which will improve the employability profiles of those workers without formal qualifications.
- ETC is introducing competency-based qualifications and developing individual learning plans for students. The National Human Resources Strategy focuses on modern HR methods and techniques. ETC has also developed the INT (Ibda Negoju Tieghek - Start your own business) Entrepreneurship Scheme. This

scheme targets people interested in starting their own business, and provides in-depth training and mentoring. anyone (except the self-employed) who is willing to open his own business venture.

A number of other organisations are offering “modern” training opportunities in Malta, including the University of Malta, Enterprise Malta, the Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise (IPSE), the Kordin Business Incubation Centre (KBIC), The Malta External Trade Corporation (METC), and others. Some of these are also linked with degrees, such as those linked with Henley College or the London Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

There has also been an emergence of innovative VET partnerships between industry representatives and VET providers. An example of this is the recent partnership between Malta Enterprise, the Enterprise Training Corporation, the University of Malta and MCAST in strengthening vocational and higher curricula for chemical operators.

### ***Innovation in Industry-VET Partnership, Maltese Chemical Industry***

A course comprising 5 modules of 15 hours each was designed by Malta Enterprise, ETC and the University which will lead either to later entry to MCAST Clinical Chemistry courses, or to entry into industry as operators. MCAST is also expanding its offerings by introducing top-up training modules for healthcare and food & beverages, a short course in Analytical Chemistry. Other plans include the introduction of modules in Analytical Chemistry, Industrial Pharmacy at the undergraduate levels of the University of Malta, as well as a Post Graduate Diploma.

There are now 31 students in the Clinical Chemistry course, while links between the healthcare industry, the University and MCAST have been strengthened. This will positively impact the future HR needs of the industry, as well as open up cooperation possibilities for future training.

However, there is also evidence that some time is needed for these reforms to fully take effect. The 2002 Graduate Potential Seminar, for instance, expressed a number of recommendations and requests, particularly from the Malta Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Federation of Industrialists:

- Some programmes are still “excessively linked to traditional academic training and not sufficiently responsive to dynamic business needs”;
- Technical education areas may still be in need of revision and modernization; the restructuring effort may not be complete;
- Many of the programmes would be helped by an injection of an innovation culture and a modernized outlook. This particularly applies to students of a young age, who should be taught more about innovation and their role in the workplace.

In policy terms, the reforms and activities put into place are in line with Lisbon objectives. The challenge will now be to see these priorities implemented in practice.

## 3.2 Improving integration; integration of formal and informal learning

The integration of formal and informal learning as well as learning sites has made advances based both on policy changes as well as emerging practise in the field. The enhancement of the Apprenticeship Schemes by the ETC, for instance, or the development of innovative curricula such as the Clinical Chemistry course described in the preceding section are examples of this. Given the services-oriented emphasis of the Maltese economy, it is inevitable that a growing share of training is taking place in association with enterprises. The increasing reliance by companies on short training courses for staff, as seen in the 2001 CVET Survey, is another example of this. At the policy and qualifications levels, the emphasis on competency-based learning as well as Accreditation of Prior Learning qualifications enshrined in the National Minimum Curriculum, MCAST and the MPVQAC will make further strides in integrating learning sites as well as formal and informal learning.

### 3.3 Evaluation and quality assurance of VET provision

The evaluation and quality assurance of VET provision have assumed increased importance in Malta with the ratification of the New Minimum Curriculum, the foundation of MCAST and the various other policy initiatives of the past 6 years. At the individual level in MCAST, the focus on learning is intended to move from end-of-year examinations to a continual assessment of competencies and qualifications. Individual learning is now (in policy terms, at least) focussed on individual requirements, and institutions such as the Literacy Support Unit are designed to offer personalised assistance to challenged students. At the qualifications assessment level, the MPVQAC qualifications framework adopts a competency-based framework with the input of Standards Boards and input from social partners. Other innovations, such as an Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning, point to a different approach for assessing individual knowledge and qualifications.

At the institutional level, a number of policy and structural initiatives have been defined to improve quality management. The National Minimum Curriculum focuses, for example, on the role of teachers and the need to improve their competencies and teaching ability. The National Curriculum Council, for example, has specific activities relating to staff training and development, while the Division of Education has formulated and implemented a number of training initiatives for school heads, deputy heads, teachers and staff members, sometimes in conjunction with external partners such as the London Institute of Education or Edexcel. Individual Education Programmes (IEPs) have been defined for teaching staff. A range of training opportunities, such as “Thinking Skills”, “IT in Education” and other courses have been developed and launched.

In addition to staff development, Malta has focussed on building in formal quality management systems into its VET institutions. All major institutions, including the Ministry of Education, the DFSAE, MCAST, its Institutes and the University of Malta have quality charters that include a specific quality policy as well as recourse and consultation mechanisms for the specific body and its staff. The focus on decentralising authority to individual schools and institutions enshrined in the National Minimum Curriculum is a further indication of this quality emphasis. The University of Malta participates in ENQA.

At the system level, Malta has focussed on establishing consultative bodies as well as formal review mechanisms for VET. A number of consultative bodies ensure communication between the various stakeholders, including:

- The Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD)
- The Foundation for Human Resources Development
- The Graduate Potential Seminar (FOI, Chamber, ETC and University of Malta)

In addition, each major VET institution has its own consultative process: the MPVQAC, for instance, cooperates with social partners through Standards Boards in defining qualifications and competency standards.

Besides consultations, Malta has an extensive system of wider consultation and review of key policies and institutions. Major policies, for instance the National Minimum Curriculum or the Lifelong Learning Strategy, including mechanisms such as steering committees, working groups and real and effective national consultation. Malta's participation in international working groups, projects or consultative projects are another method of ensuring a continual evaluation and quality assurance of the system.

### 3.4 Professional development and status of teachers and trainers

The professional development of public-sector teachers and trainers has assumed a greater importance in the National Minimum Curriculum and other policy initiatives. The Government, in conjunction with the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) and the Faculty of Education of the University of Malta have developed a range of training and qualifications opportunities are now required for or available to professional management/administrative and teaching staff in the school system. Some examples:

- Training Needs Analysis plans for the Department of Education in the Ministry were developed. This has resulted in the formulation of Individual Education Programmes (IEPs) for staff and teachers. A range of general and individual training programmes have been developed in response, on topics such as curriculum development, teaching and learning strategies, pedagogical competencies and others. In 2001, for instance, a total of 76 training In-Service courses were held, and a total of 2,340 teachers attended.
- Training for administrative staff (heads and deputy heads of schools) has been implemented on a widespread basis on themes such as leadership, examinations and others.
- Certificate and diploma courses for Inclusive Education have been launched, focussing on special learning needs for challenged or disadvantaged individuals.
- A series of certificate and diploma courses for information technology in education have been defined and implemented. Support for the European Computer Drivers License certificate has been extended.

A number of opportunities and resources have also been made available for specialised institutions or post-secondary teachers. These include programmes launched within relevant institutions, such as MCAST or the University of Malta, as

well as exchange and EU-related projects, such as the Socrates or Leonardo da Vinci.

The resourcing and development of VET staff in the public sector is done on a systematic basis, although a greater effort may be required to enhance linkages or training from “practitioners” in the private sector. Given the size of the country and the structure of the economy, the government is doing a fairly good job on teacher qualifications and development.

The situation in the private sector, however, is different. Given the absence of resources that are allocated on the same basis and availability as the public sector, private sector teachers and trainers have had to rely on own resources or market reputation to enhance their skills and knowledge. While there is an extensive transfer of skills and knowledge from, for instance, international industries or sectors to Malta, this is largely on the basis of private initiative. Greater cooperation between the public and private sectors would enhance the ability of private sector practitioners to deliver quality services. This may imply a greater access of financial resources, either through national means or EU programmes. This is vital if Malta is to be able to keep up with trends in critical areas, such as tourism, information systems, financial services or other areas.

The status of trainers in the public sector is high. Working conditions are considered favourable, and the starting salary is higher compared to the public sector. A job in the VET system in Malta brings with it job security and stability in a society that holds education and educators in high regard. In terms of organisational flexibility, the National Minimum Curriculum encourages the decentralisation of authority to the institutional level. It is likely that a review of the Curriculum will be needed to summarise the results of this approach and synthesize successful approaches and best practise.

Private sector positions are slightly different. Working hours are longer, and trainers are usually expected to be able to cover a range of disciplines in order to “sell” their services, or for an organisation to “amortize” them (if they are working at an in-house training organisation).

In the future, it is likely that additional demands will be made of the teaching profession in the public sector, as individuals have to adapt to new pedagogic and educational requirements. The requirements, for instance, of information technology and lifelong learning are likely to accelerate changes in the public VET system, requiring a more rapid process of curriculum assessment and results-oriented training. While this concept is a foundation of the National Minimum Curriculum, it is likely that more focussed efforts in analysing the results and performance at the institutional and individual levels may be needed.

## 4. Theme 3: Building Competences for a European Labour Market

### 4.1 Challenges & policies in relation to the Lisbon employment strategy

The Kok Report has identified the following main challenges faced by Malta:

- The low general employment rate; the low employment rate of older workers; increasing unemployment and the need to restructure the Maltese economy.
- Increasing adaptability in the market through privatization and redeploying employees; progressively reducing administrative costs and taxes on labour; continue reforms through building on the revised Business Promotion Act.
- Expand the labour supply through expanding the employment rate of women, in particular through increasing participation in the formal economy as well as increasing child care provision.
- Reforming social welfare systems: the current gap between minimum wage and benefit levels are too small to promote employment opportunities.
- Invest in human capital through redressing low education levels; address mismatch between supply and demand of labour; address issues of illiteracy, early school leavers and low skills attainment. Include the social partners in the development of a more systematic approach to education and training.

A number of changes have been planned or implemented based on the recommendations of the Kok Report as well as ongoing strategic and policy reforms:

- ETC has published the National Human Resources Policy and Strategy, which affirms the role of HR development in the enterprise sector.
- Work has started on a National Employment Strategy.
- The role of the social partners has been strengthened through a number of consultative bodies. In particular, the MPVQAC has recently strengthened its activities and is in the process of enhancing the national vocational framework.
- Structural changes in government have brought the ETC and MCAST under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Education.
- Malta Enterprise has strengthened its cooperation between various social partners, including IPSE, the Chamber of Commerce, FOI and others.
- The definition of ESF projects by MCAST, ITS and other institutions is expected to result in measurable results in labour policies and performance.
- ETC has launched initiatives such as the Labour Market Barometer, which will enhance institutional and private sector awareness on critical supply and demand issues in the labour market.

Based on an analysis of the Maltese economy, the policy reforms required by the *Acquis communautaire* as well as an awareness of transition effects in other accession economies, it is highly likely that the full impact of accession is not yet being felt in Malta. Certain symptoms, such as falling profit margins, a commoditisation of key goods and services, the limited entry of larger EU enterprises into the protected market, are only now in the process of occurring. These point to a fundamental need to restructure the Maltese economy, in particular so that:

- Companies and entrepreneurs are able to become more productive and competitively differentiate their products or services in order to add value. In the absence of a “value migration” or innovation strategy, it is likely that profit margins in key industries-particularly tourism-will continue to fall.

- Different forms of work organisation and management capacity will be required to ensure a greater contribution and return from human capital. This will require a professionalisation of human resources, staff compensation and motivation, and recruitment, and may fundamentally affect the family style of business in Malta.
- Coping with regulatory compliance brought about by Single Market directives, new approach directives and other requirements will necessitate a greater attention by entrepreneurs, managers and their representative associations.
- Major external factors, such as globalisation, the role of manufacturing in China, World Trade Organisation negotiations, and ICT are fundamentally changing the way business is done in sectors ranging from tourism to textiles and banking to pharmaceuticals. In this rapidly-changing work, the traditional sources of competitive advantage of Maltese companies will also be affected.

In this respect, it is vital that the momentum of reforms already launched in the VET sector are maintained, and the various institutions, businesses, social partners and individuals involved do not stop the pace of change now that accession has been achieved. The changes are probably only now beginning, and a period of “creative destruction” is underway. The challenge will therefore be to deliver the reforms envisioned in key policies, and in particular to improve control over statistics and monitoring. A major objective should be to reduce reaction times on both the policy-making and the labour market fronts, enabling reforms to be implemented, monitored and adjusted at greater speeds.

It may also be that hard decisions have to be made, for instance on exemptions granted to early school leavers, the investment in social services for child care, mandatory retirement ages, public sector employment practises, or the issue of workplace inclusion and discrimination. The consultants do not underestimate the practical impact of these comments: these are difficult issues to confront, and appropriate care must be taken in the formulation of policy in these areas.

## 4.2 Involving stakeholders

The role of the stakeholders and social partners in VET planning has been significant in Malta. Consultation occurs on an ongoing basis through established bodies such as the MCESD, the Foundation for Human Resources Development, the annual Graduate Potential Seminar, and others. Representation of social partners such as the Malta Teachers Union or industry partners through the Standards Development Boards of the MPVQAC is permanent. In addition, all major policies are cleared through a major national consultation process, which includes for instance media broadcasts, articles in press, fora in schools or community centres, direct mailings and a range of other processes. The Lifelong Learning strategy consultation process, for instance, included consumers associations, prisons, students’ councils, associations of disabled people, and others.

The input of stakeholders has been incorporated into national policies such as the National Minimum Curriculum and the Lifelong Learning Strategy as well as policy under development such as the Employment Strategy and the Human Resources Development Strategy.

Greater cooperation with the private sector is envisaged. The Government of Malta and the Microsoft Corporation and the Maltese Government are establishing a Public Private Partnership for technology, including the development of an IT Academy and an extensive training and development programme. The University of Malta, MCAST, Enterprise Malta and ETC have cooperated in developing new chemistry training courses at the vocational and university level.

While these are worthy initiatives, it is likely that the challenges of a rapidly-changing business environment will require even closer cooperation, particularly in the field of implementation. The time gap between policy formulation and implementation should be reduced, and care should be taken to implement the reforms foreseen. The public sector may have to increase its efforts in this respect. At the same time, it is likely that the private sector approach towards human resources development, employee training, workforce management and productivity and staff performance management will have to be driven by real investment and fundamental changes in the current approach, particularly among smaller companies or micro-enterprises.

### 4.3 Transparency, recognition & mobility

Malta has made a major effort to participate in European frameworks for credit transfer, qualifications transfers and similar initiatives. Some examples include:

- The Malta National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) is the focal point for the regulation and recognition of credit frameworks under Directives 89/48/EEC and 98/51/EEC. It works in conjunction with the Malta Equivalence Information Centre, the University of Malta and the MPVQAC.
- The MPVQAC has based its competency-based vocational frameworks on the UK NVQ system and has received technical assistance from the Scottish Qualifications Authority in developing the system.
- The University of Malta implemented the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in October 2003, and also participates in the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

## 5. Scoreboard: Achieving the Lisbon VET Objectives in Malta

LISBON VET OBJECTIVE	CURRENT STATUS	RESPONSE
<p><b>1. Investment in Education and Training</b></p> <p>No benchmark. However, 1999 EU average was 5.0% for public expenditure on education as share of GDP, while average of three best performing countries was 7.4%.</p>	<p>1998 public expenditure on education: 7.98% GDP; public expenditure on VET: 0.44% GDP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government expenditure on VET may be endangered by rising deficit and debt; private expenditure on VET unknown; potentially between 0.5-0.7% GDP in 1999.</li> <li>• Better statistics are needed, particularly in terms of consolidated budgeted figures for the Employment Strategy, Human Resources Strategy and other indirect policies and initiatives.</li> <li>• Additional resources will be invested through Structural Funds.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Early School Leavers</b></p> <p>Benchmark is an EU-average rate of 10% or less by 2010, down from 1999 EU average of 19.4%.</p>	<p>Malta has one of the highest rates of early school leavers in the European Union, at 54.9% of all students in 2001.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundation of MCAST; closure of trade schools; passing of new National Minimum Curriculum; investment in individual / student-focussed learning; introduction of competencies.</li> <li>• Technological, regulatory and economic changes will likely promote take-up of VET through liberalisation and competition as result of EU entry.</li> <li>• Additional monitoring of number of early school leavers required; a policy decision on exemptions may be needed.</li> </ul>

LISBON VET OBJECTIVE	CURRENT STATUS	RESPONSE
<p><b>3. Graduates in Mathematics, Science and Technology</b></p> <p><i>“By 2010, Member States will have at least halved the level of gender imbalance among graduates in mathematics, science, technology whilst securing an overall significant increase of the total number of graduates compared to the year 2000.”</i></p>	<p>In 2001, 3.3% of all graduates of 20-29 years age class were in the Science &amp; Engineering Field in Malta<sup>8</sup>. In 1999, the Malta Innovation Scoreboard shows a rate of 6.1% of S&amp;E graduates in the 20-29 age class.<sup>9</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malta Council for Science and Technology has developed S&amp;T competitiveness strategy; 2004 RTDI Programme.</li> <li>• Gender mainstreaming policy objectives found in national innovation policy, employment strategy, National Minimum Curriculum, and others.</li> <li>• The supply of VET in some fields, notably technology and science, has improved and become closer to labour market requirements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Upper Secondary Education Attainment</b></p> <p><i>“By 2010, Member States should ensure that average percentage of 25-64 year olds in the EU with at least upper secondary education reaches 80% or more.”</i></p>	<p>In 1995, 51.9% of the working age population had not completed secondary schooling and have attained only ISCED levels 0-2; only 36% of the working age population attained ISCED 3.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Minimum Curriculum aims to increase attainment levels in primary and secondary schooling through improving quality and supply of VET.</li> <li>• Other policies, including the Lifelong Learning strategy, the Human Resources Strategy, the future Employment Strategy, and others reaffirm the importance of post-secondary VET.</li> <li>• Learning and qualification systems are being revised to focus on competencies and individual learning; APEL is being introduced.</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> European Innovation Scoreboard 2003 – Technical Paper No 1: Indicators and Definitions

<sup>9</sup> Malta Innovation Scoreboard 2000

<b>LISBON VET OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>CURRENT STATUS</b>	<b>RESPONSE</b>
<p><b>5. Key Competencies</b></p> <p><i>“By 2010, the percentage of low-achieving 15 year olds in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy will be at least halved in each Member State.”</i></p>	<p>No clear statistics, apart from high number of early school leavers and low attainment levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Minimum Curriculum focuses on helping disadvantaged groups.</li> <li>• Literacy and technology initiatives have been introduced in schools.</li> <li>• Institute for Child and Parent Learning Support and St. James Cavalier Centre for Creativity supported and expanded.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Lifelong Learning</b></p> <p><i>“By 2010, the EU-average level of participation in lifelong learning should be at least 15% of the adult working age population (25-65 age group) and in no country should it be lower than 10%.”</i></p>	<p>There was a 4.2% participation in education and training in 2003 (based on Labour Force Survey methodology); enrolment in University of Malta is increasing; enrolment of “over 40” age cohort in adult learning increased in 2003; University of Third Age enrolment fell in 2003.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Strategy for Lifelong Learning passed in 2002.</li> <li>• Offerings, quality and access to adult learning expanded through MCAST, DFSAE, and other providers.</li> <li>• APEL and other competency-based initiatives should improve take-up of lifelong learning.</li> <li>• Structural funds and programmes such as EQUAL, ESF, SOCRATES and others will increase participation.</li> <li>• Economic, regulatory and technological pressures will make lifelong learning a priority in companies and at the individual level.</li> </ul>

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