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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

Ideas for a National Integration Policy Framework in Malta

I. Overall goals

A settlement and integration policy framework in Malta may be useful for several purposes:

- Provide a longer term vision as to where the country aims to be in the coming years as regards the framework to facilitate settlement of beneficiaries of protection;
- Contribute to implementation of international law obligations towards refugees and migrants in general in Malta;
- Form part of a framework to facilitate well coordinated operational structures involving various relevant Gov't entities in Malta, maximizing the impact of the available financial, material and human resources;
- Contribute to better management of mixed migration movements, to the benefit of people affected as well as the country as a whole;
- Foster development of skills potential among beneficiaries of protection and address labour needs in the national economy;
- Provide a tool to pursue economic, cultural and social development for individuals and communities in Malta;
- Facilitate steps towards greater acceptance and understanding of a multi-cultural environment in Malta.

In the below outline these objectives are incorporated under two main headings. The first part addresses the definition of relevant Government entities' responsibilities, and development of their capacities and collaboration arrangements. The second part provides an overview of integration issues from the perspective of rights and obligations of migrants, refugees and other beneficiaries of protection.

A national integration policy framework may follow a similar structure.

II. Government entities' responsibilities, capacities and objectives

An integration policy framework can help to ensure that relevant government entities are provided with clear direction as regards their involvement with migration and refugee issues. This may include elaboration of specific guidance towards the following targets:

Clarity as regards responsibilities

- It is important to ensure that the relevant **roles, functions, responsibilities and capacities** under each Ministry and Department engaged with migration issues are identified and described, avoiding potential overlap and confusion of roles.



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Effective coordination and collaboration

- It should be a central objective to ensure **effective coordination** among Ministries and service providers under their respective remits.
- Such coordination will require a mechanism to facilitate sharing of information, joint policy development and sharing of implementation responsibilities. This may be lead by an existing Governmental entity (Ministry) designated as responsible for coordinating settlement and integration issues, including through establishing links with focal points in other government entities. Alternatively, an inter-Ministerial working group can be established, potentially under the leadership of a designated Integration Commissioner or under the remit of a new governmental migration entity.

Defining the role of mainstream services

- In order to **facilitate access to services** available to various categories of migrants and beneficiaries of protection (health, social security and assistance, education, employment, housing etc), it is essential that mainstream providers in Malta have clear guidance as regards their responsibilities towards these groups.
- This may require further measures as regards development of additional capacity, and provision of information and tailored training activities for relevant staff.

Legislation, policy development and review

- An integration policy should indicate a process for review of current **integration related legislation and policies**, in accordance with the longer term vision of the Government and as measured against the new recast EU Directives. A review process should link also with the development of asylum and reception related policies with the aim to create conducive environment for future integration in Malta.
- Particular attention may be required to ensuring effective legislation and policies to curb abuse and exploitation in the labour and housing market etc.

Links with EU institutions, international organizations and civil society

- The national on settlement and integration should take into account regulations and **capacities available within the EU system**, including relevant parts of the recast EU directives and various support and funding mechanisms.
- International organizations and civil society can also contribute to a national integration framework as required.

Data collection and analysis

- In order to facilitate planning and effective responses it is essential to monitor developments through **data collection and analysis**, including through maintaining comprehensive statistics on integration indicators. Such information should be made available to relevant Government entities as well as to the general public.
- This may require further involvement by existing data collecting entities (NSO, ETC, Education Ministry) as well as development of a central capacity to collect and coordinate management and presentation of integration related information.



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III. Rights and responsibilities of migrants and beneficiaries of protection

A comprehensive national integration policy should describe the implications of key rights and obligations of migrants and refugees, and indicate the role of stakeholders, relevant tools and measures to ensure their implementation. This may include the following elements:

- A system to disseminate **information** to migrants and beneficiaries of protection (rights/ duties/ services). One important element in this regard could be to develop an online portal to serve information needs of various categories of third country nationals, including migrants and beneficiaries of protection.
- While access to mainstream services is essential, it will also be necessary to maintain a level of **targeted integration support**. This may include training activities (voluntary and/or mandatory) to promote language skills, cultural orientation and learning programmes. This approach should be developed with a view to ensure sensitivity to age, gender and diversity variations among beneficiaries of protection.
- A national framework should ensure that formal legal status is reflected through **appropriate registration and provision of identity documents**. This means establishing secure legal status, facilitating the issuing of residency documents, enable family reunification as appropriate and as far as possible establishing a pathway to facilitated naturalization for people who remain in Malta in the longer term.
- Ensure that **mainstream services** are able to meet specific refugee needs and promote their social inclusion. Civil society may also contribute with setting up training and mentoring programmes etc. There is also further potential to engage local councils, parishes in the local settlement process. ‘Access’ centres and other relevant organizations eg. scouts, youth centres, Agenzija Zghazagh (Youth Agency), Kunsill Malti għall-Isport (Malta Sports Council) may be assisted to contribute more to integrate migrants in the locality.
- There is a need to target **support for families to settle and integrate in Malta**. This may require additional resources towards child care centres and schools (introduction programmes, peripatetic teachers etc). A system for transitional housing support may also be considered (eg as in Italy’s SPRAR system).
- Further targeted support may be provided to **specific groups** (such as unaccompanied children, older persons, persons with a disability, women, single women with children, LGBTI refugees, victims of torture/trauma etc) by adapting the access to and support of existent service providers to cater for specific needs within the migrant population.



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- Permanent schemes should be launched to **promote skills development and improved access to the regular labour** market. Incentives should be established to counter informal work arrangements. Specific support may also include mechanisms to ensure recognition of degrees and qualifications from countries of origin.
- A national policy framework should also foster tolerance and a multi-cultural environment through **public campaigns** and information initiatives (TV, radio, billboards, school outreach, art exhibitions etc). The NCPE may play a central role in this regard.
- An integration policy framework should include mechanisms to ensure **refugees' participation** in gap analysis and the policy development process. This may be done through establishment of consultative fora, possibly with involvement also by UNHCR, IOM and civil society.
- It is essential to define **clearly various obligations of migrants and refugees**, and establish mechanisms and tools to facilitate raising awareness about all requirements and expectations relevant to the settlement and integration process in Malta.

Some documents that can provide further guidance in the development of a national integration policy framework:

- EU Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners
http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/doc1_12892_168517401.pdf
- UNHCR Executive Committee Conclusion on Local Integration
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/4357a91b2.html>
- UNHCR Note on the Integration of Refugees in the European Union
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/463b24d52.html>