

Malta

Women in decision-making: **0.28/5**

Socio-economic position of women: **2.48/5**

Violence against women: **1/5**

UNDERSTANDING MALTA

Although EU figures assess the gender pay gap in Malta as one of the lowest among the EU Member States, 62% of Maltese women are inactive on the labour market, and financially dependent on someone else. In spite of the increase in female employment, Malta still has the lowest full-time employment rate for women in the EU (35.3%) and the biggest gender gap in employment. This is largely due to large amounts of inactive women aged 34 years and over, who, for various reasons, leave the labour market.

In the entire country, there are only 10 state-subsidised childcare centres catering for children below the age of 3. In all, 44 centres are registered with the Department of Education and some 15% of infants are in childcare. There exists no legislation to regulate childcare centres. Despite tax breaks, good quality care is still considered to be expensive.

Women not in the labour market depend on their husband's retirement pension that is partly inherited when the male spouse passes away. However, an anomaly exists for couples who are both in employment but who lose entitlement to the lower pension once one of the spouses passes away. More often than not it is the woman who tends to outlive her male spouse.

Every year in Malta, some 300 women make use of shelters for victims of violence. 1 out of 7 reported cases of rape are within marriage, while 62% of the rapists are known to the victim. In 90% of domestic violence cases, children are either in the same room or in the room next door. 90% of women who seek mental care have been abused.¹

Malta is the only country in the EU not to allow abortion under any circumstances.

TRENDS:



In January 2012 statutory maternity leave was increased from 14 to 16 weeks and is due to reach 18 weeks from January 2013. Although the added weeks are only remunerated at minimum wage (EUR 160 per week), for the first time, the State is covering the expense of maternity leave, lowering thereby the temptation of employers to discriminate against women. Also, Malta introduced tax incentives for women to return to work following child-rearing leave and to offset the costs of childcare.

Malta finally adopted a policy and strategy on sexuality education in 2012. However, implementation is still at an early stage and no system of monitoring has been foreseen.

A Sexual Assault Response Team is due to be set up in 2013.

In 2011, Malta finally legalised divorce (under certain conditions).



Malta has the lowest rate of women's participation in decision-making in the EU in terms of women members of parliament (9%) and women on boards (3%). In addition, it is feared that the Maltese government will not support proposed EU legislation to promote more gender balance on boards.

Precarious work is on the increase and, although it is hitting both sexes, women are worse off.

Highlights

9%

women in parliament

36.8%

gender gap in full-time employment

National action plan on domestic violence but no gender analysis

1.08

shelters places for women victims of violence per 10,000 inhabitants

6.1%

gender pay gap

100%

of dependent elderly persons receive formal care

Abortion is illegal

¹ National Council of Women of Malta.