



EMN

European Migration Network



MALTA

NEWSLETTER ISSUE NO.1

MALTESE NATIONAL CONTACT POINT - MALTA
EMN WORK PROGRAMME 2021-2022

New Diploma in Education for Cultural Mediation being offered at the University of Malta

Dr Phyllisienne Gauci – University of Malta

Cultural mediation facilitates the establishment of good communication and mutual understanding between different cultures. It also promotes and enhances access to local services provided in a number of specific areas of intervention such as reception, health, education and employment. It is important for successful cultural mediation to be exercised by trained and experienced professionals who are able to promote and not hinder its scope.

The **Diploma in Education for Cultural Mediation** course trains professionals in facilitating the relations between migrants and citizens in the host country, aiming at the mutual exchange of knowledge and the establishment of positive relations between individuals of different cultural backgrounds and ethnic origins. The course aims at promoting awareness sensitizing all parties involved in otherness issues.

Maltese and non-Maltese citizens interested in this course are encouraged to apply. The course is also open for those who already practice a profession such as nurses, teachers, social workers etc. and want to be cultural mediators at their place of work.

For more information visit: <https://www.um.edu.mt/courses/overview/UDCLMFT-2021-2-O>. Link to apply: <https://www.um.edu.mt/esims/ipp/appindex.html>

International Students are asked to contact the *International Admissions Office* for more

details before applying. intadmissions@um.edu.mt | +356 2340 2225

Answers to some frequently asked questions:
What is the duration of this course?
The course will start in October 2021. This is a one-year, full-time day course.

Where will lectures be held?

Lectures will be held at the University of Malta. If necessary and in particular circumstances such as those related to the COVID-19 pandemic, lectures will be held online.

What language/s will be used?

English and Maltese.

What are the course requirements?

- i. Applicants can be Maltese or non-Maltese citizens. All applicants must prove that they have **resided in Malta for a minimum of three (3) years** prior to the commencement of the Course
- ii. Applicants must be in possession of a Secondary Education Certificate pass at Grade 5 or higher in **English and Maltese**. Passes at the same standard in comparable qualifications will also be accepted. In case of missing certification, written and oral proficiency tests approved by the Faculty will be held in September for students claiming to have the language competences in Maltese and English.

- iii. Applicants must have native or near-to-native speaker competence in a **third language** other than Maltese or English.
- iv. Applicants shall be required to satisfy the Board, through an **interview**, that they have reached the necessary aptitude and disposition to follow the course with profit.
- v. Applicants are to submit a **motivation letter** written in English and a copy of their **Curriculum Vitae** together with their application. All applicants must produce a **Certificate of Conduct** issued by the Police or other competent authority not earlier than three (3) months from the date of application.

What is the course fee?

No course fees apply for local and international students. The course is part-financed by the European Union under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014-2020.

Starting October 2021
Diploma in Education for Cultural Mediation
1 Year Course, Full-time Day
#ShineAtUM

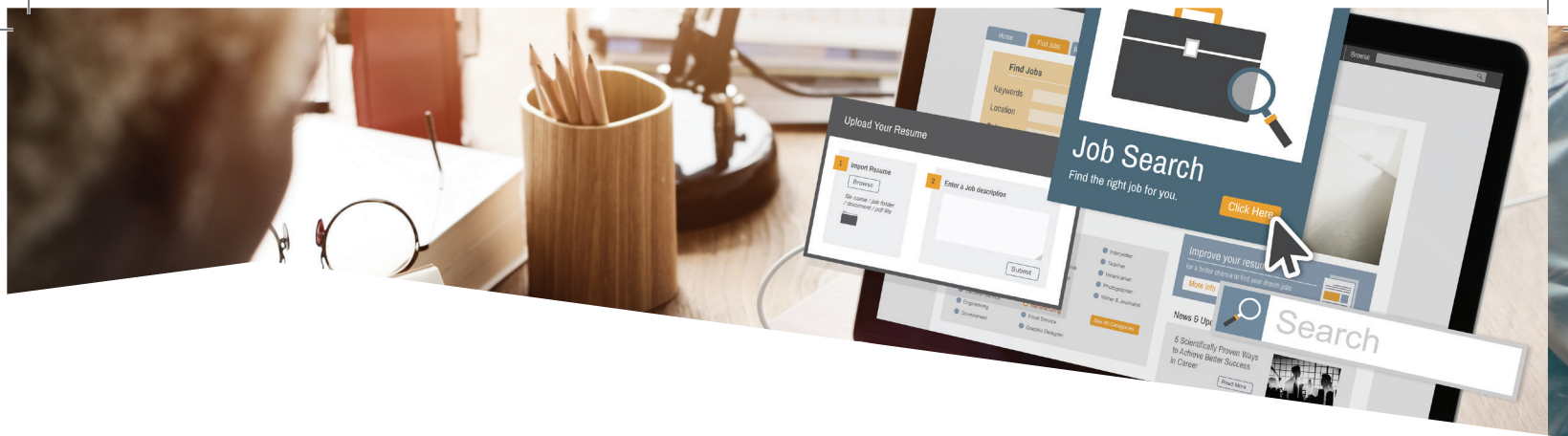
Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014 – 2020
This project is part-financed by the European Union
Co-financing rate: 70% EU funds 20% Beneficiary Funds
Sustainable Management of Migration Flows



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR HOME AFFAIRS,
NATIONAL SECURITY
AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

EMN National Contact Point (NCP) Malta
T: +356 2568 9738 E: emn.ncp@gov.mt
www.homeaffairs.gov.mt





The Impact of Covid-19 in the migration area in EU and OECD countries

Between July 2020 and January 2021, the EMN, in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography (KCMD), developed and published a series of five EMN OECD Informs on the impact of COVID-19 on migration.

The Maltese National Contact Point (MT NCP) contributed towards these Informs through its replies to the Ad Hoc Queries launched to produce the 5 Informs. The information below lists the key findings of the Umbrella Inform on the Impact of Covid-19 in the Migration area in EU and OECD countries. The Umbrella Inform provides an update on these impacts as at 31 December 2020.

It closes earlier information gaps, summarises and analyses the key findings across the earlier Informs, and it identifies the main challenges and learning points in responding to the pandemic at national level. It is a joint effort of the EMN and OECD, in cooperation with KCMD, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) and includes a section from EASO exploring the impact of COVID-19 on asylum and international protection. Remittances are not covered here, but there is detailed information on the consequences of pandemic remittances and the companies providing those services

The COVID-19 pandemic had far-reaching effects on all areas related to asylum and migration throughout 2020. The impact was felt particularly in terms of border closures, travel restrictions and the need to introduce sanitary measures to try to bring the virus under control. EU and non-EU OECD countries adopted contingency measures in an effort to keep systems operational and to mitigate the impacts on migrants and citizens to the greatest extent possible.

Residence permits and entry conditions

The pandemic impacted on entry conditions and the issuance of **residence permits** by EU Member States both at missions abroad and on the territory. On the territory, Member States and Norway began to **introduce restrictions on in-person immigration-related services**. To ensure continuity, even during office closures, **services were maintained using post, electronic means or using online systems**. In some Member States, pre-existing online systems continued to be used.

Electronic tools and online systems were also commonly used in non-EU OECD countries. Australia, for example, provided few in-person services, with applications available for electronic submission, and in 2020, naturalisation ceremonies were also conducted virtually.

Supports to mitigate the effects of the pandemic for migrants

For migrants already on the territory, measures were introduced to ensure that those affected by travel restrictions or restrictions on immigration services **did not fall into an irregular situation**. In the EU Member States and Norway, these included automatic extension of residence permits, tolerated stays, removal of the obligation to leave, and/or the suspension/extension of procedural deadlines, and in some cases, these measures were still in force as of 31 December 2020. Non-EU OECD countries also made similar efforts to ensure that migrants did not fall into an irregular situation, for example, in the US, where from March 2020, timely online requests for extension of stay were possible to mitigate the effects of COVID-19.

With regard to migrant workers affected by the pandemic, many Member States and Norway reported that **mainstream supports available to the unemployed and employers were also applicable to migrants** during this period. In addition, some flexibility in the minimum income

requirements for qualifying for/protection against withdrawal of the residence permit was reported. Non-EU OECD countries also provided income support to migrants.

Most EU Member States reported that **COVID-19 related healthcare was available for all migrants**, with costs met from public health insurance or social security and/or from State public health funds. For regular migrants who experienced a drop or loss in income, underlying rules on access to general healthcare were maintained, allowing access to general healthcare in most reporting Member States.

Meeting labour market needs

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, **most EU Member States imposed restrictions on the admission of migrants**. Continued admission was justified for essential occupational sectors, notably **health, agriculture** and **transport**. Non-EU OECD countries similarly identified health and, in most cases, agriculture/food security as essential sectors, as well as support of critical infra structure in some cases. To address labour shortages, especially in **seasonal activities**, some EU Member States implemented measures to facilitate labour market access for third-country nationals already on the territory.

Regularisation of third-country nationals employed in certain key sectors was permitted in a limited number of cases, both in EU and non-EU OECD countries.

Regarding **contingency planning for 2021**, some EU Member States reported the relevance of the usual tools for fulfilling labour needs, e.g. quotas, or measures taken earlier in 2020, to meet the demand for seasonal workers, including an exemption from travel restrictions. Member States also reported the importance of using similar tools to meet labour needs in other key sectors, especially healthcare, with some reporting more specific measures in relation to ongoing labour needs for healthcare workers. Some non-EU OECD countries planned to increase labour migration in order to spur economic recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.



International Protection

The pandemic also impacted on the implementation of international protection systems in EU+ Member States. The **new tools and processes used in asylum and reception systems** in the immediate response to the health emergency no longer represent just a short-term solution for EU+ countries to mitigate COVID-19, but the emerging 'new normal' in European societies and legal systems with long-lasting effects on the implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS).

Physical distancing and sanitary measures pose a particular challenge for reception systems. The operationalisation of emergency shelters or isolation areas has been crucial, not only to address the spread of COVID-19, but also for the development of solid contingency plans. In addition, national authorities are adapting practices to continue to provide reception services beyond accommodation, such as educational activities, information-sharing, counselling through e-services, etc. Other stakeholders, such as civil society organisations and public-private partnerships, also needed to adapt their services in a more permanent way.

At the same time, **new challenges arise in guaranteeing an effective and fair asylum procedure** for both first instance applications and appeals, e.g. the quality of remote interviews, access to and skills needed to use electronic tools by applicants, the quality of processes and data protection.

The resumption of operations by **judicial institutions has led to the review of emergency measures** in asylum and reception procedures, and in some cases, the immediate annulment of certain measures.

International students

International students were generally subject to the same travel restrictions and testing/quarantine requirements as all other third-country nationals. Some EU Member States reported **substantial**

decreases in the number of new international students by the end of 2020 compared to previous years. Migration authorities in EU Member States used **online procedures for issuance of visa or residence permits** (in similar ways as for other third-country nationals, see above). Some non-EU OECD countries, showed leniency or provided extended deadlines for the provision of documents needed for the application process.

EU Member States and many non-EU OECD countries adopted national policies that **discouraged physical presence on campuses**, with a few exceptions connected to laboratory work in smaller groups, practical studies in medicine, or mid-term exams that could not be held remotely. Similar scenarios also applied in Canada and the UK.

Most EU Member States allowed international students who were admitted to the territory prior to the pandemic to undertake their studies but subsequently returned home, to **continue their studies online from abroad**.

Online systems for renewal of residence permits were available to students, often linked to similar measures for other residence permit categories. Some EU Member States provided state-funded social security or other support mechanisms for (financially disadvantaged) international students, for example in the form of scholarships or bursaries. EU and non-EU OECD countries also increased the maximum working hours applicable to international students, opening access to national funds or other financial programmes.

Return

The Covid-19 crisis and associated travel restrictions and bans impacted on both **the number of return decisions and on the implementation of return** in EU Member States, and in non-EU OECD countries. Typically, this meant a reduction in returns in March, April and May 2020, and a relative rise in

the following months. Forced return was heavily impacted, with a substantial decrease in March and April, which had not reach pre-pandemic levels by December 2020.

Travel restrictions were lifted at various points throughout 2020, but not consistently across EU Member States and third countries, so that **difficulties in organising return flights to third countries remained**.

Some non-EU OECD countries (Japan, Korea, and New Zealand) noted that a reduction in the number of international flights and other travel restrictions made it difficult to carry out deportations in 2020. The US did not suspend deportations due to COVID-19.

Almost half of EU Member States reported having implemented **contingency measures on pre-removal detention** in order to avoid absconding. Hygiene measures were implemented throughout 2020, especially in pre-detention testing and quarantine. Several EU Member States continued to respect the reduced detention capacity and prioritised alternatives to detention where possible.

Over half of EU Member States **continued to provide return counselling and other pre-departure services**, with most moving to online communication formats and developing online pre-registration activities to allow individuals to access Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) procedures.

EU Member States reported that the conditions for providing **access to the education system** for third-country national children subject to return decisions remained the same as those for nationals, both in normal circumstances and during the pandemic across EU Member States.

Emergency healthcare and essential treatment to individuals subject to a return decision was maintained.

British Nationals in Malta after Brexit

Giliane Mallia - Unit Manager - Recruitment Services and EURES - Employer Services Division



At the stroke of midnight on the 31st of December 2020 the United Kingdom's transitional period ended and fully ceased to be part of the EU and lost any rights associated with free movement. Where does this leave British nationals? Despite the fact that Brexit (along with Covid-19) must have been one of the most commonly used words in 2020, Jobsplus still received a flurry of emails and queries and engagement forms from British nationals in the tail end of the year. The UK restricting air travel in December did not help anyone who was planning a last minute move to the island.

In brief, any British National who came or will come to Malta post 2020 is for all intents and purposes classed as a Third Country National and requires an Employment Licence to work here. Therefore any new arrivals would need to apply for a Single Permit (with an option of requesting a residence permit of up to 10 years which is only available to British Nationals) should

they wish to reside and work in Malta, with an Employment Licence that would need to be renewed with Jobsplus annually thereafter. Those workers that do not fall within the scope of the Single Permit process, will need to apply for an Employment Licence directly with Jobsplus. With regards to Jobsplus services this means that they are not eligible to register as unemployed however they can use the website and are able to receive advisory services to help with finding a job IF they have a valid Employment Licence. Any British National resident in Malta would still be able to access Jobsplus training or benefit from the Investing in Skills scheme however they would not be able to benefit from numerous other schemes and incentives that Jobsplus has available (A2E, WES, Traineeship, Youth Guarantee etc).

For any British Nationals who were already residing in Malta by 2020 then their rights were protected via the Withdrawal Agreement. Brits who were living in Malta

and already in possession of a residence card were asked to apply for a new residence card issued under Article 50. This card gives them the right to reside and to work in Malta and is valid for 10 years and is renewable (under certain criteria). Anyone who has yet to apply for such a residence card has **until the end of June 2021** to do so. This cohort of British Nationals retained all rights relating to employment and residence and can access all Jobsplus services without restrictions. They have however lost the right of free movement within the EU.

To summarise anyone who was not in Malta by 2020 is not automatically able to work and reside here. Even for those who were in Malta by 2020, if they are not in possession of a residence card or at the very least, have submitted an application for one with Identity Malta on Brexit.ima@gov.mt and have had an appointment date **by the end of June 2021** then they will also lose the automatic right to reside and work in Malta.



This publication has been funded with the support from the European Commission. It reflects the views only of the author, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

EMN National Contact Point (NCP) Malta
T: +356 2568 9738 E: emn.ncp@gov.mt
www.homeaffairs.gov.mt

