**Disability:IN Global Directory**

**Malta**

**Disability Definition**

As per the [Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (EOA)](https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/413/eng), a "person with disability" is defined in the Act as having the meaning assigned to it in Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, which generally encompasses individuals with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental impairments that may hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

**Legislation**

[The Constitution of Malta](https://legislation.mt/eli/const/eng) guarantees equality for all individuals under the law, including protections against discrimination based on disability. The Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (EOA) further enforces this by mandating that individuals with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as all other citizens, requiring both public and private sectors to ensure equal access to services, employment, and accommodations.

Enacted in 2000 and amended multiple times since, the [Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (EOA)](https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/413/eng) is Malta’s main legislation safeguarding non-discrimination and accessibility for persons with disabilities. It requires organizations to provide reasonable accommodations and eliminate barriers that hinder participation in employment, education, and access to goods and services. Additionally, organizations must conduct regular reviews to identify and remove barriers related to disability.

Malta ratified the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)](https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html) in 2012, committing to uphold international standards of accessibility, non-discrimination, and equal opportunity for persons with disabilities. This Convention reinforces national laws, ensuring Malta’s accountability in promoting full participation of persons with disabilities.

Under Maltese law, particularly the [Employment and Industrial Relations Act](https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/452/eng), employers must support diversity and equality in the workplace, including provisions for reasonable accommodations and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The National Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NCRPD) oversees and enforces compliance with these requirements, offering guidance and support to ensure workplace accessibility.

**Employer Requirements**

According to Malta’s [Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (EOA)](https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/413/eng), all employers must implement inclusive policies to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal opportunities in the workforce. The Act mandates the following key requirements:

* Employers are required to identify and remove any barriers within their employment practices that might limit opportunities for individuals with disabilities. This includes assessing and modifying employment systems, policies, and practices that may disadvantage persons with disabilities in recruitment, hiring, training, and promotion processes.
* Employers must provide reasonable accommodations to support the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in the workplace. This may involve adjustments to workspaces, job responsibilities, or providing assistive technologies, depending on the employee’s needs and the job requirements. Accommodations should be made as long as they do not impose an "unjustifiable hardship" on the employer, as determined by the EOA.
* Employers are encouraged to conduct regular reviews and analyses of their workforce to assess the representation of persons with disabilities. By doing so, they can determine whether persons with disabilities are equitably represented across occupational groups and, if not, make appropriate adjustments to improve diversity and inclusion.
* Employers may implement targeted programs designed to enhance employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. These “special measures” aim to redress historic disadvantages and improve accessibility within the workforce, in line with Maltese anti-discrimination laws.

The [National Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NCRPD)](https://www.crpd.org.mt/investigations/) monitors employer compliance with the EOA and provides guidance on implementing inclusive practices. The NCRPD supports employers in developing policies that foster a more accessible work environment and ensure alignment with national disability inclusion standards.

[Malta’s Employment and Industrial Relations Act](https://maltaemployers.com/wp-content/uploads/Position-Paper-on-the-employment-of-disabled-persons-Jan-20153.pdf#:~:text=In%20the%20late%20sixties%2C%20government%20had%20passed,which%20disabled%20persons%20face%20when%20seeking%20employment.) includes a quota system for businesses with over 20 employees, requiring that at least 2% of their workforce consists of persons with disabilities. This policy supports the integration of individuals with disabilities into the labor market and promotes a diverse workforce.

**Accessibility Requirements**

In Malta, accessibility for persons with disabilities is governed by a combination of national legislation and standards aimed at ensuring inclusivity across various aspects of public life. Central to these efforts is the [Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (EOA)](https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/413/eng), which mandates that public spaces, services, and workplaces be accessible to individuals with disabilities. Both public and private organizations are required by the EOA to actively remove physical, informational, and technological barriers that may restrict access, thereby enabling persons with disabilities to participate fully in society. Compliance with these standards is monitored by the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), which offers guidance and may enforce corrective actions if organizations fail to meet the mandated requirements.

In addition, the [Accessibility Standards for all in a Built Environment Regulations](https://legislation.mt/eli/ln/2019/198/eng/pdf) outline specific requirements for the built environment, digital content, and service delivery. These standards cover accessible design for buildings, public transportation, information and communication technologies, and service provision. Any new construction or major renovation of public buildings must adhere to these guidelines, promoting a more accessible infrastructure across Malta.

Malta is also committed to digital accessibility through adherence to the [EU Web Accessibility Directive](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2016/2102/oj), which mandates that public sector websites and digital services be usable by individuals with visual, auditory, and physical disabilities. This initiative enhances digital inclusion by ensuring that online content and government services are accessible to all.

**Cultural Norms**

In Malta, cultural attitudes towards disability are shaped by close family networks and traditional Mediterranean values. Disability may sometimes be downplayed or overlooked, with societal expectations set lower for individuals with disabilities. As a result, people with less visible disabilities, such as partial hearing loss or mental health conditions, may choose to conceal their disability to fit in with societal norms.

Despite growing awareness, challenges remain in enacting comprehensive disability rights legislation that covers all areas of life, although public advocacy and support continue to push for more inclusive policies.

Reference: <https://www.crpd.org.mt/category/living-with-disability/>

**Insights**

According to the Census of Population and Housing 2021 conducted by Malta's National [Statistics Office (NSO)](https://nso.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/volume3-Census-of-Population-2021.pdf), approximately 26% of individuals aged 5 and over reported having a long-term illness, disease, or chronic condition, marking a 6-percentage-point increase from the previous census in 2011.

According to the [European Commission](https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=23939&langId=en), the gap in economic activity rates between people with and without disabilities in Malta is 31%, which is higher than the EU27 average of 19.8%.

In Malta, 49% of women with disabilities aged 20–64 are employed, compared to 53.9% of men with disabilities in the same age group. Only 20% of women with disabilities are in full-time employment, compared to 29% of men with disabilities.

29.5% of women with disabilities are at risk of poverty and social exclusion, compared to 27.4% of men with disabilities.

Reference: <https://www.edf-feph.org/content/uploads/2022/09/EDF-recommendations-on-employment-of-women-with-disabilities-September-2022-final.pdf>

# Supplier Diversity

In Malta, supplier diversity initiatives are gradually emerging, with efforts focused on empowering businesses owned by individuals with disabilities and other underrepresented groups. While formal certifications specific to disability-owned enterprises are not yet widely available, the government and various organizations promote the inclusion of diverse suppliers in both public and private procurement processes.

The [Malta Chamber of SMEs](https://www.smechamber.mt/the-malta-chamber-of-smes-endorses-and-signs-the-first-ever-malta-diversity-inclusion-charter/#:~:text=The%20Malta%20Chamber%20of%20SMEs%20is%20proud%20to%20endorse%20and,Inclusion%20Charter%20Conference%20May%202024.) advocates for inclusive economic practices and often collaborates with the government to encourage supplier diversity in procurement. They aim to promote opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises, including those led by individuals with disabilities.

While specific disability-focused supplier certification programs are not currently offered, broader diversity and inclusion programs are being developed in Malta, particularly as part of EU-funded initiatives.

# Talent Sourcing Resources

[The Lino Spiteri Foundation](https://www.lsf.org.mt/) is a key organization dedicated to improving employment access for individuals with disabilities. It offers career guidance, job matching, and support services to ensure that persons with disabilities can participate fully in the workforce.

The [Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD)](https://www.crpd.org.mt/) also supports employment initiatives by collaborating with employers to create inclusive work environments. They provide resources, guidance, and assistance with workplace accommodations to facilitate the hiring of persons with disabilities.

**Additional Resources**

[The Inspire Foundation](https://inspire.org.mt/) is a prominent organization in Malta offering a wide range of services for individuals with disabilities, including physical, intellectual, and learning disabilities. Inspire provides therapy, education, and community support programs to enhance quality of life and support personal development. Their services also extend to family support and training to foster a more inclusive environment.

[The Equal Partners Foundation](https://equalpartners.org.mt/) is a family-focused organization that provides tailored support and services for persons with disabilities. They work closely with individuals and their families to develop personalized support plans that encompass educational, therapeutic, and social needs, aiming to facilitate full community participation.

[The Richmond Foundation](https://www.richmond.org.mt/) offers mental health support services that include programs for individuals with disabilities who may also experience mental health challenges. They provide counseling, residential support, and mental health education, working to reduce stigma and improve mental well-being.