



European Commission



MALTA

# The Environmental Implementation Review

Europe has ambitious laws and policies to protect air and water, to promote the circular economy, raise recycling rates and safeguard nature. Implementing them is key to achieving our environmental objectives. This is why the European Commission launched the Environmental Implementation Review (EIR), a tool to help countries address systemic obstacles to environmental integration by identifying the causes behind poor implementation. The EIR comprises a regular cycle of analysis, dialogue and peer-to-peer support. This factsheet summarises the results of the second EIR package published in April 2019.

## Country profile

Malta is the smallest, most urbanised and most densely populated Member State. These features, as well as the scarcity of natural resources, pose specific challenges in its efforts to reach a high level of environmental protection, despite investment in environmental infrastructure and regulation. Balancing nature conservation with economic development or recreational activities remains a challenge but the need for sustainability and environmental public awareness is increasing.

## Main progress EIR 2019

- ✦ The terrestrial Natura 2000 network has been set up.
- ✦ Some progress has been made on air quality as total national emissions of sulphur oxides (SO<sub>x</sub>), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>), ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) and PM2.5 continued to fall between 2014 and 2016.
- ✦ Malta is leading on the supply of government services to citizens, ranking first on the reuse of information across administrations (pre-filled forms) as well as on the sophistication of services (online service completion), and has continued to improve its digital public services.

## EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE FROM MALTA

- ✦ The government's 'Don't Waste Waste' campaign has launched an online game to engage the public in understanding more about good waste-management practices and ongoing initiatives in Malta and Gozo.
- ✦ As part of the pan-European 'Researchers' Night', Malta's Science and Arts Festival 2018 focused on increasing citizens' awareness of the effects of plastic waste on the planet through an interactive exhibition.
- ✦ To ease congestion on the roads, a free school transport scheme was introduced for all students.
- ✦ The Ministry for Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change created an official Facebook page to raise awareness and announce initiatives, such as litter clean-ups, involving different stakeholders and volunteers.

## Main challenges EIR 2019



### Waste management

The 2019 EIR shows the need for significant improvements to bring waste management in line with the waste hierarchy. The recycling rate is too low, far below the EU average, and the landfill rate remains too high, over three times the EU average. According to the Commission's 'Early Warning Report' (2018), Malta is at risk of non-compliance with the 2020 municipal waste recycling target of 50%. Urgent reforms and enforcement actions are needed, notably for the functioning of the Extended Producer Responsibility Systems and on waste collection separation. Malta has yet to capitalise on turning waste into a resource and low recycling rates into business opportunities.



### Air quality

Reducing emissions is particularly pressing in road transport, considering the growing number of cars and the ageing car fleet. There has been some progress in addressing air quality and traffic congestion. A key measure by the Maltese authorities is the reform of the public transport

system which aims to achieve a modal shift away from cars. Moreover, although total national emissions continued to fall between 2014 and 2016, further efforts are required to define strategic targets and actions beyond 2020, in particular on emission-reduction commitments laid down in the new National Emissions Ceilings Directive.



### Nature protection

The protection of habitats and species by fully implementing Natura 2000 and strengthening the enforcement of nature directives has long remained a challenge in Malta. While the terrestrial Natura 2000 network is complete, many marine sites have still to be designated for submerged or partially submerged caves. Setting up conservation objectives and measures require further efforts. Hunting and trapping practices must be aligned with the Birds Directive: on 21 June 2018, the EU Court of Justice ruled that by allowing the capture of seven species of finches, Malta has failed to fulfil its obligations under EU law.

### Peer-to-Peer support

The EIR is supported by the TAIEX-EIR Peer-to-Peer (EIR P2P) tool, which finances peer-to-peer learning between environmental authorities in the Member States. Malta has participated in two EIR P2P workshops, one on timber and one on air-quality plans.

The full country report on Malta and the other country reports, as well as the Communication 'Environmental Implementation Review 2019: A Europe that protects its citizens and enhances their quality of life' are available here:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/index_en.htm)

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