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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES IN MALTA

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PREFACE

This country monograph is the result of a request from the European Commission (Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs) in the context of the Employment Policy Reviews launched by the latter in the future member states in 1999. According to this request, the key aim of the country monographs is to provide up-to-date, detailed information and analysis on the vocational education and training systems and structures as well as on the public and private employment services in order to support the monitoring of the *Joint Assessment Papers of Employment Priorities (JAP)*. This analysis is considered to provide a useful input enabling the future member states and the European Commission to identify the most important needs and gaps.

In particular, the analysis aims at providing:

- (1) an instrument to assess the progress made by the countries to increase the responsiveness of their education and training systems to labour market needs; this assessment addresses particularly the challenges and priorities related to the development of lifelong learning;
- (2) a tool to assess the effectiveness of the public and private employment services to assist both young and adult unemployed people and those threatened by unemployment to enter the labour market; and
- (3) a basis for positioning the development trends of these systems in relation to those in EU member states.

The work has been conducted by a team of national, EU and ETF experts, under the responsibility of the European Training Foundation (ETF) and with the support of

the Employment Training Corporation (ETC). The method of work combined the use of desk research and field visits in the capital and also in some selected regions. The final document has been prepared by the European Training Foundation and therefore, reflects primarily an ETF viewpoint.

The preparation of the monographs has also benefited from a close consultation process with representatives of the national authorities. The latter were informed about this work right from the beginning of the process and they were invited to provide their opinion on the final draft. In addition, a seminar was organised on 27 September 2002 in Brussels with the aim of presenting and discussing the documents with the national authorities of the future member states as well as with the European Commission. This monograph also reflects the outcomes of this seminar and further discussions and comments from the country.

The document makes use of quantitative indicators from international institutions as well as national sources. As discussed during the 27 September meeting, it should be acknowledged that in relation to indicators used in the EU, some data are still missing, while others might refer to different realities. Therefore, figures must be interpreted with caution, taking into account that statistics should be complemented by more qualitative assessments. Further analytical work will be needed to improve the picture and in particular the positioning of developments in the country towards developments in the EU.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The country monograph on vocational education and training and employment services provides baseline information and analysis aiming to identify the progress in implementing the priorities identified in the *Joint Assessment Paper on Employment Policy (JAP)* agreed between the government of Malta and the European Commission. Current EU policies based on the Lisbon conclusions, such as the lifelong learning initiative, and the European Employment Strategy set the framework for the analysis.

1. THE CONTEXT

a) Economic development

- The average year-on-year GDP growth rate between 1995 and 1999 was slightly above 4% compared to an EU average of 2.4%. In 2000, GDP amounted to € 3.9 billion, and real GDP growth remained high at 5%¹ compared to an EU average of 3.3%.
- The present government's economic policy aims at achieving macro-economic stability with low inflation and a sustainable balance of payments.
- GDP per capita amounted to € 12,600 PPS in 2000, which corresponds to about 56% of the EU average of € 22,530 PPS (up from 49% in 1995).

b) Key employment and labour market developments

- A distinctive feature of the labour market in Malta is the **large proportion of SMEs and micro enterprises** with only 46 companies (around 0.2%) of a total of 23,660 (1999 figures) employing more than 200 people. This has particular consequences for continuing training provision for the employed, as the readiness to invest in training is usually higher in larger companies.
- **Unemployment has remained relatively stable** at a low level of 4.5% in 2000 (ILO methodology), following a period of somewhat higher rates between 1997 and 1999 (5%, 5.1% and 5.3% respectively). The unemployment rate of under 25 year-olds was 7%.
- **Employment rates are low** (54.6% in 2000), particularly among women (33.1% in 2000)². Since 1995, there has been a steady decrease in employment rates in the 15-24 age group (from 62.4% in 1995 to 49.6% in 2000³, which reflects longer periods of school attendance and higher participation rates in education.
- As illustrated by the table below, there have been slight **structural changes in employment**, i.e. a decrease of the employment share of agriculture, complemented by an increase in the share of services, with the share of industry remaining relatively stable.

1 Regular Report on Malta's Progress Towards Accession, Commission of the European Communities, November 2001.

2 Labour Force Survey, December 2000, quoted in: *Joint Assessment of the Employment Policy Priorities in Malta*, October 2001.

3 Employment and Training Corporation, quoted in: *Joint Assessment of the Employment Policy Priorities in Malta*, October 2001.

Structural changes in employment

Year	Employment share of agriculture	Employment share of industry	Employment share of services
1994	1.7%	30.4%	67.9%
1997	1.6%	28.5%	69.9%
2000	1.5%	28.4%	70.0%

Source: *Employment and Training Corporation, 2000, quoted in: Joint Assessment of the Employment Policy Priorities of Malta, October 2001.*

■ The share of unemployed males holding a diploma or a higher education degree in the overall number of unemployed was only around 0.4% in 1998 and 1999. The share of unemployed females with diplomas or degrees was higher: 0.5% for diploma holders, 1.7% for those with a degree in 1998, increasing to 1.1% and 2.1% respectively in 1999. This is considerably lower than the share of unskilled workers: for males it was 61.8% in 1998 and 57.6% in 1999, compared to 54.7% and 40.8% for females⁴.

c) Demographic development

■ Similar to other countries in Europe, Malta is confronted with an ageing population. Birth rates have been declining over the past four decades; at the same time life expectancy has improved. Despite these factors, population projections show that the 15-64 age group is expected to grow slightly to 261,000 people in 2015, compared to 258,483 in 1999. This development indicates potentially higher competition in the labour market. The natural population increase in 2000/01 was 2.6 per 1,000 inhabitants. In 2000, the population was around 395,000 with a high density of 1,250 persons per sq. km., and a 89% share of the urban population.

other stakeholders on the importance of vocational education and training in a lifelong learning perspective to support social and economic development, a formal policy framework defining the key objectives with regard to future development has not been elaborated yet.

The National Minimum Curriculum, the latest version of which came into force in October 2000, is a step towards integration of core skills in line with the Lisbon targets and a more unified approach in basic education provision up to the lower general secondary level. Together with other reforms (phasing out of trade schools, establishment of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology - MCAST) this indicates a change in policy direction towards a more inclusive approach, counteracting the previous trend of early specialisation.

Links between initial and continuing training are still weak. Permeability between the different programmes and pathways is possible in theory, but limited in reality. It is expected that the new Apprenticeship Board set up by the Employment Training Corporation (ETC) with the participation of representatives of the ETC, the Education Division of the Ministry of Education and the MCAST will ensure higher vertical and horizontal mobility of students through flexible pathways between different qualification levels by offering a modular course structure and incorporating the two apprenticeship schemes. However, it is too early to assess its impact on the overall vocational education and training (VET)

2. FOUNDATIONS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

The issues outlined above underpin new needs for lifelong learning. Although there is consensus across political parties, educational authorities, employers and

⁴ E. Zammit, F. Borg, S. Vella: *Background Study on Employment and Labour Market in Malta*, Employment and Training Corporation, 2001.

system and on the relevance of training for the labour market.

Both MCAST and ITS (Institute for Tourism Studies) also hope to encourage mobility between their programmes and the University of Malta, but especially in the case of the College, the details are still being worked out.

a) Participation in education and educational attainment

- Educational **attainment levels are low**. According to the 1995 census, 51.9% of the working age population have not completed secondary schooling and have attained only ISCED levels 0-2⁵. 36% have completed ISCED 3, 3.5% ISCED 4, 7.3% ISCED 5-7. The EU average concerning completion of ISCED 3 is 59.9%⁶ (1999 figure). However, only about 10% have attained tertiary education, compared to an EU average of 20.5%⁷. About 60% of the working age population declare that they do not have any formal qualification, and the country also has a problem with 9% of the same group being illiterate.
- In 1990, 56% of compulsory school graduates continued in education, while 31% entered the labour market. Ten years later, 65% continued in education and 19% entered the labour market. There has been a **considerable rise in the overall number of students registered at post-16 level**. Student enrolment rose to 5,191 in 1999/2000, which represents an increase of 17.7%. At the same time, the number of students following vocational education at this level dropped to 2,615 students in 1999/2000 (-7.1%)⁸. This underpins the phenomenon of **academic drift** that is typical for many other European countries as well.
- It illustrates that vocational and technical education is not considered an attractive alternative. In total, 78% chose the general stream, while only 14% and 9% opted for technical and vocational options.
- The University of Malta has grown from an institution catering for less than 2,000 students in 1987 to over 7,600 students in 2002, compared to 7,322 in 1999/2000. About 45% of the student population was male, 55% female. However, the figures provided by the National Statistics Office indicate a decline in student numbers that occurred for the first time in 1998/99. The total decrease accounted for 8.6% in 1999/2000 and is largely due to decreases in the Faculties of Education, Arts, and the Institute of Social Welfare. Other Faculties, such as Economics, Management and Accountancy or the Centre for Communications and Technology report increases in student numbers⁹. This shows a trend towards more economically oriented study choices.
- Despite a firm policy to keep students at school until the end of their course, permission to leave school early is given by the Education Division in special circumstances. Hence in 2000, 1,686 students applied to be exempted from school upon reaching the school leaving age of 16. 1,265 permissions to terminate the school year earlier were issued. This is not in line with the Lisbon target of halving the number of 18-24 year-olds with only lower secondary education not enrolled in further education.
- **Enrolment in adult education continues to rise**. A total of 12,392 attended state and private institutions in 1999/2000, which corresponds to an increase of 1% compared to enrolments in the year before¹⁰.
- Malta did not participate in the **Eurostat CVTS 2**, but a **survey on continuing training** initiated by enterprises

5 One should note that secondary education for all was only introduced in 1970. School-leaving age was 14 until 1974, after which it was raised to 16. The primary school period prior to 1974, therefore, was longer than that of today.

6 Eurostat data 1999.

7 Eurostat data 1999.

8 National Statistics Office, Malta: *Education Statistics 2000*.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

(National Statistics Office, 2001) allows some insight into current practice. A total of 1,683 enterprises participated in this exercise, of which 991 or 59% provided continuing training (CVET) to their employees. This indicates a relatively strong position among future member states. However, the results are limited to enterprises employing ten or more staff. 14.1% of the enterprises have in-house training centres (237). For the vast majority, training is provided externally.

- The **Employment and Training Corporation (ETC)** is a corporate body providing **Public Employment Services**. It operates in a context of comparatively low unemployment (4.5% or 6,583 people). There has been substantial progress in changing the ETC's philosophy from a reactive towards a more proactive approach, investing in preventive measures as well. New programmes have been introduced to address the needs of disadvantaged groups and skill shortages in the economy, which is also reflected in an increase in resources.

b) Financial resources

- **In 1998, Malta spent 8% of its GDP on education, but only 0.44% on VET¹¹.** The provisional Eurostat figure for 1999 (public expenditure) is 4.7%. Despite resource constraints, there are indications that the state intends to invest more in initial and continuing training. This is underpinned by the budget estimates for 2002, which include additional funds for the MCAST and ETC.
- There are **no direct employer contributions to initial (IVET) or continuing (CVET) training funding** through taxes or training levies. However, employers are obliged to pay wages to apprentices undertaking on-the-job training as part of the training scheme.
- **There is a lack of statistical information on training provided by the private sector** and, as a result, it is difficult to calculate the level of investment in human resources

development. According to the Continuing Vocational Training Survey 2001 mentioned above, the enterprises participating in the exercise spent around € 8 million on CVET courses, with the largest investment per employee in real estate, renting and business activities.

- **Public expenditure on employment policy amounted to 0.64% of GDP in 1999** (around € 23 million), compared to 0.47% of GDP in 1992. In contrast, expenditure on active measures decreased from 0.1% of GDP to 0.08% of GDP in 1999 compared to 1998, equivalent to € 3 million, of which around € 1.75 million were allocated for training and employment measures and € 1.25 million for administration.
- **Employment policy is funded through contributions** collected from employers and employees (10% of the monthly salary). All state revenue is concentrated in the National Consolidated Fund. Budget estimates prepared by ministries and departments constitute the basis for the allocation of funds by the Ministry of Finance to the different applicants.

3. INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Reform of initial vocational education and training (IVET) is mainly determined by a top-down approach, aiming at gradually raising educational attainment levels and improving the skills base of the population in line with labour market requirements. In parallel, current policy strives to counteract fragmentation and the lack of prestige of the VET sector compared to general education streams. A holistic approach to reform in the perspective of lifelong learning (LLL) is still to be developed.

a) Policy and legal framework

- At this stage, there are **no comprehensive formal/legal documents** outlining the government's key policy objectives for VET and LLL, and the National Employment Plan is

¹¹ Figure quoted in the *Joint Assessment of the Employment Policy Priorities in Malta*, October 2001.

still under preparation. There is consensus at political level that VET and LLL have to be given more attention, and there is a clear commitment to create and support a wide range of formal and non-formal learning opportunities for all age groups.

- **Most educational activities are regulated by the Education Act XXIV of 1988** which underlines the compulsory nature of education that is to be provided free of charge to all citizens. It emphasises the principle that education should equip the Maltese with the skills, trades, professional or vocational competencies required by the labour market.
- The **Employment and Training Services Act of 1990** provides the legal basis for the ETC to administer apprenticeship schemes, and Legal Notice 125 of 1981 and Legal Notice 82 of 1990 specify the two apprenticeship schemes.
- The various measures provided for by the different Acts and Legal Notices serve to open up pathways, **supporting both horizontal and vertical access and mobility** within the training system. The three most important public training providers, MCAST, ITS and ETC (through its training services) are bound by their respective charters to provide not only initial training, but also second-chance education and training to increase employability and to facilitate access for all to the labour market.

b) Resources

Teachers

- Teaching in Malta received **official recognition as a profession** in the Education Act of 1988. Working conditions of teachers are good (favourable leave regulations and remuneration packages: starting salary of Maltese Lira (MTL) 5,352 or around € 13,380, compared to an average

salary of MTL 4,644 (around € 11,600)¹². This has made teaching an attractive profession and has led to an oversupply of teachers. Attempts to assess the demand for teachers have not been successful due to a number of variables that cannot be anticipated easily.

- **Entry qualifications vary**, but there is an **increasing trend towards professionalism**. The principle of pedagogical training has become well established, with most vocational teachers receiving preservice training. In-service and continuing training opportunities are increasing.

Equipment

- The **modernisation of training facilities remains one of the most challenging aspects** for initial and continuing training. In some cases, MCAST Institutes still use equipment that was donated a long time ago in the framework of VET initiatives supported by aid agencies. Due to funding bottlenecks, a replacement of outdated equipment does not seem very likely in the near future. The situation seems to be better at the ITS which has, in general, succeeded in keeping its facilities and equipment at a level comparable to that in industry.
- **Access to computers** in schools and training institutions varies according to types of schools and programmes. The ratio of computers to students in state primary schools is 7:1, which is very high compared to the EU average (13.2:1)¹³. In state secondary schools it is 20:1 (8.6:1 as EU average). The ratio for ITS is 15:1, and at MCAST institutes there are huge differences, with the most favourable ratio 1:1 at the ICT institute¹⁴. However, in many of the institutes, most of the computers are outdated and cannot handle sophisticated software. Vocational teachers have not received comprehensive training in the use of information and communications technology. It is used only rarely as teaching aid.

¹² E. Zammit, F. Borg, S. Vella: *Background Study on Employment and Labour Market in Malta*, Employment and Training Corporation, 2001.

¹³ Eurobarometer Flash 102.

¹⁴ Figures provided by the Eurydice Unit in Malta.

c) Structure and organisation

- Schooling is compulsory from the age of five to the age of 16 (11 years), comprising six years of primary school and five years of lower secondary school. The education system is characterised by strong channelling practices, which tend to separate pupils into different streams already at the age of 11, following the **final primary school exam**. The lower secondary level is now largely unified, as trade schools (vocational schools for pupils entering at the age of 13, preparing them for apprenticeship) have been phased out. Despite this, horizontal mobility is still extremely limited. Continuation of education at upper secondary level depends on achievements in the final examination leading to the **Secondary Education Certificate** and the professional aspirations of students.
- The main vocational education institutions operating at the post-16 level are MCAST, founded in 2000, the Education Division and ITS. **MCAST** has gradually integrated **most of the technical institutes** and offers a variety of vocational qualifications at different certificate and diploma levels in its six institutes (Art and Design, Business and Commerce, Building and Construction Engineering, Electronics Engineering, Information and Communication Technology, Maritime Studies). In total, the MCAST will comprise ten institutes by the end of 2002. The Education Division is still responsible for four technical institutes.
- The establishment of the MCAST with the expected streamlining effect on VET provision resulting in wider choice and more flexibility may contribute to changing the current trend towards general education programmes at post-16 level.
- The **ITS** prepares students at post-16 level for the **tourism industry**. It offers students various entry possibilities and pathways through the system. Students can choose from a range of certificate, diploma and higher diploma courses in the hospitality industry.
- Both institutions offer **modularised programmes**, supporting horizontal permeability and customisation to individual needs. The programmes on offer combine theoretical elements and practical training through placements in enterprises.
- **Apprenticeship schemes** fall under the responsibility of ETC, in cooperation with the Education Division, MCAST and ITS, responsible for the institution-based part of training and education. There are two options: the **Extended Skills Training Scheme (ESTS)** leading to the journeyman's certificate at craftsmanship level, and the **Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS)**, leading to a technician qualification. The duration is four years for the TAS and two to four years for the ESTS. After the purely school-based first year, the programme combines on-the-job and off-the-job training. There are no transfer possibilities between the two schemes.
- **A national qualification framework agreed in cooperation with social partners is not in place.** The **Malta Professional and Vocational Qualification Awards Council (MPVQAC)** started its activities in October 2000. Supported by Standards Development Boards that include employer representatives, it is supposed to prepare a coherent national framework of competence-based vocational qualifications, applicable in IVET as well as CVET. Cooperation with the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) is envisaged. This initiative will help to **make the system more transparent and also more responsive to labour market needs.**
- The **shift towards competence-based vocational qualifications** can be observed throughout the whole system of education and training provision in Malta, mainly promoted by employer associations, most notably the Maltese Chamber of Commerce (MCC) and the Federation of Industry (FOI).
- An **integrated system of data collection and appropriate forecasting methodologies** to facilitate medium-term projections of qualification requirements does not yet exist, despite single initiatives, such as a **Human**

Resource Needs Survey carried out by the Maltese Chamber of Commerce (MCC) in 2001. This exercise aimed at better integrating the skills profiles of graduates and the skills requirements of the local business and industrial community. The setting up of a **Skills Forecasting Unit at the ETC** indicates the awareness of the authorities of the issue.

- VET at post-16 level is available in campuses on various sites in Malta and Gozo. The wide network of institutions combined with the small size of the country and a cheap and efficient system of public transport ensures **geographical accessibility of education and training opportunities** for all citizens.

d) Delivery

- The participation of social partners in the **Governing Boards of VET institutions** such as MCAST, ITS, MPVQAC and ETC, in **Development Boards** preparing vocational standards and in **apprenticeship schemes** (through provision of on-the-job training and work placements) can be considered a positive development. On the boards, educators and employers are represented, but trade unions are not. **Appropriate legal provisions to support a concept of institutionalised tripartite social partner involvement** in decision-making processes on education and training issues are not in place.
- **There is no tradition of a mechanism to facilitate partnerships between industry and education and training institutions** to support IVET through the sharing of human or material resources. A determining factor in this respect is the enterprise structure in the country, with micro-enterprises dominating. This has an impact on the relevance of the training provision for the labour market, both in terms of the equipment used by school-based training facilities and in terms of teachers/instructors who lack opportunities to update their skills through placements in industry.

e) Responsiveness of IVET to the needs of the labour market and the individual

- **Guidance and counselling** is offered both within schools and through the employment services (ETC). Information on post-compulsory and LLL courses is provided by guidance personnel in secondary schools at a ratio of 1:300. At the ETC, provision of guidance suffers from an unfavourable ratio of 1:550. In addition to considerable staffing bottlenecks, sufficient links between the different guidance and counselling systems do not exist. Moreover, guidance and counselling personnel at schools have often been criticised by employers for their lack of adequate knowledge of the labour market and skills to interpret trends.
- Current government policy is strongly focused on **mainstreaming and inclusion of disadvantaged groups and early identification of individuals at risk** rather than segregation. This is underpinned by the training of facilitators to support teachers in integrating students with disabilities (currently over 500 staff). With regard to VET, the MCAST's policy is to offer at least **one course in each of its institutes to students without any formal qualifications**. ETC also offers services to the disadvantaged. There are not yet any targeted measures for children of migrants or refugees, but the situation is under consideration.
- Despite enhanced awareness of gender issues in education, a number of indicators suggest that there is still a lot to be achieved. With regard to education and training choices, **traditional patterns still prevail**. While access to educational opportunities is no longer an issue, representation on courses is still strongly gender-biased.
- The MCAST Institute of Business and Commerce offers **course modules to support small business set-up** within its mainstream provision. ETC has also an entrepreneurship programme. Apart from that, **entrepreneurial skills**

training is mainly provided through **extra-curricular activities**, such as the “Coops in Schools” (SCOOPS) project and the “Young Enterprise Scheme”.

- The current developments in VET are expected to contribute to achieving more coherence in education and training provision and to enhancing quality of VET delivery and outcomes. At the same time, the modular structure of programmes implemented by MCAST and ITS as well as involvement of employers at certain levels and efforts at analysing skill requirements **have at least partially contributed to making the system responsive**, both to the labour market and individual needs.

4. CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Training courses provided by private training agencies and institutions have mushroomed, with supply and demand stimulating each other. There is little information on the extent of this provision or its quality. Much of the training provided by institutions operating on a commercial basis is related to management skills and the use of information technology.

a) Policy and legal framework

- **A coherent policy and strategic framework for CVET is lacking**, apart from references to CVET provision in the statutes of MCAST and ITS, and the Act establishing the Employment and Training Corporation ETC (Employment and Training Services Act No XXVIII). A National Human Resource Development Plan is being prepared by ETC, but is not yet available. Policy objectives as articulated in official documents such as the JAP, in official speeches and reform initiatives include encouraging LLL in all its forms, widening training opportunities for modern technologies and creating a flexible system to encourage the upskilling and reskilling of the labour force.

b) Structure and organisation

- The main state-funded providers of CVET are the ETC and the Department for Further Studies and Adult Education (DFSAE), with the ETC having managed courses for 3,420 trainees between October 1999 and September 2000¹⁵, while the **DFSAE provided training in a number of vocational and craft areas** to about 2,000 people in 2000/01.
- The **ETC offers short tailor-made training programmes** accessible to both employed people who wish to upgrade their skills, and to unemployed people with a view to enhancing employability, classified under four headings: office-related skills, hospitality/caring skills, management skills, and trade skills.
- **MCAST and ITS will also take on an increasingly central role in CVET** through their modular course structure providing flexible entry points to a variety of programmes at certificate, diploma and higher diploma level and their system of accreditation of prior (experiential) learning.
- According to a survey on continuing training carried out in 2001, **continuing training provided by companies is an important factor** (for details, refer to chapter 2a), both with regard to training provision and investment in staff development (see chapter 2b). Training courses for the employed are **delivered mainly by private training institutions**. Only 14% of the enterprises participating in the survey have in-house training centres, the vast majority of training is implemented externally.
- In 1998/99, 1,552 registered unemployed received training as part of active employment policy measures, representing 47% of the total number of training participants, but only 19.3% of the total unemployed. The 16-25 age group represented a share of 39%¹⁶. The total number of course participants in 2000/01 increased to 4,564.

¹⁵ ETC Annual Report 1999 - 2000.

¹⁶ E. Zammit, F. Borg, S. Vella: *Background Study on Employment and Labour Market in Malta*, Employment and Training Corporation, 2001.

c) Responsiveness of CVET to the needs of the labour market and the individual

- **Responsiveness of CVET** to individual needs depends largely on the types of programme and training institution. The impact of the modularised training courses delivered under the umbrella of MCAST and ITS cannot be assessed yet, although it is expected that this approach will facilitate access to knowledge at a pace and at times most suitable to an adult clientele.
- **The needs of the disabled are addressed by a number of governmental and non-governmental bodies.** Measures include provision of specific training and employment opportunities. The guiding principle is the creation of an environment supporting the integration of disabled people.
- **Guidance and counselling** provision is not sufficiently coordinated among the different institutions and suffers from resource constraints.
- Generally, efforts by the ETC to **encourage women to participate in training measures receive a positive response.** Training choices however follow mainly traditional occupational patterns, with a main focus on office-related courses¹⁷. Several bodies are engaged in creating an environment addressing the concerns of women. The initiative to raise awareness of the need for **gender-disaggregated data to support the implementation of targeted measures** is a step in the right direction.

5. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Public employment services are provided by the ETC, which was established to implement national employment policy, which is based on the European Employment Strategy. The ETC has developed an increasingly proactive approach fostering preventive measures, but despite a recent increase in resources,

there is insufficient capacity to monitor and assess the impact of its activities.

a) Legal and policy framework

- The **Ministry of Social Policy (MSP)** is in charge of the development of employment policy in Malta. The responsibility for implementing employment policy is divided between the **Department for Social Security** under the MSP (passive measures) and the **ETC** (active measures). At present, a **major overhaul of labour legislation** is under way.
- A coherent framework to link the new employment and training measures at different levels has not been elaborated yet. The **National Human Resource Development Plan** and the **National Employment Action Plan**, currently under preparation by the ETC, will contribute to consolidating the achievements and integrating the various initiatives.
- **Tasks of the ETC** include job mediation, providing information and counselling services related to career choice and qualification requirements, implementing active employment policy measures including training, administering the register of job seekers and vacancies, managing apprenticeship schemes, training grants, occupational certification and monitoring labour market developments. Moreover, the ETC maintains a **database of people in gainful employment.** Employers are obliged to report any recruitment or termination of contract to the ETC. The data is made available to other governmental bodies, economists and statisticians and constitutes a **major tool for economic and social policy development.**

b) Structure and organisation

- In accordance with the relevant legal provisions, the ETC implements all main functions of public employment policy. It is governed by an independent board of directors, nominated by the Minister for Social Policy and run by a chief executive officer and a group of senior

¹⁷ Ibid.

managers. The board approves the work programme and ensures its compliance with the government's national employment policy. It is also responsible for monitoring work programme implementation. The ETC submits an annual report to parliament.

- Employment services are provided through about 150 staff working at the ETC's **central office** and **a network of four regional job centres** catering for the main geographical regions.
- **33 agencies are registered as private employment services** but they do not play an important role as employment services are not their main business. For most of them, job-brokering is only part of their activities. Apart from a legal obligation to report to the ETC on placements (419 full-time and three part-time from 1995 to 2001), monitoring does not take place. There is no cooperation between public and private employment services.

c) Resources

- In 2000/01 staff costs constituted 51% of ETC's budget, compared to 57% in the year before. In parallel, the number of registered unemployed went down from 7,695 in 1999 to 6,583 in 2000.
- Job vacancies are advertised on the ETC website. Job centres, in particular the one in Valetta, are well equipped, but computer facilities are not available for the clients.

d) Specific issues

- There were few **mechanisms to encourage social partner involvement** in employment policy formulation which hampered the development of targeted measures to increase the adaptability of the system. The representation of social partners on the ETC's board of directors is not shaped along the common tripartite model, and members are nominated in their personal capacity. This set-up

prevents a more structured input to policy development. However, the Labour Market Policy Committee, established in early 2002, addresses employment policy issues and includes representatives of the social partners, among others¹⁸.

- **Social exclusion is counteracted** by a number of targeted measures managed by the ETC. The effectiveness and efficiency of these initiatives is not assessed systematically.
- The reform plans of the ETC include **decentralisation of services**, making full use of information and communication technologies, with a target date of June 2003.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- According to the Joint Assessment Paper (JAP), further efforts will be needed to consolidate and modernise the VET system in a lifelong learning perspective in cooperation with social partners. Particular reference is made to improving the responsiveness of the system to labour market requirements, as well as implementing targeted measures to address the specific needs of disadvantaged groups.
- At this stage, a **comprehensive set of formal/legal documents** outlining the government's key policy objectives for VET and LLL **does not exist**¹⁹. The Human Resource Development Plan and National Employment Action Plan, currently under preparation, will be important milestones on the way towards a more coherent reform approach. There is consensus at political level on the importance of VET and LLL for social and economic development, and stakeholders seem committed to consolidate the reform initiatives started in 2000. This is underpinned by a trend towards increased funding.
- Policy objectives are in line with the Lisbon targets and include:
 - raising the esteem of VET;

¹⁸ The wide involvement of social partners in the formulation of projects under the National Development plan should also be mentioned.

¹⁹ Some documents – such as the ones produced leading to the establishment of MCAST – do however partially address the issue. Furthermore, at present (September 2002) documents are being formulated on government's key policy objectives for VET and LLL.

- widening access to VET and technological literacy, particularly for women;
- modifying the academic drift towards universities;
- adapting the skills profiles to meet the challenge of restructuring Malta into a knowledge-based economy by opening up vertical and horizontal pathways in education and training;
- reinforcing partnerships between education and industry to generate a mobile, adaptable and skilled labour force;
- encouraging LLL in all its forms, particularly in view of the large number of people who are economically inactive;
- increasing opportunities for training in modern technologies for unemployed and low-skilled persons; and,
- providing a new impetus for further skilling and reskilling, for recognition and certification of the skills profiles of those already employed, and for more transparency of standards through the development of a coherent national qualification framework.
- These goals are ambitious and contain different elements of lifelong learning that need to be integrated in a coherent framework. Concrete targets to measure progress have not been set.
- Currently, **links between initial and continuing training are still rather weak**, and access to **higher education is not sufficiently developed**.
- Despite efforts to modernise the education and training system by implementing a National Minimum Curriculum to ensure a sound educational basis for all and to counteract early channelling of pupils into streams determining their further educational career, the traditional model largely prevails and VET continues to be a less attractive option for students despite the reforms under way.
- There is a need to involve employers more strongly in VET design and provision and to **strengthen the links between schools and enterprises**, in order to improve practical training delivery and facilitate school-leavers' transition to working life. In the near future, the apprenticeship board, set up by the ETC, will make employers' representatives able to make a greater input in this particular component of the VET system.
- Partially, both IVET and CVET reform initiatives and enlarged provision due to establishment of numerous (private) training institutions have **contributed to enhancing employability and competitiveness**. They have partly responded to the needs of the labour market and individuals. The integration process of VET needs to continue, in particular, with regard to counteracting early school leaving and **social exclusion**.
- The information base on the situation of women has been extended, not least through the introduction of gender disaggregated data and targeted research and analyses. This has facilitated the design of specific support measures for women. The appropriateness of these measures is not assessed on a regular and systematic basis.
- With regard to public employment services, the **policy shift towards prevention and activation should be reinforced, and responsiveness to the needs of individuals**, should be **strengthened**. The current ratio of one counselling staff to 550 clients constitutes a serious obstacle.
- Some of the targets referred to in the Lisbon conclusions have already been taken into account in documents and policy statements (to increase investment in human resources development, to raise the numbers of students continuing their studies at upper secondary and tertiary level, to improve access to the Internet, to develop new basic skills). However, most of the lifelong learning building blocks still need to be developed further. Better coordination between the different ministries in charge and involvement of social partners, continued investment in education and training, enabling flexible pathways and improving access to learning, in particular for early school-leavers still remain on the reform agenda.

1. INTRODUCTION

1

Malta is a small open economy, with a strong manufacturing base for high value-added products such as electronics and pharmaceuticals produced mainly in foreign-owned export-oriented enterprises, as well as financial and transport-related services. The most important economic sector, however, is tourism.

Similar to other countries in Europe, Malta is confronted with an ageing population. Birth rates have been declining over the past four decades; at the same time life expectancy has improved. Despite these factors, population projections show that the 15-64 age group is expected to grow slightly to 261,000 persons in 2015, compared to 258,483 in 1999²⁰. This development indicates a potentially higher competition in the labour market. The natural population increase 2000/01 was 2.6 per 1000 inhabitants. In 2000, the population was about 395,000 with a high density of 1,250 persons per sq. km, the urban population dominating with an 89% share.

Since the late 1980s, governments have pursued a policy of economic liberalisation, opening markets to internal and foreign competition and privatising state-owned enterprises, but publicly owned enterprises still play an important role as employers.

Generally speaking, the economy is performing well with year-on-year GDP growth rates of around 4%. The present government's economic policy aims at achieving macro-economic stability – low unemployment (hovering around 4-5% with 4.5% in 2000, following a period of somewhat higher rates between 1997 and 1999 – 5.1% and 5.3% respectively), low inflation and a sustainable balance of payments.

Distinctive features of the labour market in Malta are the **limited number of large enterprises**, and related to that the dominance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), of which many are micro-enterprises, and a **low overall**

²⁰ E. Zammit, F. Borg, S. Vella, *Background Study on Employment and Labour Market in Malta*, Employment and Training Corporation, 2001.

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employment rate (54.6% in total), but in particular of women (33.1%)²¹.

In December 1999, out of a total of 23,660 enterprises in Malta there were only 46 companies employing more than 200 people. The percentage of micro-enterprises (94.7%) in Malta is only slightly above the European average²² (93%), as is the percentage of medium-sized enterprises, but the lack of large companies results in underdeveloped ancillary industries that usually link SMEs with bigger enterprises in more or less stable partnerships. This distinguishes the Maltese economy from most of the other European economies and has important consequences for the labour market.

Firstly, **SMEs and micro-enterprises are of a largely local character with relatively few connections to international markets.** As a consequence, there are hardly any drivers for change to stimulate productivity increases through rationalisation and efficiency in general.

Secondly, **the labour market is highly segmented**, especially in terms of gender, with limited employment opportunities for women.

Thirdly, the current enterprise structure also results in **fewer continuing training opportunities** for the employed labour force, as these tend to be provided mainly by larger firms. This observation is confirmed by the Continuing Vocational Training Survey 2 carried out by Eurostat in the EU member states, Norway and nine future member states. Malta did not participate in this exercise, but a Continuing Training Survey carried out by the National Statistical Office achieved similar results. The limited scope of continuing training provision in enterprises combined with relatively low levels of educational attainment is a potential obstacle to advancing towards the European Employment Strategy. This

relates in particular to the employability and adaptability pillars, but also lifelong learning.

The second characteristic is the low female employment rate, which is well below the levels found in many other European countries. In Malta, females continue to represent only around 30% of the gainfully occupied working age population (15-64). Although there has been a slight increase from 27.4% in 1994 to 33.1% in 2000, the situation remains precarious²³.

However, as in many other European countries, **the numbers and proportions of females working on a part-time basis have gone up.** The number of women in part-time occupation doubled, from over 5,000 to more than 11,000, over the period 1995 - 2000. Part-time workers do not feature in the employment rates.

Another important characteristic of the Maltese labour market is the legacy of a **strong public sector.** The public sector remains the largest single employer and therefore exercises a powerful influence over the labour market. With a total of 48,791 employees it still accounts for 35.5% of all jobs, of which 26.6% were held by females and 73.4% by males, a slightly lower percentage of females than that found in the private sector. Traditionally the public sector has been seen as providing high levels of job security, "a secure job for life". In recent years, most jobs were created in the manufacturing industry, mainly electronics, and community and business services.

The **strong reliance on the public sector to provide security of employment** has been seen as a factor contributing to the **decline in the percentage of self-employed** that has been observed in recent years. It has decreased by two percentage points over the past 15 years and brought (declared) self-employment down to 10.9% of the labour force in

²¹ *Joint Assessment Paper of the Employment Policy Priorities of Malta*, table 4, Source: Labour Force Survey December 2000.

²² European figures taken from Trouve, P. (2001), *The employment and training practices of SMEs. Examination of research in five EU member states*; in P. Descy and M. Tessaring (eds.) *Training in Europe*, Vol. 2, Thessaloniki, Cedefop, p. 96.

²³ *Joint Assessment Paper of the Employment Policy Priorities of Malta*, table 6i, Source: Employment and Training Corporation.

September 2000. At the end of 2000, the male share in total self-employment was 86.7%. The male self-employment rate was 13.9%, while the female rate was 5.1%. Both figures are low when compared to the EU averages of 18.3% and 14.4% respectively. As in many other countries, no distinction is made between entrepreneurs and the self-employed. The JAP also notes that there may still be a number of self-employed who at the same time are also in full-time employment.

The other distinctive feature of the Maltese labour market has been the **relatively low level of unemployment over the past 15 years**. While many other European and future member states have seen a significant rise in their unemployment rates over this period, the Maltese rate has remained relatively stable.

Finally, although the Maltese labour market is homogeneous by virtue of its small size, there are nevertheless some regional variations. These are reflected in the ETC's distinct strategy for Malta's sister island Gozo. Other regional disparities are also evident, e.g. the Cottonera region in the south has a much higher unemployment rate (10 %) than the national average.

In order to cope with the challenges outlined above, in particular the limited training provision for the workforce in small and micro-enterprises and the low employment rate of women, which are not counteracted by a comprehensive lifelong learning strategy at national level, cooperation mechanisms to involve all relevant stakeholders, in particular social partners, will be required.

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2

2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

One distinctive feature of the system is that there has been, until now, **little or no institutionalised social partner involvement in vocational education and training**, either as an input into the decision-making process or through financial contributions. In the absence of structured social partner involvement, education and training provision has remained largely the responsibility of the government, often responding in an ad hoc manner to the requirements of the economy. The result has been a somewhat disparate set of training opportunities and forms of certification, with some sectors having little or no provision. A range of reforms has been initiated aiming at a more coherent approach.

Education up to tertiary level is provided for 17% of the respective age cohort, compulsory education (including lower secondary level from 11 to 16) or upper secondary education (up to the age of 18) for the remainder. However, 26.3% of males and 19.5% of females in the age group 16-24 still have only attained ISCED levels 0-2²⁴.

The limited provision of initial training, largely apprenticeship schemes, has resulted in a relatively low level of qualifications of the labour force as a whole compared to European standards. **CVET has been highlighted as an area for development by the JAP exercise**, given that education levels in the labour force are low compared to the EU average. The 1995 census showed that 51.9% of the working age population (1995) have not completed upper secondary schooling and have attained only ISCED levels 0-2, while in the EU the average is 40%. According to

²⁴ Census 1995.

the 1995 census, 36% have completed ISCED 3, 3.5% ISCED 4, 7.3% ISCED 5-7. As many as 60.2% of the working age population declare that they have no qualifications (see tables 13 and 14). In the EU, 59.9% of the age group 25-64 (EU average, 1999 figure) have completed at least upper secondary education, 20.5% tertiary education²⁵.

The country also faces the problem caused by 9% of the working age population being illiterate. This may be partly due to the fact that secondary education for all was introduced only in 1970. Before that, only about 25% of the age cohort continued formal education after completing primary school. Moreover, given that the vast majority of employers are small or micro-enterprises, there are few training opportunities for those in work. Lifelong learning is therefore an important means of raising the skill levels of the country as a whole, especially for the older workers, many of whom have not completed lower secondary education.

2.1.1 LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

Most educational activities are regulated by the **Education Act XXIV** of 1988²⁶. The Act reinforces the constitution's emphasis on the **compulsory nature of education**, which the nation commits itself to provide free of charge to all its citizens. The Act stresses the principle that education should equip each Maltese citizen with the skills, trade, professional or vocational competencies that are required by the labour market, and highlights the view that education is the best investment in the development of the talents of the Maltese people.

The Education Act of 1988 allows for the **church** as well as **other private secular entities** to establish their schools subject

to the fulfilment of conditions set by the state. 30% of all students attend a church or independent private school.

The **state** carries most of the **financial burden** of providing general education. Following an agreement reached with the Catholic church in 1991, the state pays all the salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff in church schools, together with an additional 10% for school needs²⁷. Figure 1 provides an organigram of the Maltese education system.

The Act has been supplemented by a number of **Legal Notices (LN)**, which address different aspects of education practice, and the context of that practice. Some of the more relevant of these are:

- (a) **LN 150 of 1990**, which stipulates the **national minimum conditions** of all schools (including use, size and safety features of educational laboratories and workshops); and
- (b) **LN 135 of 2000**, which set up the **Institute for Child and Parent Learning Support** – recently integrated in the **Foundation for Educational Services (FES** – established by public deed in March 2001), which aims to combat school failure.

Articles 29-45 of the **Employment and Training Services Act of 1990** empower the **Employment and Training Corporation (ETC)** to administer apprenticeship schemes in Malta, providing a legal basis for the education/training and labour conditions of apprentices. Article 40 empowers the minister responsible for labour to appoint Trade Testing Boards to ascertain the proficiency of the individual.

To be mentioned is another Legal Notice supplementing the Employment and Training Services Act:

²⁵ Eurostat data 1999.

²⁶ As a member of the Council of Europe since 1964, Malta has long followed policies similar to those of the EU member states in the field of education. Consequently, Malta is aligned with the principles provided by EU Resolutions, Declarations, Conclusions, and Recommendations (including equality of opportunity, illiteracy, safety in schools, etc).

²⁷ Parents who send their children to church schools do not pay a fee, but are encouraged by the school authorities to make a donation. Independent schools – which fall outside the church-state agreement – do not receive any direct financial support from the state. As from 2001, however, parents with children in such fee-paying schools are given a tax rebate.

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- (c) **LN 215 of October 2000**, which established the **Malta Professional and Vocational Qualification Awards Council (MPVQAC)** as an independent body with the goal of developing a unified National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) framework that helps to establish qualification standards in all the vocational fields, in order to facilitate recognition and certification of skill profiles²⁸.

The **apprenticeship systems** operate within a **different legal framework** from that of the Education Act of 1988:

- (a) **LN 125 of 1981** established the **Extended Skills Training Scheme (ESTS)** that leads to the journeyman's certificate at craftsmanship level in a number of vocations.
- (b) **LN 82 of 1990** is the basis for the **Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS)** that provides education and training at the technician level, and is based on the **Industrial Training Act**.

In both the ESTS and TAS, the legal notices define the rights and obligations of employers and apprentices bound by a contract of apprenticeship. Both schemes fall under the **responsibility of the Minister for Social Policy**. Both training programmes are of four years duration and provide apprentices with financial assistance²⁹.

The various measures provided for by the different Acts and Legal Notices serve to open up pathways, supporting both horizontal and vertical access and mobility within the training system. The three most important public training providers – the **Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST)**, the **Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS)** and the **ETC**

(through its Training Services) – are bound by their respective charter/constitution to provide second chance education and training and to facilitate access to employment.

The ETC, for instance, does not only run the apprenticeship system, but also offers retraining and continuing vocational training (CVET) to unemployed persons and those who need to be reskilled or upskilled. The MCAST, besides absorbing qualified students into certificate and diploma level courses, also caters for students who finish their compulsory schooling without any formal qualifications, giving them access to a number of basic training courses. The College plans to offer accreditation of prior learning (APL), which will open up new pathways into initial and further training – but no progress has been registered in providing such a service to date. The ITS already operates an APL system, and its modular curriculum and Delta Fasttrack Open Learning Systems (DFOLS) encourage flexible entry into LLL structures and occupational mobility.

Authorities

Malta can be characterised by a **culture of centralised management**³⁰. **Decision-making largely continues to be with the relevant ministries, and ministers generally have ample discretion in appointing members to management boards or boards of governors in the respective institutions, but since funds are provided directly by the state, ministerial approval is required for most managerial and policy-related decisions. The education budget is agreed during the parliamentary debates on the financial estimates.**

²⁸ Ten development boards have been set up, each made up of five members (chairperson, two representatives from industry, and two training providers), and these are developing the NVQ standards in line with the framework designed by the European Training Foundation (ETF).

²⁹ ESTS leads to craft-level skills, while TAS leads a technician level with some supervisory duties. Generally speaking, ESTS engages students in a three-day placement in industry, and a two-day placement in an educational establishment from the second year of their studies onwards. TAS students spend three days at school, and two days on placement.

³⁰ Over the past decade there has been a growing cultural shift – reflected both in new policies and practices – that encourage and support decentralisation, with educational establishments at all levels developing their own identity and character, and with increasing discretion being given over decision-making in a number of fields including curriculum development, text-book choice, and the use of finances.

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Financial appropriations cover both running and capital expenditure, for which estimates are proposed and discussed by the senior management of the Education Division and approved by the Minister of Education. These are included as integral part of the Cabinet's budget forecast for the following year.

The **Ministry of Education (MoE)** is responsible for the education system, from the kindergarten right through to university³¹. Its executive arm is the Education Division, which includes the Director-General, and six directorates. Until 2001, the MoE used to be the main provider of initial vocational education and training (IVET) through its technical institutes, as well as of a number of CVET and Lifelong Learning (LLL) evening programmes, largely through the services of the Department of Further Studies and Adult Education (DFSAE).

The **Ministry of Social Policy** is responsible for the ETC (established 1990) which, besides offering employment services, also caters for both initial and continuing VET with young people and adults, and for the retraining of the unemployed.

The **Ministry of Tourism** is responsible for the ITS, which was established in 1987 in order to offer initial training in the tourism and hospitality industries.

Role and responsibility of social partners

A concept of institutionalised tripartite social partner involvement in decision-making processes on education and training issues is not catered for under existing legislation. There are only few legal provisions across the different educational levels and sectors that allocate specific roles and responsibilities to social partners.

Compulsory education

LN 135 of 1993 establishes the regulations for **school councils**, which play an advisory and fund-raising role although the regulation

allows them to have broader roles. School councils are composed of representatives from parents and teaching staff, and also students in post-16 institutions. School council presidents are nominated by local councils from a list approved by the MoE. In many cases, the president is chosen from the business community, in an effort to encourage partnerships between schools and industry. School councils are represented by an Association (*AKS – Assocjazzjoni Kunsilli Skolastici*), which is an advisory body with a consultative role in policy-making processes.

Vocational education and training

The **social partnership model in the formulation of VET and LLL policy** comes across most strongly in the constitution of the **governing boards** of the ITS, MCAST, ETC, and the MPVQAC. In all four cases, the Boards are composed of educators and employers, but representation of unions is scarce. The MCAST board also includes student representatives. In the establishment phase of the college, several meetings with social partners were held to formulate the goals of the institution, but trade union involvement was minimal.

The statute of the ITS requires the board of governors to collaborate with social partners in the management of the institution. The board includes representatives from the Malta Tourism Authority, the University of Malta, the Education Division, and entrepreneurs from the hospitality industry. Social partnership (in particular involvement of employers) in the hospitality industry is considered inevitable, given the internship requirements of ITS programmes.

The statute of the MCAST establishes the institution as an autonomous foundation, managed by a board of governors that includes employers' representatives, who participate in decision-making processes. The MCAST seeks to develop sustainable links to the labour market. This intention is underpinned by the provision in the statute for setting up a **Partnership Office**, which

³¹ Over and above the Education Division, the MoE is also responsible for the Department of Libraries and National Archives, Department of Culture, Department of Youth and Sports and the Museums Department.

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is to have a number of tasks. The most relevant ones in this context are (a) the development of better synergy between the college and other educational and training institutions, and (b) the development of partnerships with the industrial and services sectors on the island³². The Partnership Office is not yet functional.

The ETC is dealt with in more detail in chapter 3.

2.1.2 POLICY FRAMEWORK

Although the various reports leading to the establishment of MCAST, also the legal notice setting it up and other reports or studies have, to some extent, covered the issue, there are, at this stage, **no comprehensive formal/legal documents** outlining the government's key policy objectives for VET and LLL, and the National Employment Plan is still in preparation. Nevertheless, documents are now being formulated on the government's key policy objectives for VET and LLL. In addition, one can extract some of the more significant policy directions from electoral manifestos³³, ministerial speeches and declarations made at public and high profile political events, such as the National Conference on VET³⁴, the launching of the Joint Assessment Paper (23 November 2001) or budget speeches.

On the occasion of the VET conference, the Minister of Education made a statement clearly indicating that VET reform, both in its initial and continuing stages, ranks high on Malta's political agenda. There is a

consensus across political parties, educational authorities and social partners that VET and LLL have to be given more attention and that reform efforts need to be in line with Malta's economic and educational objectives.

In the area of **LLL**, the government has signalled a **clear commitment to create and support a wide range of formal and non-formal learning opportunities** for all age groups. This corresponds to the 1998 electoral manifesto, which stated: "Major efforts will be made in the field of adult education, with special emphasis on those who left school early. This will be incorporated into the concept of lifelong learning. Wider use will be made of distance learning through radio, TV, and computer"³⁵. Liberalisation of the media (1991), setting up of Local Councils (1993) and intensive educational activities of NGOs (both religious and secular) have created a **wide scope of lifelong learning opportunities**. These are sustained and supported, often financially, by the government.

As mentioned before and stated in the JAP, the **low education level of Malta's labour force** is a matter of concern. The need to provide LLL opportunities is therefore increasingly visible in the national debate, and a related policy is to be formally articulated by June 2002³⁶. It will be the result of discussion and wide social partner consultation in response to the European Commission's LLL Memorandum³⁷, a process that commenced in June 2001.

³² It must be pointed out that private providers of VET – in such areas as IT skills, for instance – consider the MCAST as a competitor and a threat, since its institutes are offering at no cost services that they are charging for. Partnership is therefore unlikely. Indeed, one director noted that one such private provider was not even ready to share syllabi with the institute. The college would be seen even more as a threat when it started offering evening courses on a larger scale.

³³ The party in government, the National Party, declared in its manifesto that the ETC should be "better equipped to answer the needs of all those who are registering for work, especially those who are older than 45, the long-term unemployed and persons with special needs who are seeking work" as well as for the training needs of married women who wish to return to work" (1998, p. 11).

³⁴ The fact that policy documents are unavailable has one significant implication: that while general policy directions can be derived from official circulars, speeches, and so on, specific targets, measures to attain such targets, and mechanisms to monitor progress in achieving targets are largely absent.

³⁵ *Gid, Fiducja u Direzzjoni* (Prosperity, Confidence, Direction). Electoral Programme '98, Nationalist Party. Pieta: Malta: Dar Centrali PN, 1998, p. 13.

³⁶ *Report on the National Consultation Process on Lifelong Learning* (July, 2001).

³⁷ Commission of the European Communities (2001) *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*. COM(2001) 678.

Policy will most likely reflect the key concerns articulated during the consultative process. These are (a) the need to **develop basic skills** of school-leavers (literacy, numeracy, intra- and inter-personal communication, problem-solving, decision-making, ICT) to improve employability in a progressively changing labour market; and (b) the need for **higher investment in the development of human resources**, both in the public and private sphere, with the state adopting the role of a partner of industry.

Policy objectives as articulated in speeches, as reflected in initiatives, in reforms of educational curricula and structures, and particularly in the JAP, include:

- (a) raising the **esteem of VET**;
- (b) **widening access** to VET and technological literacy, particularly for women;
- (c) **modifying the academic drift** of post-secondary students towards the University;
- (d) **adapting the skills profiles** to meet the challenge of restructuring Malta into a knowledge-based economy by opening up vertical and horizontal pathways in further education and training;
- (e) **reinforcing partnerships** between education and industry to generate a mobile, adaptable and skilled labour force;
- (f) **encouraging LLL in all its forms**, particularly in view of the large number of people who are economically inactive;
- (g) increasing opportunities for **training in modern technologies**, both to better equip the growing number of registered unemployed, and also to reskill workers to face the growing employment gap³⁸; and
- (h) giving new impetus to **further skilling and reskilling**, for recognition and certification of the skills profiles of

those already employed, and for the monitoring of skills standards in the labour market through the development of a coherent national qualification structure through consolidating the MPVQAC.

As stated before, traditionally, and up to the very recent past, **social partners have only been marginally involved** in arrangements and/or structural decision-making processes on **VET policies**, mostly as representatives on governing boards. The **Malta Federation of Industry (FOI)** regularly issues position papers, some of which have directly dealt with VET and LLL policies. The impact of these position papers is hard to assess, although it does seem that many of their ideas have influenced the policy-making network³⁹.

The first steps towards formulating a national policy on LLL have involved a **broad consultative process**, as mentioned above, with a view to disseminating the *Memorandum of Lifelong Learning* of the European Commission, to generate discussions and obtain feedback about the six key messages contained therein. A questionnaire regarding LLL was widely distributed across all sectors of Malta's population, and the responses obtained formed the basis for drafting a set of recommendations regarding LLL. Here, as in other areas, NGO's have made a valuable input.

2.1.3 RESOURCES (HUMAN, FINANCIAL AND PHYSICAL)

In 1998, Malta spent **8% of its GDP on education**, but only **0.44% on VET**⁴⁰. Public expenditure on education amounted to around 178.8 million euro, public expenditure on VET was around € 9.8 million. Much of the funding for IVET and CVET/LLL activities comes from the state,

³⁸ Government projections on sectoral employment for 2005 show further declines in employment in agriculture and fisheries, quarrying and construction, and in the public sector. IVET and CVET are therefore key government policies to provide the skills required in the growth sectors, including private market services such as insurance and real estate, transport services and communications, and hotel and catering.

³⁹ For a review of FOI Position Papers on education and training, and their impact on policy-making, see R.G. Sultana (1997) 'Employers and education in a Mediterranean micro-state: the case of Malta.' *Journal of Education and Work*, 10(1), 37-58.

⁴⁰ Figures quoted in JAP. Real total spending is higher, because the figure of 0.44% does not include private sector investment, information about which is only partially available. Calculations do not take into account public expenditure for St. Patrick's Industrial School.

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and details of this funding are provided in table 2 and table 3⁴¹. Table 4 provides data regarding the percentage of government expenditure on education and VET, relative to 11 future member states.

State funding

Funding VET at post-compulsory level: The running of **post-compulsory institutions** providing initial and continuing VET is **completely financed from state funds**. The state also pays **maintenance grants** to post-secondary students including those in VET and to apprentices. Funds are allocated to MCAST, ITS, as well as the school-based component of apprenticeship schemes.

Funding VET/LLL evening courses run by the DFSAE: Participants in such courses have to pay a **nominal fee**, but the costs incurred in running these programmes are much higher than the fees paid⁴². As a result, **the state carries most of the costs**.

Funding VET courses provided by ETC: ETC's vocational training initiatives are almost **completely funded by the state**. The training grants paid to private manufacturing companies under the Industrial Development Act are also paid from state funds⁴³.

Trend in state funding

There are clear indications that **the state intends to invest more heavily in initial and continuing VET** – though such aspirations are severely hampered by resource constraints. Nevertheless, the state made an **additional allocation** of MTL 0.4 million (around € 1 million) for new training initiatives, in particular for disadvantaged groups, to the ETC in 2000.

Moreover, extra funds were provided in the form of maintenance grants to encourage compulsory school-leavers to enter VET programmes. The state has also made a major commitment to retrain instructors who were previously employed in trade schools to enable them to teach technology at primary and lower secondary school levels. LLL has been given a specific budget to support the drafting of the LLL policy document referred to earlier. This trend was sustained by the 2001 budget, which increased the funding of the MCAST from MTL 1 million (around € 2.5 million) to MTL 2.028 million or around € 5 million (estimates 2002)⁴⁴.

Non-state and private funding

There is a **lack of comprehensive statistical information** on training provided by the private sector, and as a result, it is **difficult to calculate the level of investment in human resources development** activities. Indications have recently been provided by the National Statistics Office, which carried out a *Continuing Vocational Training Survey* (2001) with 1,683 enterprises across a whole range of sectors, and employing ten or more employees. These enterprises spent an estimated MTL 3.2 million (around € 8 million) on CVET courses, with the largest investment per employee being marked by real estate, renting and business activities sector (see table 6).

There is **no obligation on private employers in Malta to allocate funds for human resources development**, and there are no direct employers' contributions to IVET or CVET funding through taxes or training levies. However, employers pay wages to apprentices undertaking on-the-job training as part of their apprenticeship requirements.

⁴¹ Government concern about its ability to generate the funds to fulfil its educational aspirations have led it to establish, in May 2001, a *Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools* (FTS), which will be responsible for the construction, refurbishment and maintenance of schools, as well as for the development and application of alternative sources of finance. FTS will also be involved in the physical modification of schools to accommodate adult learning activities. It will set out its own resources and put the necessary financing in place so as to be in a position to implement its programme of works, identifying and implementing appropriate financing structures to achieve the accelerated capital expenditure programme within the shortest possible time.

⁴² Legal Notices establish the fees to be paid. Maltese pensioners and certified refugees are exempted from paying fees for courses run by the DFSAE.

⁴³ In 1999, the Malta Development Corporation (MDC) and the ETC provided grants amounting to over MTL 436,000 (around € 1.1 million) to 73 industries for staff training purposes.

⁴⁴ Much of this increase, however, represents salaries of staff that used to be paid by the Education Division and which followed these teachers when they transferred to the college.

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Government expenditure and budget estimates in VET and LLL

Institution or entity	Actual expenditure 2000 (MTL)	Approved estimate 2001 (MTL)	Estimate 2002 (MTL)
Ministry of Education			
Dept. of further studies & adult education		1,016,000	
MCAST ⁴⁵	62,982	400,000	2,028,000
TAS	484,169	500,000	490,000
ESTS	322,590	300,000	300,000
Ministry for Tourism			
Institute of Tourism Studies	531,607	555,000	555,000
Ministry for Social Policy			
		900,000	900,000
Adult Training Centres	57,779	50,000	40,000

Source: Ministry of Finance (2001) *Financial Estimates 2002*. Malta.

The financial estimates of the Ministry of Finance also contain additional budget lines for education and training-related fields.

Institution or entity	Actual expenditure 2000	Approved estimate 2001	Estimate 2002 (MTL)
Trade schools reform	3,391	10,000	10,000
Careers convention	5,000	5,000	5,000
Adult education	11,124	16,000	16,000
National Commission for IT	15,700	20,000	•
Malta Council for Science and Technology	148,618	120,000	120,000
Malta Centre for Restoration	120,000	150,000	300,000
Subsidy to Society of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce	30,000	30,000	25,000

Source: Ministry of Finance (2001) *Financial Estimates 2002*. Malta.

Employers operating large enterprises, however – whether in the state, parastatal or private sectors – are more likely to invest in human resources development and in the upskilling or reskilling of their employees⁴⁶. State and parastatal enterprises are increasingly likely to invest in human resources development, given the quality charters they have adopted. Within public service, for instance, a Staff Development Organisation provides employees with a range of courses, largely but not exclusively in the use of information technologies and in management⁴⁷.

In general, **employees are under no obligation – financial or otherwise – to improve their skills levels**. Traditionally the state and private sector employers meet all or most of the costs of initial and further training, with embassies and international bodies (e.g. the ILO, the Council of Europe, Unesco, etc.) offering scholarships which permit staff to continue with their training outside Malta.

⁴⁵ Figures concerning MCAST must be seen as corresponding to the progressive transition of educational institutions to the MCAST.

⁴⁶ STMicroelectronics, for instance, as Malta's largest private enterprise, has its own Learning Institute and is attached to the "international ST University", offering opportunities to its employees to develop their skills in a wide array of technical areas in programmes that are available either locally or overseas.

⁴⁷ SDO was set up in 1990 as the central government training agency, following recommendations submitted by the Public Service Reform Commission. It has a staff of 30.

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Teaching staff

Teaching in Malta received **official recognition as a profession** in the Education Act of 1988, with teachers gaining favourable conditions of employment (e.g. leave: 60 days plus Christmas and Easter) and remuneration packages (starting salary of MTL 5,352 or around € 13,380⁴⁸ per year in compulsory education compared to an average of € 11,600⁴⁹), that have made the profession very attractive⁵⁰. In most subjects (other than in technical, science and IT areas), supply outstrips demand. Since 1999, it has become increasingly difficult to place all graduate teachers in employment. Attempts were made by the Education Division and the Faculty of Education in 1998 to carry out a **needs assessment analysis** to get a more profound insight into the number of teachers required in different curricular areas. This project proved to be largely unworkable, given the number of variables that were beyond control.

Teachers can be divided into subgroups according to distinct sectors, with each sector having **different conditions of work and salary structures**. Details of these are represented in table 7. The **entry qualifications vary**, but increasingly the trend is towards teaching as a graduate profession. The distribution of teaching staff classified by sector, qualifications and gender is presented in table 8.

The **principle of pedagogical training has become well established**, with most teachers receiving **pre-service training**, and opportunities for **in-service** provision are increasing.

- *VET teachers at the lower secondary level* are generally ex-trade school

instructors, who have followed a one-year course in pedagogical methods, and are now to follow another certificate course at the Faculty of Education to convert themselves to general technology teachers.

- *VET teachers in the post-16 sector* have different educational backgrounds: a relatively small number of prospective teachers – 53 in all – have followed a B.Ed. (Hons.) course offered by the Faculty since 1993 (see table 9); a minority have followed in-service training by the institution in which they work⁵¹, and many of them have not undergone any pedagogical training.
- *Teachers in the CVET area*: ETC training staff are normally knowledgeable in the areas they teach, but – as is common in most LLL sectors in Malta – they tend to have little training in adult education methods⁵². Partly in response to this deficit, the Faculty of Education's Adult Education Programme has entered into a partnership with the ETC and offered diploma and Masters-level course in Adult Training and Development.

Teachers are usually **selected on the basis of their qualifications and experience**, and compete for an assignment by sitting for an interview with their prospective employers. In the state sector, the Education Division's head office is responsible for recruitment and deployment – as well as promotion and discipline – of staff. Teachers have to be in possession of a warrant to teach at compulsory school level. Such professional warrants are granted by the Minister of Education, acting on the recommendations of a Teachers' Warrant Board. Since 1994, and after an agreement was reached between the Malta Union of Teachers and the government, **teachers have the statutory obligation to participate in**

⁴⁸ See table 7.

⁴⁹ Around MTL 4,644. *Background Study on Employment and Labour Market in Malta*, Employment and Training Corporation, January 2001.

⁵⁰ Between 1997 and 2000, attempts were made to channel students away from choosing teaching. Newspaper articles were written pointing out the excessive supply of teachers in some curricular areas, and qualifications criteria for access to teacher training courses were raised. Despite all this, the number of applicants to join both the B.Ed. (Hons) and PGCE (Post-Graduate Certificate in Education) courses did not appreciably diminish.

⁵¹ The Faculty of Education has run a certificate-level course in pedagogy for ITS assistant lecturers, and a foundations course in teaching methods at the MCAST.

⁵² See J. Vancell's analysis *Workers at school? A study of the training programmes of the ETC*, unpublished M.Ed. dissertation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta, 1999.

in-service courses of at least three days duration every two years.

The **teacher/student ratio** for IVET differs according to the areas of study and to the institute concerned. The ratio of students to teachers at the MCAST is around 1:10 overall, but it is around 1:15 at the ITS. In the CVET and LLL sector, the teacher/student ratio at the ETC and the DFSAE varies according to the course in question. At the ETC's Night Institute for Further Technical Education (NIFTE), for instance, the ratio is maintained at 1:15 in order to enhance quality.

2.1.4 STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF VET AND LLL

The structure and organisation of VET and LLL, and how this connects with the overall education system in Malta is presented in **figure 1**. The organigram also presents the pathways through the system, and numbers of students where available.

Schooling is compulsory from the age of 5 to the age of 16 (11 years), comprising six years of primary school and five years of lower secondary school⁵³. The first important milestone in the educational career is the **final primary school exam**, which all pupils have to sit. According to the results achieved, pupils are channelled into two main types of educational institutions at lower secondary level, so-called "area secondary schools" and "junior lyceums". For the latter, an entrance exam is required. This procedure largely determines subsequent educational pathways.

The **lower secondary school sector is now largely unified**, both in curricular provision and in end-of-cycle examinations, as **trade schools** (vocational schools for the students) that used to accept students

aged 13 and prepare them for an apprenticeship at 16 have been phased out. Despite this, horizontal mobility is still extremely limited, although students theoretically have the opportunity to transfer from area secondary schools to junior lyceums and fill vacant seats there after sitting for examinations.

Pupils underperforming in the primary school exam are tracked into boys' schools and girls' schools (formerly called "**opportunity centres**"). These institutions **do not offer any formal qualifications** at the end of their cycle⁵⁴.

Upon completion of compulsory education, students obtain the **Secondary Education Certificate (SEC)**. If they choose to continue education at upper secondary level, their further educational path depends on achievements in the final examination and their professional aspirations.

Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET)

VET is generally perceived a less prestigious option and plays only a marginal role at **lower secondary level**. **St. Patrick's Crafts School** traditionally caters for 14-16 year-old boys that have become disenchanted with education, preparing them for entry into the labour market, but **without formal qualifications**.

At **upper secondary level**, students have the following options:

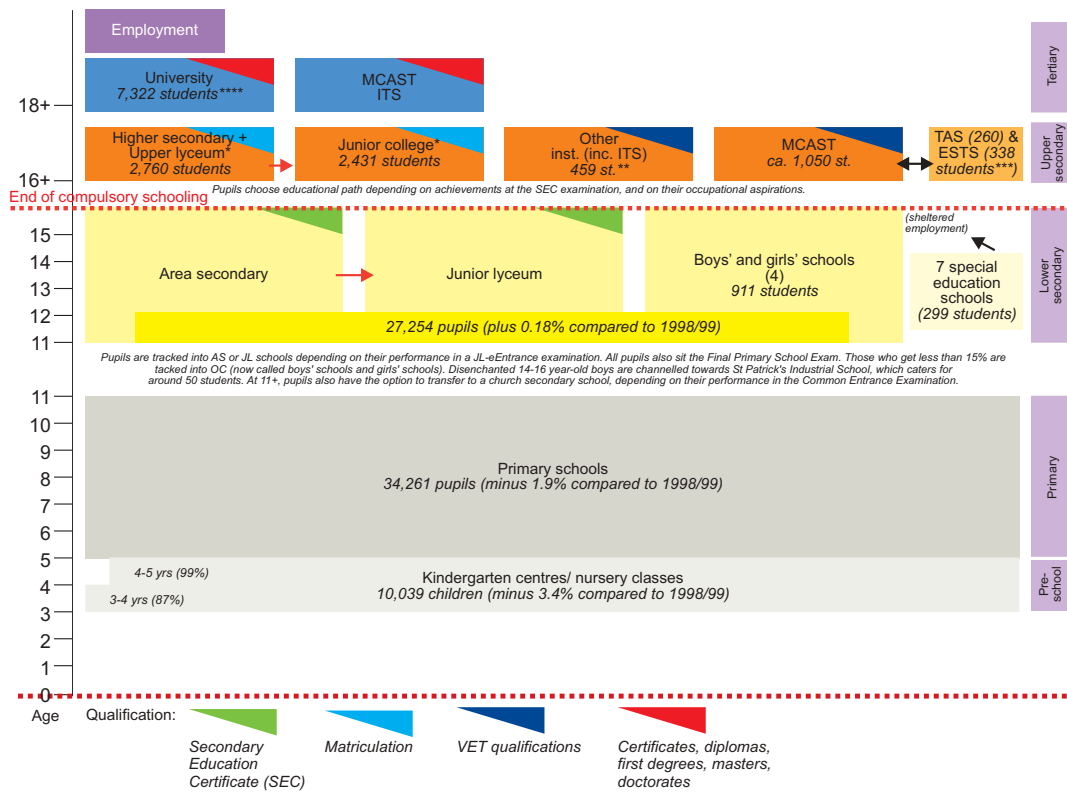
- Entering the **academic stream** in a state or non-state sixth form establishment, such as "higher secondary school", "upper lyceum" or "junior college" preparing students for the matriculation examination, which gives access to the university;

⁵³ The Education Act of 1988 stipulates that students who wish to leave at the end of their compulsory education, must **terminate the academic year** in which they reach the school leaving age, even if this takes them past their sixteenth birthday. Between January and December 2000, the Welfare Section of the Education Division processed 1,686 requests from students to be exempted from school (*Education Division Annual Report 2000*, p.17). Of these 1,265 (male = 560; female = 705) students were allowed to terminate their schooling prematurely. This level of exemptions tends to **contrast with the Lisbon target** of halving the number of 18-24 year-olds with only lower-secondary level education who are not in further education and training.

⁵⁴ A request has been made by one of the centres for some kind of formal proficiency testing of core skills to be recognised in the further education, training and employment market.

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Figure 1: Organigram representing key features of Malta's education system



Note: Student/pupil numbers refer to the school year 1999/2000 and include public and private schools.

Source: National Statistics Office.

* Compared to 1998/99, student numbers at general upper secondary level rose considerably by 17.7%. In parallel, the number of students in vocational programmes dropped from 2,815 students in 1998/99 to 2,615 students in 1999/2000 (-7.1%).

** Source: Institute for Tourism Studies, quoted in Structures of Education, Initial Training and Adult Education Systems in Europe, Malta 2000, Eurydice, Cedefop.

*** Student intake in 1999/2000. Source: DFSAE 1999/2000, quoted in: Structures of Education, Initial Training and Adult Education Systems in Europe, Malta 2000, Eurydice, Cedefop.

**** Source: University of Malta, quoted in: Structures of Education, Initial Training and Adult Education Systems in Europe, Malta 2000, Eurydice, Cedefop.

- Entering the **vocational stream**, choosing
 - one of the **MCAST** institutes operational since October 2001 (currently six institutes: Art and Design, Business and Commerce, Building and Construction Engineering, Electronics Engineering, Information and Communication Technology, Maritime Studies), preparing students for different vocational qualifications;
 - other vocational institutes, such as the **ITS**, preparing students for professional certificates or diplomas;
 - one of the two existing **apprenticeship schemes**, either the **Extended Skills Training Scheme (ESTS)** leading to the journeyman's certificate at craftsmanship level, or the **Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS)** leading to a technician qualification. Both schemes are managed by the **ETC** in cooperation with the **Education Division** of the MoE.

Table 5 shows the number of students in VET, in relation to the overall number of students in a particular age group. Participation in VET ranged from 10.4% (575 students) of the 14 year-old student population (in total 5,525) to 60.6% (633 students) in the 18 year-old student group (in total 1,045). This is followed by a considerable drop to 29.4% (393 students) in the group of 19 year-olds participating in education (1,336) to only 5.5% (367 students) in the student group 19+ (6,727 in total)⁵⁵.

The **MCAST** is an autonomous foundation totally funded by government. The college, which is regulated by a deed and statute dated 11 August 2000, has gradually integrated former trade schools and other technical institutes that were previously under the control of the Education Division of the MoE. In its six institutes, it offers a variety of **both initial and continuing training courses (post-16 level)** at different certificate and diploma levels (ISCED 3-5), combining theoretical and practical components. The college applies

a **modular approach**, encouraging flexibility and facilitating access to various VET programmes. Entry requirements vary according to the course applied for. The MCAST will take on an **increasingly central role in CVET** over the next few years, once its training potential becomes consolidated, and its function as a community college confirmed.

The **ITS** prepares students at **post-16 level** for the tourism industry. It operates what is known as a "Delta Fasttrack Open Learning Systems" (DFOLS). DFOLS offers students various entry possibilities and pathways through the system. Entry is flexible enough to allow both school-leavers and industry practitioners to enrol in study programmes at entry points designed to suit individual profiles. Some of the ITS programmes are in fact organised within the ESTS while a new programmes will be introduced under the TAS.

Courses are open for **students of all age groups**, provided they fulfil the entry requirements. Prior experiential learning of applicants is taken into account. Students can choose from a range of certificate, diploma and higher diploma courses in the hospitality industry, both at **initial and continuing training** levels. In the training programmes, theoretical components are combined with work placements in the hospitality industry both in Malta and overseas. Some programmes are modelled on the apprenticeship system, but students are not formally recognised as apprentices since the schedule is not formally registered at the ETC.

Apprenticeship schemes fall under the responsibility of ETC, in cooperation with the Education Division for administering the maintenance grants and under MCAST and ITS for the institution-based part of training and education. (ETC organises placements and the monitoring of apprentices). There are two options: the **Extended Skills Training Scheme (ESTS)** leading to the journeyman's certificate at craftsmanship level, and the **Technician Apprenticeship Scheme (TAS)**, leading to a technician qualification. The duration is four years for the TAS and two to four

⁵⁵ Ministry of Education (cited in O. MacDaniel: Malta: *An Overview of Vocational Education and Training*, ETF 2000).

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years for the ESTS. After the purely school-based first year, the programme combines on-the-job and off-the-job training in a 3:2 ratio. In 1999/2000, 338 apprentices enrolled in ESTS, while 260 apprentices started a TAS⁵⁶. There are no formal linkages or transfer possibilities between the two apprenticeship schemes.

VET at the post-16 level is available in **campuses on various sites** in Malta (Naxxar, Mosta, Paola, Kalkara, Sliema, St George's Bay and Pembroke). There are two centres in Gozo (Victoria servicing MCAST, and Qala servicing ITS). CVET and LLL opportunities are offered in ETC training centres in Hal Far, Valletta and Victoria (Gozo), and in state schools all over the island. This extensive network, together with the small size of the island and a cheap and efficient public transport system, ensures that **LLL opportunities are geographically accessible to all**.

The **main destinations of young people** who have completed compulsory education can be seen in the tracer studies that have been carried out by the Guidance and Counselling services of the Education Division since 1990. The most recent Tracer Study concerned students finishing their final year of lower secondary schooling in 1999/2000. Key trends are the **gradual steady increase in the number of students opting to further their education rather than entering the labour market** (1990: 56% continued in education, while 31% entered the labour market; 2000: 65% continued in education, 19% entered the labour market). In parallel, there is an increasing trend not to choose either of the two options but to register for work, stay at home or go abroad (10% in 1990 compared to 17% in 2000).

Analyses of student flows into the post-16 sector confirm that Malta has the same phenomenon of "**academic drift**" as reported for the rest of Europe⁵⁷. Compared to 1998/99, student numbers at upper secondary general level rose considerably (by 17.7%). In parallel, the

number of students in vocational programmes dropped from 2,815 students in 1998/99 to 2,615 students in 1999/2000 (-7.1%).

Of all the students opting to join the upper secondary sector, **78% chose the general stream**, while the rest choose technical education. However, there are indications that the setting up of the MCAST with the envisaged streamlining effect on vocational and technical education may contribute to changing this trend: In 2001, **more students applied for VET courses than could be admitted** at the MCAST, and as a result, 222 applicants had to be left out, with 85.3% of all eligible applicants being admitted (see table 11).

An analysis of flows of school-leavers into work gives us an indication of the **sectors of the labour market that are still prepared to absorb unskilled and uncertified workers** (see table 12). School-leavers typically find work as machine operators, shop assistants or salespersons, or waiters in the catering industry.

The **University of Malta** has grown from an institution catering for less than 1,000 in 1987 to over 7,600 students in 2002. Much of the increase can be explained by rising educational aspirations accompanying socio-economic development, and by the government's attempt to upgrade the profile of Malta's future workforce. The reform of the university in 1988 led to the abolition of the *numerus clausus* for most courses, thus removing an artificial obstacle to higher education. However, the figures provided by the National Statistics Office indicate a decline in student numbers that occurred for the first time in 1998/99. The total decrease accounted for 8.6% in 1999/2000 and is reported to be largely due to decreases in the Faculties of Education, Arts, and the Institute of Social Welfare. Other faculties, such as Economics, Management and Accountancy or the Centre for Communications and

⁵⁶ Student intake in 1999/2000. Source: DFSAE 1999/2000, quoted in: *Structures of Education, Initial Training and Adult Education Systems in Europe*, Malta 2000, Eurydice, Cedefop.

⁵⁷ See A. Green et al. (1998) *Convergence and Divergence in EU Education and Training Systems*. London: Institute of Education, University of London.

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Technology report increases in student numbers⁵⁸.

Around **17% of each age cohort** proceed to university studies, and while the percentage is still very low when compared to the EU average, the government is attempting to channel students into fields that are in line with the profiles needed by the economic development in the country. The MCAST is thus being promoted as an alternative to university, with parity in esteem between the two institutions. The ITS offers one programme (Higher Diploma in Hospitality Management) that prepares students to participate in a degree course in tourism run by the University of Malta.

Continuing Vocational Training (CVET)

The **main state-funded providers of CVET in Malta are the ETC and the Department for Further Studies and Adult Education (DFSAE)**, with the ETC handling 4,272 trainees between October 2000 and September 2001⁵⁹.

The **DFSAE** provided CVET courses in a number of vocational and craft areas to about 2,000 persons for the year 2001/02⁶⁰.

The **ETC** offers **short training courses** accessible both to the unemployed and those in employment wishing to upgrade their skills. Courses can be classified under four headings:

- office-related skills courses;
- hospitality/caring skills courses;
- management skills courses; and
- trade skills courses.

Some of the courses are delivered through the Night Institute for Further Technical Education (NIFTE), to encourage access for adults in employment – altogether, 106 trainees attended NIFTE courses in 1999/2000⁶¹.

ETC courses generally lead to a **certificate of attendance**. The ETC selection of courses is based on comprehensive labour market statistics that are maintained by ETC. Most of the trade courses are delivered jointly with the DFSAE of the Education Division, making use of school facilities after normal school hours. Other ETC courses are run jointly with public or private training institutions.

Provision of **CVET options in the MCAST and ITS** has already been referred to earlier.

A wide scope of **CVET opportunities** is offered by the **private sector** (private training agencies and institutions or employers).

- **Training courses provided by private training agencies and institutions have mushroomed**, with demand and supply stimulating each other. This sector is not regulated, and while the 1988 Education Act requires privately run commercial schools to seek authorisation from the Education Division for running courses, the DFSAE does not have the resources for proper monitoring. The DFSAE is therefore reluctant to issue licences. There is **little indication in the formal statistics as to the extent of this provision, or to its quality**, since there are no statistics about training delivered by private training agencies, or on vocational training undertaken at employers' establishments. Much of the training provided by private agencies typically concerns management, and the use of information technology. Successful candidates are generally awarded certificates of attendance.
- **Training provided by employers, either in-house or outsourced: Major companies and enterprises**, whether state, parastatal⁶² or private, have their own in-house training programmes,

⁵⁸ National Statistics Office, Malta: Education Statistics 2000.

⁵⁹ Source: *ETC Annual Report 2000 - 2001*, p. 31.

⁶⁰ With the establishment of the MCAST, the Department has announced its intention to fulfil its LLL brief by focusing on general education courses, and to extend its reach by intensifying its use of the education television channel (Channel 22), and by developing distance education through e-learning.

⁶¹ *ETC Annual Report 1999 - 2000*, p. 23. For 2001 - 2002, the number went up to 280 trainees. There is as yet no formal analysis, in terms of quantifiable outcomes, as to whether course attendance leads to improved job prospects and career advancement, though informal evidence suggests that this is the case.

⁶² Companies with public majority shareholding and/or independent statutory bodies.

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such as leading banks (e.g. HSBC, BOV), STMicroelectronics, Maltacom, and Enemalta. Insight into this type of training has improved thanks to a recent **survey by the National Statistics Office (NSO)**, already referred to in chapter 2.1.3. Despite the extent of the survey (1,683 enterprises, of which 991 or 59% provided CVET to employees), it needs to be pointed out that the results are limited to enterprises that employ ten or more staff. The survey does not provide a picture of the investment made by employers in smaller enterprises, which are the norm in Malta. In very general terms, the results are comparable to Eurostat's CVTS2 carried out in the EU and nine future member states. 14.1% of the enterprises participating in the survey have in-house training centres (237 of 1,683), the vast majority of training is implemented externally. More details of this study can be found in table 15.

The state gives incentives for employers to offer training and retraining opportunities to their employees. The **Industrial Development Act of 1988** provides for the payment of **training grants** to manufacturing establishments to assist them financially in training their newly recruited employees. The grant is equivalent to half the minimum wage for the duration of the training period that must not exceed 48 weeks. Manufacturing establishments apply to ETC, which issues these grants following an examination of the application that includes details about the training programme⁶³. The number of females benefiting from training under this scheme is almost twice that of men⁶⁴. The

new **Business Promotion Act**, which seeks to attract further investment to Maltese business, also provides for **incentives and grants for companies** investing in human resources development.

A number of **LLL opportunities are provided** by NGOs⁶⁵ and **local councils**, which, in general, have a subcommittee focusing on education. Courses offered tend to be of a general rather than vocational nature, with funding coming through the **Ministry of Justice and Local Government**.

Linkages

Horizontal and vertical linkages between the different pathways are possible in theory, but limited in reality. This is largely due to tracking practices that formally start already at the primary school level.

This trend is slowly changing. The new **National Minimum Curriculum (NMC)**, together with reforms at the lower secondary and post-compulsory level (including the phasing out of trade schools and the establishment of the MCAST) indicates a **new policy direction**. The focus is now more on **ensuring achievement than on early differentiation between students**, and **postponing specialisation** until as late as possible in the compulsory education cycle.

The **MCAST** also hopes to arrange for **mobility between the college and the university**, although the details of this still have to be worked out, with the university having traditionally shown **reluctance in**

⁶³ Employer feedback that they are looking for a more advanced profile of skills from their employees has led the ETC to organise trainee programmes which are of longer duration, and with the support of social partners. The ETC has lately started the process of examining the possibility of subcontracting more of its courses to public or private training agencies which are suitably equipped for the purpose, so that it will concentrate on the delivery of courses in demand which no other organisation is providing for (E. Zammit, F. Borg and S. Vella (2001) *Background Study on Employment and Labour Market in Malta*, ETC).

⁶⁴ See E. Zammit et al. (2001), p. 49 for further details.

⁶⁵ These include the Guze Ellul Mercer Foundation (GEM), a branch of the General Workers' Union; the Academy for the Development of a Democratic Environment (AZAD), a branch of the Nationalist Party; the Centre for Social Leadership (CSL), a branch of the Social Action Movement; the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce; and several other religious or secular organisations. Most recently, central government funded the setting up of St. James Cavalier Centre for Creativity, which provides a useful venue for NGOs to offer a range of learning opportunities for all age groups in multidisciplinary art forms. Short courses, often on a fee-paying and part-time basis are also offered by professional associations, the Malta Chamber of Commerce (MCC), the Malta Institute of Management (MIM), the Foundation for Human Resource Development (FHRD), the Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprises (IPSE), Market Intelligence Srics Co. Ltd. (MISCO), and the Malta University Services.

giving equivalence to technical qualifications⁶⁶

Guidance and counselling

Guidance is offered both within schools, and through the employment services (ETC). School guidance teachers follow a two-year evening course leading to a Diploma in Guidance and Counselling from the University of Malta. They also have opportunities for in-service courses that help them remain up to date with developments in their field. All students at compulsory and post-16 levels have access to guidance services, with most schools and institutions having a resident guidance teacher, established on a **ratio of 1:300 students at the secondary school level**. In primary schools, and in church schools, students are generally catered for by a mobile guidance team.

Information about post-compulsory and LLL courses is given directly by guidance personnel in schools, as well as through leaflets and the media. The DFSAE publishes a catalogue of post-secondary education opportunities every year. Guidance personnel meet students and parents at **key crossroads in the school system**. In addition, students and parents can have individual advisory sessions with guidance personnel at no charge.

At the ETC⁶⁷, guidance provision suffers from a ratio of **one employment adviser to 550 clients**. The ETC has a clientele that includes women returning to the labour market, individuals with special needs

requiring advice on access to special employment units and the unemployed.

At present there is **no mechanism in place to measure the effectiveness of vocational guidance** in orientating people towards new skill areas. Moreover, there are **few linkages between the employment services and schools⁶⁸**, and school counsellors and guidance teachers have often been criticised by employer associations for having neither the required knowledge of the labour market and employment prospects, nor the skills to interpret trends. Much of the vocational guidance that is provided to students at the secondary and post-secondary level tends to be **oriented towards personal development** rather than with a view to helping young people understand the labour market, and the opportunities that exist for them there. At the MCAST, there are only two full-time counsellors for all the Institutes, while at the ITS there is one full-time and one part-time counsellor.

Delivery, assessment and certification of initial and continuing VET

The **modalities for delivering, assessing and certifying initial and continuing VET,** still vary between one institution and the other, but the trend towards better integration is underpinned by the establishment of the MCAST and the MPVQAC. In the delivery of IVET, the privileged modality includes **placements in industry** as an integral part of the curriculum. The **share between theoretical** and practical elements in curricula varies widely according to the

⁶⁶ In regulating admissions, the University of Malta operates a 'maturity clause' that allows prospective students over the age of 23 who do not have the required qualifications to enter a number of courses if the faculty decides that they can follow the programme of studies 'with profit'. Such a decision is made on the basis of a written and/or oral examination.

⁶⁷ ETC officials provide training in job-search and self-presentation skills that enhance the chances of employment. The ETC is attempting to **strengthen its capacity to offer vocational guidance**, and has developed a process for drawing up a Personal Action Plan for every person registering. It has also reached an agreement with the Workers' Participation Development Centre at the University of Malta, so that a tailor-made course on occupational guidance is offered to ETC guidance personnel.

⁶⁸ **The linkages between the guidance section of the Education Division and the world of work are often limited** to an annual Careers Convention that provides students with an overview of labour market opportunities and information about how to access these; to occasional visits to the workplace, and to orientation talks given by invited guest lecturers from the business community. In secondary schools, guidance teachers also run a "career room", displaying information and brochures about educational and occupational pathways. As a consequence of criticism expressed by representatives of the world of work, the Guidance and Counselling Services section is implementing a training programme for its personnel. This includes seminars on the Maltese labour market, visits to and short placements in industrial concerns, and stronger linkages with the employment service section of the ETC with a view to regularly updating guidance teachers with developments in the labour market.

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area of study, and according to the course year. Institutes linked to the four-year ESTS and TAS schemes place around 600 students in industry for two and three days respectively from the second year onwards. Other institutes have **block work experience placements** for two to three weeks at a time. In most cases, however, the different segments of school-based education and industry-based training work parallel to each other rather than together, with **little of the structured interaction that is characteristic of the “dual system”**⁶⁹.

Assessment and certification have been varied and still lack comparability. The different VET providers used to offer a variety of examination modalities (school-based or external examiners) and certificates, often tied up to British examination boards such as the City & Guilds, the Association of Accounting Technicians, and the Chartered Institute of Bankers and, increasingly, BTEC⁷⁰. Local skill certification and testing included the Journeyman’s Certificate, as well as licensing for would-be plumbers and electricians.

The different **VET qualifications have not yet been integrated within a national framework of qualifications.** The Malta Professional and Vocational Qualifications Awards Council (MPVQAC)⁷¹ started its activities in October 2000. Supported by Standard Development Boards that include employer representatives, it is supposed to develop and implement a coherent national framework of competence-based

vocational qualifications, applicable in IVET as well as CVET. Cooperation with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) is envisaged. The project has obtained support at ministerial level. The Council is currently elaborating an operational plan, which will be presented to the ministers in charge.

The adoption of **standard levels of competencies in the new Malta Vocational Qualifications framework** will ensure comparability of skills both in the internal and international labour market, as well as a more transparent system of qualifications as recommended by the Lisbon targets. It must be pointed out, however, that Malta is unlikely to have the financial or human capacity to draw up lists of the skill requirements of all job groups found on the island, and their translation into competency-based syllabuses⁷².

The **Malta Standards Authority**, through its Accreditation Directorate established by Legal Notice 313, facilitates the shift towards unified occupational standards through quality accreditation based on **ISO standards**.

There is a **gradual shift towards competency-based assessment and qualifications** across the whole spectrum of educational and vocational provision in Malta. Competency-based assessment in the post-compulsory sector has largely been promoted by employer associations, most notably the Malta Chamber of Commerce (MCC) and the Federation of Industry (FOI) – and mainly within the

⁶⁹ This is not quite true for the ITS, which has a carefully monitored ‘Local Industrial Trade Practice’ and ‘International Internship’ system, that have recently been reviewed (see A. Borg, 2001, *The International Internship: An In-Depth Look*, Long Essay, Certificate in Tourism Studies Education, Faculty of Education, University of Malta).

⁷⁰ At the MCAST, for instance, BTEC courses are offered by the ICT and the Institute for Electronic Engineering; the Maritime Institute offers an international mariner’s certificate; the Institute for Business and Commerce prepares its students for the local Matriculation examination, and for local and foreign certificates in accountancy and insurance (e.g. Certificate in Financial & Banking Services); Arts and Design Institute students sit for local examinations, which have no international purchase, but which have recently been accredited by the University of Leeds. The latter has agreed to give access to a third year Arts and Design course to graduates of the Institute. A consultant attached to the MCAST, and who previously had been with EDEXCEL, provides staff training in curriculum development and assessment in line with BTEC philosophy and requirements.

⁷¹ Eight of the ten Standards Development Boards - namely Insurance, Office Management, Banking and Financial Services; Room Service; Food and Beverage; Telecommunications; Industrial Electronics; Marketing Sales and Retail – have drafted some standards, drawing on the NVQs as approved by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in the UK and other standards found in EU member states.

⁷² For a discussion of these limitations, and the articulation of a set of alternative options, see A. Green’s consultative report to the Minister of Education, *Developing a national system of Professional and Vocational Qualifications: International experiences and options and scenarios for Malta* (mimeograph, 2000).

context of **accreditation of prior learning** (APL), a concept that is increasingly gaining legitimacy.

As has already been noted, the MCAST, besides awarding certificates, diplomas and, eventually, degrees to those successfully completing courses, intends to provide schemes for the **accreditation of prior (experiential) learning**. Similar schemes are already operational at the ITS. APL is also carried out at the ETC for people who have not been through an apprenticeship. These people apply to the ETC to be assessed and certified, and their application is referred to one of the **Trade Testing Boards**, which carries out a test in order to determine the competence of the applicant. Those who are assessed and found competent in the practice of a trade are awarded a Certificate of Achievement, indicating the level of competence. Few non-apprentices, however, apply to be trade tested and certified⁷³.

2.2 RESPONSIVENESS OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM TO THE NEEDS OF THE LABOUR MARKET AND THE INDIVIDUAL

2.2.1 APPROPRIATENESS OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

Planning/programming

There are **two main sources of information** that can be referred to in this context:

The ETC's **Labour Market Research Section** collates, analyses and interprets labour market information and conducts

research on issues related to the labour market. It runs a **National Employment Database** that facilitates data handling and information management⁷⁴. Every six months, the Research and Development branch of the ETC issues Labour Force Trends and submits a report to the ministry responsible for employment. In this context, the ETC collaborates with the Central Bank, the Ministry of Economic Services, the NSO (National Statistics Office) and the Ministry for Social Policy.

The Federation of Industry (FOI) has conducted a half-yearly **Industry Trends Survey** on a regular basis since 1982, with its most recent exercise covering 94 manufacturing and 24 non-manufacturing firms. Such surveys provide some information related to employment increase and decrease in specific areas and broadly indicate skill areas being requested by industry.

In addition to these generic surveys, studies targeted at specific groups or sectors have also been carried out, largely in collaboration with the ETC, whose **databases on the gainfully occupied population**, on part-time employment and the unemployed, as well as its surveys on the employment status of graduates and of women, throw some light on the skills profiles needed and available, and how these match considerations regarding a national employment plan. The ETC has also been involved with the university, the FOI, and the MCC in producing a **Human Resource Needs Survey** in 2001, largely aimed at a better integration between the skills profile of graduates and the skills requirements of the local business and industrial community⁷⁵.

In 1996, a study was carried out by the Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the

⁷³ The system only caters for trades and callings covered by the apprenticeship schemes – i.e. trade or engineering-related occupations, practically excluding persons working in service occupations from the possibility of assessment and certification.

⁷⁴ The NED carries all the details of those that are actually in employment or are registering for employment. The database has the full employment history of anybody who has worked in Malta, and while clients include employees and employers who request work records, the NED is mainly used to supply the National Statistics Office with data, which is regularly published at a national level. Records are kept up to date since employers are obliged to fill in engagement and termination forms, which are sent to the ETC.

⁷⁵ Information provided courtesy of Professor Joseph Micallef, Chairperson of the survey team. Results show that public and private sectors will be requiring 50% more graduates in their employment by 2005 than they did in 2001, with the greatest skills mismatches being in the science, engineering and IT areas. More graduates would also be needed in financial/economic and health/medicine sectors (see also report on the *Graduate Potential Survey*, M. Wood, *The Times*, 8 Feb. 2002, p. 22).

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Ministry of Social Services, indicating that the hospitality industry would be creating around 2,500 new jobs over the following three years⁷⁶.

Despite these efforts, an **integrated system of data collection and appropriate forecasting methodologies, which would facilitate medium-term projections of qualification requirements, does not yet exist in Malta**. Collecting information related to skill needs and assessing future demand is difficult, largely due to the fact that most entrepreneurial activity in Malta is to be found in the context of micro-enterprises.

The government has become increasingly aware of the need to have a clearer picture of the skill requirements in Malta and has commissioned the ETC to develop a **national human resources development plan** to support the attempt to create a better link between human resource development and Malta's economic vision and objectives. In response, the ETC is setting up a labour market forecasting function. It has also appointed a **Labour Market Policy Committee** with the task of analysing labour market issues, establishing and monitoring labour market indicators, and creating and managing a national network of employment focal points⁷⁷.

The ETC's representation on the MCAST Governing Board ensures a regular information flow on national skills needs from the employment services to the leading VET establishment on the island. The MCAST's readiness to increase its responsiveness to the requirements of industry is attested by the fact that in its first year of operation, it offered ten (of 47) different courses that had not been offered in Malta during the previous years. Most of these addressed the gap in information technology skills that had been identified in various economic analyses and documents, including the JAP.

The availability of labour market information on its own does not guarantee a satisfactory response to the skills profiles required, and curricula continue to be designed to "produce" outcomes that do not necessarily reflect the needs of the industry. In this context, the idea of more structured social partner involvement is promoted, which is articulated in current education and training policies. Concrete examples underpinning this intention were the national consultative processes on the NMC and the LLL documents. However, as mentioned in chapter 2.1.1, formal social partner involvement remains largely limited to representation of employers on constituted governing boards of such institutions as the ETC, the MCAST, the ITS and the MPVQAC for the moment.

Curriculum design/development

The notion that all citizens have to be equipped with the **core skills** as identified by the Lisbon targets has become an integral component in Malta's curriculum policy. Literacy, communication skills, IT competence, the ability to work in teams, creativity, problem solving and foreign languages (see tables 16 and 17) are given emphasis in **the new National Minimum Curriculum (NMC)**, a document that is legally binding and applicable to the compulsory education sector countrywide. The NMC covers kindergarten, primary and secondary education and provides a national framework that empowers schools to design programmes tailored to the needs of their environment. The latest version came into force in October 2000. Its main characteristics include being centred at children/students, entitling each citizen to full educational services and ensuring accessibility of education to all.

The NMC articulates the general educational objectives as distinct targets organised in terms of "knowledge/information", "skills" and "attitudes". As part of the usual examination

⁷⁶ Feedback from the hospitality industry has led the ITS to develop new courses, the latest being wine-tasting.

⁷⁷ The Committee includes all social partners (including employers' associations and trade unions), as well as several NGOs. It looks at labour market issues that are of concern (e.g. low female participation in the labour market), such as those raised by the JAP or by the National Development Plan, and invites focused input on such issues on the part of 35 'employment focal points' representing different views and perspectives on the theme under consideration.

procedures, **benchmarking and profiling** are now proposed as a more effective alternative to ensuring that key skills have been acquired, and that student assessment is carried out according to the principle of validating what they **can actually do**. The philosophy is similar with regard to post-compulsory education and training, though at this level, the curriculum is still in a state of flux.

The **formal mechanism of employer representation** established in the constitution of each MCAST institute is supposed to facilitate the development of curricula that are relevant to Malta's economic needs. Informally, MCAST principals are generally well networked with the sector their institute serves, particularly in the case where the principal himself or herself comes from industry.

The ITS has a longer experience of social partnership in the provision of training that is directly linked to the needs of the industrial sector it serves. Some of its short training programmes have been designed jointly with the ETC and the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association (MHRA).

The above indicates that **modification of education and training programmes** tends to be **driven from the top**.

Initial VET

The process of accession to the EU has acted as a catalyst to direct policy attention to the area of VET. This, together with the establishment of the MCAST, has triggered off a debate on many aspects of VET, including the curriculum. At both national and sectoral level, a number of **curricular principles** have been articulated, around which there seems to be a fair degree of consensus. The Malta LLL memorandum, for instance, makes a clear argument in favour of **VET curricula that are not**

purely "technical" or narrowly skills based. For both citizenship and economic reasons, the underlying idea is that **modern VET curricula should also include general education components**. This balance between general and specialised knowledge also makes sense from an economic point of view, particularly in knowledge-based societies, and small countries where economic vulnerability requires workers to be flexible and adaptable.

Many of the **initial VET curricula** (which are not affected by the NMC) in the technical institutes were **imported from abroad**, both because they aim to prepare students for examinations designed abroad, and because of the deficit in local competence in curriculum development⁷⁸. Overseas curricula tend to **lack direct relevance to Malta's specific labour market requirements**, or to the needs of employers with an interest in the profile of competencies of students graduating from the system⁷⁹. The situation has not yet changed much despite merging several institutes under the MCAST umbrella. According to the MCAST Principal, the modernisation of curricula is one of his top priorities, as the present study programmes are not sufficiently responsive to change, and are too rigid to meet the needs of employers⁸⁰.

At a different level, it is to be noted that the constitution of the **Board of Studies** of the institutes under the MCAST umbrella facilitates curriculum development and an interdisciplinary approach. The boards are expected to include representatives from industry and, in addition, representatives from institutes abroad with whom partnership agreements have been concluded. The interdisciplinary principle is supported by the Council of the Institutes, which brings together all the heads of the institutes and meets on a regular basis.

⁷⁸ In the area of ICT, the trend has been to follow British BTEC courses, partly because of the consultancy relationship that has been developed by MCAST with EDEXCEL (one of the leading accreditation bodies in the UK), and partly because such courses allow sufficient flexibility for the inclusion of elements that are of relevance to the Maltese situation.

⁷⁹ See *Vocational Training in Malta: The Way Ahead*. Proceedings of a Conference held in Valletta, 17-18 December, p. 10., ETF (1999) According to some of the institute principals, external certification agencies, such as that offering BTEC, do allow some flexibility, which permits the adaptation of curricula to local needs and realities.

⁸⁰ Interview with Mr Roy Snelling, MCAST Principal, in *The Times*, December 5 – 2001, pp. 34-35.

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Constraints in achieving modern and interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning include:

- (a) VET teachers' lack of pedagogical training, with many being recruited directly from industry, having a strong knowledge and skills base, but little experience or competency in modern teaching methods; and
- (b) the need for teachers involved in IVET to keep abreast of modern developments in their respective fields. At the ITS this goal is attained informally, as many lecturers remain involved in the hospitality industry through consultative positions they hold in their spare time. At the MCAST, the idea of organising staff placements in enterprises, as well as the idea to have selected workers placed in the college for short periods, have been referred to during interviews, but no mechanism has yet been put into place to ensure that these are implemented.

Continuing VET

In CVET, whether this takes place in the context of the ETC, or elsewhere (e.g. through the commercial arm of the University of Malta), key stakeholders are involved in curriculum design, often through requests regarding types and content of training, and feedback about training services provided. In the case of the ETC, duration and range of coverage of some of its modules have been extended on the basis of employer feedback, moving beyond the provision of basic skills to more advanced training.

The ETC has the institutional structures to facilitate the input of stakeholders. Government, employer, trade union, and Education Division staff are in fact appointed on the board of directors – even though this is in their personal capacity rather than as official representatives of social partners.

They are thus directly involved in setting the ETC's policies and strategies⁸¹ (for more details on ETC, see chapter 3).

Delivery

While in some cases practical training is offered in industry through work placements (e.g. as part of the ESTS or TAS apprenticeships), **initial VET establishments usually have on-site training facilities**, such as workshops or laboratories (in the case of MCAST institutes and the ETC), or kitchens and restaurants (in the case of ITS).

Much of the capital and recurrent expenditure required for the maintenance of these facilities is provided directly by the state.

There is no tradition of or mechanism to **facilitate partnerships between industry and education/training institutions to support IVET** through the sharing of human or material resources. Industry has in general not been keen to open its facilities for training activities, to offer their skilled personnel to share their expertise and experience in schools, or to offer teachers opportunities to update their skills through short placements.

Thus far, the only sector that has effectively responded to calls to invest in the college has been the IT sector, which offered some equipment to the recently established Institute of Information and Communication Technology (MCAST).

Apart from the practical training within apprenticeship schemes, industry also grants other VET **student placements for the work experience component** of their training programme⁸². Such internships tend to suffer from limitations, such as the doubtful educational as well as training value of many placements.

⁸¹ The ETC Annual Report for 1999/2000 (p. 17) reports, for instance, that a traineeship system was launched with a view to responding to requests by the labour market (e.g. traineeships for slaughtering and de-boning butchers, and one in formwork and steel fixing).

⁸² For the year 1999/2000, a total of 240 out of 250 TAS apprentices, and 269 out of 341 ESTS apprentices were provided with a training placement where they received on-the-job training and ETC monitoring. 75% of the placements were in the private sector.

Despite efforts made by the ETC to have regular on-site monitoring of apprentices, this aspect of the apprenticeship needs to be improved⁸³. More information should be shed on these issues in early 2003 as the ETC has undertaken a research study on the outcome of those participating in apprenticeship courses run since 1990, and their opinions on the scheme.

Quality assurance in VET has so far been maintained largely through a system of inspection supervising institutions, and through defining the entry qualifications of teachers, but largely without social partner involvement. Positive results obtained by VET students sitting UK examinations may be considered indicators of quality as well. It is expected that the MCAST Boards of Studies will also have the task of developing strategies of quality assurance as an integral part of their responsibilities⁸⁴. On its part, the ITS has its courses accredited by foreign universities and hotel schools, with evaluative reports being drawn up by external examiners. The institute itself is also accredited by the European Federation of Hotel Schools (EFAH), and has adopted quality assurance and student charters. Student performance in local and international competitions is also taken to be indicators of quality.

The **modernisation of training facilities will remain one of the most challenging aspects** for initial and continuing VET in Malta. It is an established fact that VET provision is costly, and occasionally VET initiatives started off in a promising manner thanks to the initial investment by aid agencies, but funding dried out soon after⁸⁵. The college institutes, in some cases, are still utilising equipment that had been donated a decade or two earlier, and serious doubts have already been expressed by college management as to whether the ambitious goals articulated for the MCAST can even remotely be met with the current commitment in funding. The ITS appears to have a healthier budget for training facilities, and has generally succeeded in keeping its equipment at a level comparable to that in industry⁸⁶.

Malta has a national IT strategy, aspects of which are still being implemented⁸⁷. Figures provided by the National Statistics Office (23 July 2001) give an estimate of 80,000 computers in Malta, or 20.5 units per 100 inhabitants (figures for December 2000). This places Malta second only to Slovenia (27.3%) among the future member states: such a high penetration of computers is explained by the introduction and use of computers in all primary and secondary schools.

⁸³ Some of the teachers and principals interviewed also expressed a lack of satisfaction with the ETC's allocation and monitoring of placements – though it must be added that, given the micro scale of the majority of Malta's industries, placements are very hard to come by. Indeed, the policy that seems to have been adopted by the MCAST is not to allow its intake be conditioned by the number of placements available. Rather, whenever placements are not found for students, these are given alternative 'industrial' experience in their respective institute's workshops.

⁸⁴ Article 8 (o) of the statute of each institute sets out as one of their duties the coordination with industrial and other partners in the development of quality assurance. In this respect, for instance, the College's Institute for Information and Communication Technology has engaged EDEXCEL to audit some of its courses.

⁸⁵ This is precisely the case with Malta. In the early 1970s for instance, and largely thanks to an Italian protocol, machinery was donated to equip the fledgling trade schools set up to provide craft-level training that was meant to build the resource base required for economic take-off after independence. That machinery was still in use in Maltese vocational schools a full 30 years later, despite the enormous changes that had taken place in technology in the real world of work. Technical institutes largely suffered the same fate, with a major exception being the Fellenberg electronics centre, which managed to keep itself abreast of developments in industry thanks to the support of the Swiss government.

⁸⁶ This is true for the facilities in the kitchens, as well as the computerised systems used in the training of receptionists for front desk operations.

⁸⁷ Government has made a major investment in IT: all its departments have had training in the use of computers, and it has provided subsidies targeting specific groups to enable them to purchase computers. A case in point would be post-16 students. The Malta Information Technology and Training Services Ltd. (MITTS), attached to the Office of the Prime Minister, supports government strategic intentions in terms of IT at the macro level – the establishment of the information society and information economy, as well as e-government – and at the micro level, the continued transformation of the public service, in large part through consolidate the government's IT infrastructure and to maximise its effective use.

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By mid-2000, more than 3,500 people had enrolled in computer courses organised at community level⁸⁸. The ratio of computers to students in state primary schools is 7:1; that in state secondary schools is 20:1⁸⁹. The ratio for the ITS is 15:1, that for the MCAST differs according to the institutes. At the ICT institute, as is to be expected, each student is seated at a PC for every session, and each computer is connected to the internet via ADSL.

At the IBC institute, the ratio is 14:1 - students have access to a computer laboratory, with only one computer being connected to the internet. At the Institute for Arts and Design, there are 38 computers for 62 students, but most of these computers cannot handle the appropriate software programmes.

Very few computers are available for students at the other institutes, with many of these being outdated (i.e. 486 rather than Pentium, for instance). Teachers in the VET sector have received little training in the use of ICT, and rarely use them as teaching aids.

The number of Internet subscriptions has increased steadily, and on the basis of one source⁹⁰, the NSO estimates that there are now 51,000 or 13.3% of the total population, who are Internet users. Compared with the EU 15, only Greece has a lower rate.

When compared to future member states, Internet penetration in Malta is lower than that of Estonia, Slovenia and Poland, but higher than the remaining countries (see table 18 to table 21)⁹¹. Internet access has been installed in 36 state schools, with the current budget allocating an additional MTL 1,100,000 (around € 2.73 million) for the introduction and upgrading of IT in schools around Malta and Gozo, and for providing

web services. The goal is for such services to be available in all state schools by the end of the year, thus meeting the Lisbon target for 2002⁹².

All prospective teachers have to have a European Computer Driving Licence (EDCL) level before graduating, and in-service courses are offered to all teachers to ensure that that level is achieved across the board.

2.2.2 RESPONSIVENESS

The prevailing educational climate in Malta puts emphasis on the need to **move away from the traditional “one-size fits all” approach to teaching and learning**, to one that **takes individual differences into account**. This is underpinned by:

- key policy-guiding documents such as *Tomorrow's Schools: Developing Effective Learning Cultures* (1995) and *Creating the Future Together: National Minimum Curriculum* (1999),
- structural reforms of the education system (phasing out lower secondary trade schools; setting up the MCAST), and
- the establishment of new entities whose mission is to cater for the needs of students encountering difficulties (the *Foundation for Educational Services*).

A lot of effort has been made in pre-service and in-service teacher training in order to facilitate the shift to learner-centred differentiated approaches. While the tradition of **early streaming of children into academic or vocational paths still prevails**⁹³, there is a **clear policy direction towards more comprehensive educational approaches** in schools, weakening the rigid classification and separation between different sectors.

⁸⁸ See report in *The Malta Independent on Sunday*, 14 May 2000, "To the heart of the computer illiteracy matter", p. 16.

⁸⁹ Figures provided by the Eurydice unit in Malta. See also: *ICT@Europe.edu*, Eurydice 2001.

⁹⁰ www.nua.ie

⁹¹ See NSO, *News Release*, No 71/2001, 23 July 2001.

⁹² See *Presidency Conclusions*, Lisbon European Council, 23-24 March 2000, para. 11.

⁹³ Due mainly to (a) the existence of a non-state sector, which tends to siphon away the most academically achieving from the state schools; and (b) due to the division of the secondary level between 'area secondaries' and the higher achieving 'junior lycéums'.

Students with difficulties have access to support services at all levels of schooling and training, and investments have been made to train more educational psychologists. Counsellors provide guidance about study strategies, as well as about further education and employment pathways, and there is an increasing sensitivity to the rights of students with special needs.

The National Commission for Persons with Disability has adopted a proactive role in this field, which includes fostering accessibility of educational buildings for disabled students. Some establishments – the MCAST included – still need to make progress in this area.

There is a **clear strategy to raise the overall skill levels** in the country, largely by:

- ensuring that more young people remain in education and training at the post-16 level (see table 22); and
- opening up more pathways from work back to education and training.

The **MCAST is considered to be the appropriate mechanism** to enable both to happen, with the ETC playing a major role that might, however, be subject to modifications, depending on the extent to which the college fulfils its mission. The fact that ITS and MCAST operate modular curricula⁹⁴ allows them to respond more flexibly to the learning needs of young people and adults. Moreover, this approach facilitates access to knowledge at a pace and at times most suitable to the clients, and enables adults to improve their skills without having to give up their employment.

The ETC's apprenticeships and traineeships also provide such opportunities for skills upgrading, and represent another important pathway back to learning and training.

Similarly, there is a **national commitment to increase LLL opportunities**. The *Malta*

Report on the National Consultation Process on Lifelong Learning (13 July 2001), echoing proposals set out in the Lisbon targets, has highlighted the need to develop **multipurpose learning centres at the local level**, and has promoted the idea of using schools as **community learning centres**. It has also proposed a variety of strategies including home-based learning, community-based courses, information technology and distance learning approaches, the education channel, etc., in order to **maximise opportunities and pathways back to learning**.

As noted earlier, adult education and training opportunities offered by the private sector have flourished, in a cultural context where paper certification is highly esteemed. Since private adult education and training is largely unregulated, there are no clear indicators as to the numbers of adults obtaining certificates. A clear picture will emerge once the Malta Professional and Vocational Qualifications Awards Council will have fully implemented the Malta Vocational Qualifications framework and encouraged private training agencies to deliver programmes leading to MVQs.

2.3 CONTRIBUTION OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM TO PROMOTING SOCIAL AND LABOUR MARKET INCLUSION

At-risk groups

At the compulsory school level, the new NMC gives primary importance to the principle of "entitlement", which is defined as the right of every student to quality education. Several initiatives have been put in place across the different levels of the education and training system to ensure that this principle is respected.

School development planning, parental involvement, early identification of learning difficulties, prevention and remedial programmes, as well as multifactor

⁹⁴ Modules – as small units of learning – can be much more amenable to development and updating than large syllabuses. They increase transparency for all – be they social partners involved in design and assessment of discrete areas of the curriculum that they have competence in, or students who need to plan their learning carefully and parsimoniously, given other commitments and responsibilities they might have.

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assessment and benchmarking are some of the key strategies that have been introduced or reinforced to ensure access to education and training for all, including disadvantaged groups⁹⁵.

Community education projects have been organised in economically depressed areas (e.g. Cottonera and Zejtun), largely by NGOs with state support. The Literacy Unit of the Faculty of Education works in close collaboration with the Education Division to identify students experiencing difficulties in attaining targeted literacy levels.

The MoE has also launched the **Foundation for Educational Services** (FES), and has budgeted for the introduction of “**activity teachers**”, so as to run **after-school programmes** for primary-level pupils, offering them a range of opportunities for self-development, creative self-expression and literacy. The Foundation will also run an EU-funded “**Parent Empowerment for Family Literacy Project**” which involves a range of parent-focused educational support activities and initiatives. In addition, technical support will be provided to secondary schools in the area of literacy and school renewal processes.

The ETC is delivering literacy courses at its training centres and in various localities in collaboration with Local Councils and with NGOs. Literacy courses are also being organised by the ETC within employers’ establishments. These courses are primarily targeted at the unemployed but employed people can attend as well.

As has already been noted, a policy **focus on specific learning needs of students with disability** has been signalled strongly in the Maltese educational policy arena. A document *National Policy on Special Education in Malta* proposes inclusion of children across all school sectors, in line with the Salamanca Statement⁹⁶.

Progressive practices in this area are being piloted and implemented at a steady pace, with evaluative and monitoring research being carried out in parallel⁹⁷.

The NMC has firmly rooted the policy of **mainstreaming and inclusion**, with government making a heavy investment in the training of facilitators to support teachers in integrating students with disabilities in the classroom, currently over 500 extra staff in state and non-state schools. In many cases, there is one facilitator per student, and not more than one student with special educational needs per class. 69% (i.e. 614) of the 889 students identified as having special education needs attend regular schools, while 275 attend special schools⁹⁸.

One at-risk group that has not yet been targeted by government or NGOs is the group of **students who are the children of migrants or refugees**⁹⁹. While the Jesuits run a refugee centre in Malta, an agreed approach on how schools can better respond to the specific needs of this group has not yet been developed. Progressive educational legislation in favour of non-Maltese students has only been considered for children of EU nationals working in Malta. Thus, the government has resolved to align itself with

⁹⁵ Two of the key initiatives of the Curriculum Department – “Teaching for Diversity” and the “Let me Learn” project - are run jointly with the Faculty of Education, and emphasise and sustain this shift. So too does the Literacy Project – another joint venture between the Division and the Faculty of Education, which has carried out base-line surveys of literacy in primary schools, followed by remedial programmes to ensure that all students reach the minimum requirements of the curriculum. Less attention has been given to the other end of the range of student abilities, with the needs of gifted children only gaining some attention recently.

⁹⁶ An agreement reached at a Unesco conference on special and inclusive education in 1994. See National Commission for Persons with Disability (1994) *Special Education in Malta: National Policy*. Malta: Centru Hidma Soċjali.

⁹⁷ For an informed synthesis of developments in the field, see P.A. Bartolo (2001) “Recent developments in inclusive education in Malta”, *Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies*, Vol. 6(2), pp. 65-91.

⁹⁸ M. King et al. (2000) ‘Inclusive education’. In J. Giordmaina (ed.) *National Curriculum on its Way*. Malta: MoE, Education Division, and University of Malta, p. 26.

⁹⁹ According to the Education Statistics for 1999 (Central Office of Statistics), there are a total of 629 expatriate students (265 primary, 364 secondary) in Maltese state schools, and 783 expatriate students (386 primary, 397 secondary) in Maltese private schools. Of course, only a percentage of this total is made up of refugees or migrants, but the official statistics do not discriminate between the different groups of foreigners.

the body of EU law, and to amend the Education Act (Cap. 327) in order to implement Directive 77/486/EEC related to the education of children of migrant workers¹⁰⁰.

At the post-16 level, the MCAST has established a policy of having **at least one course in each of its institutes open to students without formal qualifications**, thus ensuring a second chance to become engaged in learning and training again. It has committed itself, in its founding regulation, to organise special programmes to assist any person to achieve the required basic education so that s/he may continue and conclude successfully a specific education and training level according to established standards. The University's Literacy Unit has been commissioned to provide basic skills so as to help the college cater for second-chance students.

Through the National Commission for Persons with Disability, Malta has also been active in **promoting access to employment for any disabled person**, attempting to bring about legislative reform to enhance equitable treatment in the labour market¹⁰¹. The Commission's proposals can be found in the document *Employment and Persons with Disability: National Policy*, published in 1995. Several of these proposals are directly relevant to VET provision and assistance provided to persons with disability in their transition from school to work. Others relate to the provision of suitable employment opportunities and sheltered workshops. These measures are guided by the principle that it is Malta's duty to create a non-restrictive environment conducive to the integration of every disabled person.

A number of **governmental and non-governmental organisations offer services to disabled persons**, both in the area of VET and in facilitating access to employment. Among these there are:

- the **Centre for the Blind**, offering vocational activities, such as cane work;
- a variety of **Adult Centres**, providing activities of a social, religious and educational nature, as well as "occupational work";
- the **Gozo Centre**, a joint venture between an NGO, government, and the church, providing training facilities in work-related activities to encourage independent living, the *Centru Hidma Socjali*, which offers opportunities to persons with physical disability to undertake work within the centre, thus introducing them to their first work experience and serving as training for prospective employment;
- the **Special Aid Services**, through which the Commission offers consultation, advice, and financial assistance to disabled persons, supporting them in their efforts to lead a more independent life and find appropriate employment;
- the **Physically Handicapped Rehabilitation Fund**, which provides training to disabled persons so that they may find employment with adequate conditions in the industrial sector, clerical work, and so on;
- the **Eden Foundation**, which provides a training programme for adults with developmental disabilities at the Eden Ability Centre; and
- **a special section operated by the ETC** that is responsible for the training of disabled. This section delivers training in empowerment and basic

¹⁰⁰ See chapter 18 of *Malta's Negotiating Position Papers* (Malta-EU Information Centre). The EU directive concerns, however, only children of EU workers, so that upon Malta's accession, EU residents in Malta are entitled to education on the same conditions as nationals – including tuition and maintenance grants, provided that the parents work in Malta and pay their due taxes.

¹⁰¹ Presently, the relevant legal framework consists of (a) the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act – Act No II of 1969, chapter 210 of the Laws of Malta; (b) the Conditions of Employment (Regulation) Act – Act No XI of 1952, chapter 315 of the Laws of Malta; (c) the Social Security Act – Act No X of 1987; (d) Act on Industrial Development – Act No XXI of 1988. The most recent framework is that provided by (e) the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (Cap. 413) of 2000. This Act implements Council Recommendation 86/379/EC on the employment of disabled people in the Community, Resolution of the Council and the representatives of the governments of the member states meeting within the Council of 20 December 1996 on equality for people with disabilities, as well as the Conclusions of the Council of 12 June 1989 on the employment of disabled people in the Community. The Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of physical or mental disability with regard to employment. The Act furthermore empowers the Commission for Persons with Disability to investigate all allegations of discrimination on the basis of disability.

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employment skills. In 2000, 59 persons received training, whereas another 17 were trained by the Eden Foundation on behalf of ETC and funded by the corporation. The ETC, together with the Commission, also tries to generate positive attitudes towards persons with disability in prospective employers. Of 119 persons with special needs trained by ETC, 43 were placed in jobs¹⁰².

One of the new policy directions in education that has evolved over the past decade is the **early identification of at-risk students**. At the primary level, this is being accomplished through a base-line literacy survey, with the first standardised tests in Maltese and English being developed by the Literacy Unit of the Faculty of Education. On the basis of the information obtained by the project, a number of specific programmes have been established in order to provide remedial support.

2.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM TO PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

With the exception of a few units offered at the Institute of Business and Commerce (e.g. "Small Business Set-up"), **entrepreneurial skills training does not yet form part of the curriculum**¹⁰³, but is taught through extra-curricular activities. The most important of the latter are two schemes at secondary and post-16 levels that encourage, and provide a degree of training to, young people to develop entrepreneurial skills.

These are **SCOOPS** (the Co-ops in Schools Project) and the **Young Enterprise Scheme (YES)**. SCOOPS (launched in 1995) sets out to provide secondary level students with an

opportunity to organise themselves into cooperative units. There they run and manage their own creative projects, and develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will help them to identify their occupational strengths, their potential contribution to the local labour market, and to create for themselves a viable self-employment option. Over 1,000 students have participated in this scheme so far.

The YES – first launched locally in 1988 – is now a regular feature of most sixth form (upper secondary) establishments, including vocational ones. The scheme helps around 30 teams of students (involving about 400 individuals annually) to build up a variety of business skills as they set up and run a live company – properly incorporated, manufacturing marketable products, and selling competitively in the Maltese (and occasionally overseas) market. In both cases, but especially in the latter scheme, employers are involved in giving advice, in preparing business kits, and in generally being available to guide teams towards achieving their goals.

At the CVET level, the **ETC organises small business management courses** – the Entrepreneurship Programme – aimed at assisting potential entrepreneurs to start their own business. It has also launched INT – *Ibda Negozju Tieghek* ("Start your own business"), a programme which provides training, financial assistance and mentoring to a client group that includes job seekers, university graduates and vocational training graduates. Some professional associations organise similar courses, but the Institute for the Promotion of Small Enterprise (IPSE) will potentially have the biggest impact in this area. Part of IPSE's brief is to encourage start-ups and the growth of micro-enterprises by helping to strengthen management capabilities,

¹⁰² See ETC Annual Report, 1999 - 2000, p. 18.

¹⁰³ The National Minimum Curriculum (NMC) places some emphasis on the need to prepare students with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the world of work. The NMC requires teachers to help students develop a critical understanding of the business world, of different forms of entrepreneurship (including cooperatives), of the changing work environment, of workers' and employers' organisations, of the European labour market, of workers' rights and responsibilities, of health and safety issues, and so on. The NMC document recommends that teaching about the world of work should be done in a project-based, experiential manner, with importance given to the development of specific skills such as the preparation of a curriculum vitae, self-presentation skills, skills in managing one's income, and so on (see pp. 59-61).

innovation and access to capital. It is presently developing the first Business Incubation Centre in Malta, designed to accelerate the growth and success of entrepreneurial start-ups.

2.5 CONTRIBUTION OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM TO PROMOTING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

The new NMC framework specifically promotes **gender equality, based on respect for gender difference**. It is based on the principle that boys and girls follow the same curriculum to expose all young people to the same educational experiences and ensure equal access to work opportunities. Students should learn

about the occupational implications of course choices, and how such choices tend to be influenced by prejudicial outlooks that young people absorb about gender from the home, the media, and society more generally. Teachers and counsellors are instructed to promote gender equality, given that their attitudes and language will strongly influence students' choices. Initial teacher training at the university features gender equality issues both as a distinct focus and a transversal theme cutting across different areas.

Despite enhanced awareness of gender issues in education, a number of **indicators suggest that there is still much to be achieved**. Trends in course choices can be observed already at the compulsory school level, with subject choices made at the end of year two indicating largely traditional outlooks (see table 23). These patterns prevail at post-16 and tertiary level.

While access is no longer an issue, representation on courses is: women outnumber men at university, but they tend to be **concentrated in courses linked to**

the caring professions – such as health care and teaching (see table 24).

In the VET sector, the divide is even more drastic: when women do choose to take up VET after compulsory schooling, it is in **strongly gender-typified courses** (see table 25).

The MCAST has attempted to market its institutes with an eye to encouraging equitable gender representation¹⁰⁴. A working group has been established to develop measures to consolidate the college's equal opportunities policy. The first intake into the different institutes reflects, however, the **same gender patterns that prevailed prior to the establishment of the MCAST** (see table 26). There are no formal instruments to evaluate the impact of measures undertaken to encourage gender balance in courses.

At the ETC, despite an increase in enrolment levels in apprenticeship schemes, the **number of females starting an apprenticeship decreased** between 1998 and 1999. An analysis of the type of courses undertaken by women reveals that they primarily attend training in areas traditionally associated with women (e.g. office-related profiles).

All staff involved in guidance and counselling follow pre-service and in-service courses which include **awareness raising with regard to gender issues**, and how these impact on the choices made by young people in opting for both educational and occupational pathways. Most guidance teachers would also have followed other courses dealing directly with gender equity. There is a growing local research base which facilitates the work of guidance teachers in understanding how gender dynamics in Malta tend to have an impact on directions and pathways adopted by young men and women.

They often experience their "choices" as "freely made", when in fact these are

¹⁰⁴ The brochures, for instance, carefully avoid gender stereotyping in the wording and illustrative material used. Women leaders in the business and entrepreneurial community were invited to address applicant students, in order to provide positive role models to those who might have been wary of taking up tracks perceived to be appropriate for men only. Plans are afoot to have a day-care centre attached to the MCAST.

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strongly determined by the environment, and by stereotypical expectations provided

during primary and secondary socialisation¹⁰⁵. There is however **no attempt to measure whether these efforts have had any significant impact on promoting equality of opportunity**.

Several bodies **promote equal opportunities in employment, including for women returners** (Commission for the Advancement of Women, the Department for Women in Society, and the Malta Association of Woman's Business). They mainly focus on facilitating the development of a legal and employment environment that addresses the concerns of women.

Chapter 3 provides further details regarding the enactment of flexible and family friendly employment legislation.

Furthermore, ETC has finalised the Gender Action Plan and will start implementation in

late 2002/early 2003. The Gender Action Plan includes measures such as the compilation of gender segregated data, proper guidance and counselling services for women returners, promoting the vocational education options for women, conducting gender audits, sensitising the social partners about gender issues, and sectoral studies. ETC will also be participating in a task force on the establishment of a National Childcare Framework.

An initiative for gender disaggregated statistical data to facilitate analysis and policy-making in such areas as education, employment, economic performance, health, etc. has triggered Commonwealth Secretariat assistance. Subsequently, the statistics divisions of government departments have become more aware of the rationale and utility of gender disaggregated data¹⁰⁶, and a number of key publications have already been produced and disseminated, showing clear gender trends in a variety of sectors in Malta¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁵ See M. Darmanin, "Gender, Identity and Vocational Guidance". In R. G. Sultana and J. M. Sammut (eds) *Careers Education and Guidance in Malta: Issues and Challenges*. Malta: PEG, pp. 195-224, (1997).

¹⁰⁶ See A. M. Abela *Gender Issues and Statistics: Proceedings of a Workshop organised by the Central Office of Statistics in collaboration with the Department for Women's Rights*. Malta: Department for Women's Rights, (1998).

¹⁰⁷ Among these one could refer to F. Camilleri, *Gender Trends in Malta: A Statistical Profile* (Commission for the Advancement of Women: Ministry for Social Development) and A.M. Abela (1998) *Women and Men in the Maltese Islands: Statistics from the Census of Population and Housing* (Department for Women's Rights: Ministry for Social Policy), (1996).

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3

3.1 THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The **Ministry for Social Policy (MSP)** is responsible for the development of employment policy in Malta. The portfolio of the ministry is huge and includes social security, family and social welfare, the disabled, care of the elderly and community services, housing, industrial relations and labour, occupational health and safety, employment and training, and women in society.

At present, **a major overhaul of labour legislation** is under way, which involves the enactment of new legislation relating to the conditions of employment and industrial relations, and the tuning of the existing social protection systems to complement active labour market policies. Radical changes of Act No XI (**Conditions of Employment Relation Act - CERA**), first established in 1952 and followed by

several amendments, the most recent in 1995 (Act No XXIV), and Act No XXX **Industrial Relations Act (IRA)** of 1976, already superseded by Act No XXIV of 1995 mentioned above, are discussed in a White Paper published in November 2001.

Currently the trade unions and the five major employers' organisations, i.e. the Federation of Industry, the Chamber of Commerce, the Malta Employers Association, the Association of General Retailers and Traders (GRTU), and the Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association, are conducting in-depth studies on the proposed amendments.

The draft bill and the draft legal notices that have already been approved by government will allow Malta:

- (a) to implement the body of EU law on labour legislation;

- (b) to sign and ratify the Revised European Social Charter; and
- (c) to ratify the following ILO Conventions:
 - 183 - Maternity Protection
 - 177 - Home Work
 - 173 - Protection of Workers' Claim (Employer's Insolvency)
 - 171 - Night Work
 - 158 - Termination of Employment
 - 156 - Workers with Family Responsibilities
 - 150 - Labour Administration

Social Security in Malta is regulated under the **Social Security Act 1987**, which consolidates the various social assistance and social security schemes, both contributory and non-contributory, including **unemployment benefits and social assistance**.

The **Department of Social Security** under the Ministry of Social Policy is responsible for the **passive measures** provided for the unemployed.

Unemployment benefits fall within the scope of contributory schemes. Eligibility depends upon payment of at least 50 monthly national insurance contributions by the potential beneficiary, and a minimum of 20 contributions in the two calendar years preceding the benefit year when the claim is made. Recipients are entitled to receive unemployment benefit for 156 days. Depending on the results of a means test, the recipient may be entitled to a **Special Unemployment Benefit**, being around 68% higher than ordinary unemployment benefit. Disbursements are higher for single parents or those who have to maintain non-employed spouses.

When recipients of unemployment benefit exhaust their 156 days' entitlement, they become entitled to **Unemployment Assistance**, which belongs to the non-contributory schemes. It is a means-tested benefit paid to the head of the household.

Disbursement of benefits requires the recipient to register for work once a week. The law allows for benefits to be withdrawn if beneficiaries unreasonably decline a job offer or training opportunity¹⁰⁸.

Benefit coverage of the registered unemployed currently stands just under 80%. There has been a progressive rise in expenditure on passive measures in the 1990s. Expenditure on unemployment benefits has grown at an average rate of 5.3% per annum.

In Malta, the contributions of employers and employees for social security correspond to 10% of the monthly salary. However, the funds generated through these contributions are not earmarked for employment policy purposes, but constitute part of the public revenue.

Disbursement of unemployment benefits and social security benefits are managed by the Department of Social Security. The necessary forms to be filled in have to be collected from the Employment and Training Corporation, where beneficiaries register as unemployed. Payments are obtained from the nearest Local District Office of the Department of Social Security on a weekly basis.

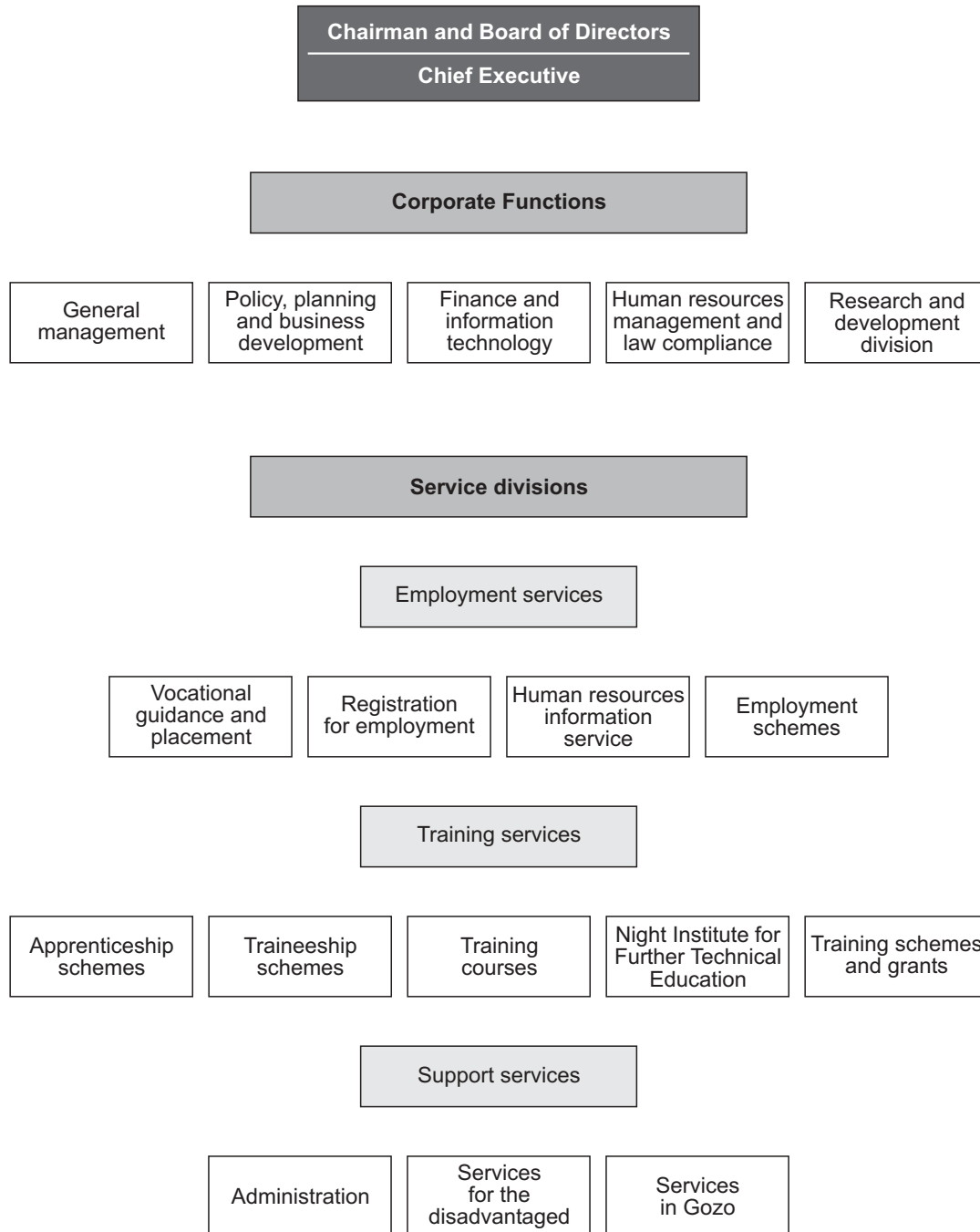
The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC)

The **ETC** was established in 1990 under the **Employment and Training Services Act** (Act No XXVIII). It was set up as a corporate body to provide and develop a **national public employment service**, actively assisting jobseekers in finding employment by mediating information on job vacancies and other services. The ETC is in charge of **implementing national employment policy**, focusing in particular on **active labour market measures**.

¹⁰⁸ Those registered unemployed who refuse an employment or training opportunity without a valid reason will be struck off of the unemployment register and lose entitlement to benefits.

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The Employment and Training Corporation



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Its mission statement is “to provide and ensure equitable access to training programmes and employment opportunities and to contribute towards the social and economic development of the community”¹⁰⁹.

Its mandate is:

- to provide **training courses promoting employability, meeting the local demand for labour**; and
- to monitor the **development of labour market trends** in Malta.

The key clients of the ETC are jobseekers, employers, employed wishing to upgrade their skills, and the government.

The ETC is governed by an independent **board of directors** composed in total of 12 representatives from ministries, NGOs and social partners who are nominated by the government and social partners. The board approves the **Corporation’s work programme** and ensures its conformity with the national employment policy drawn up by the government. It is also responsible for monitoring work programme implementation. The ETC reports on an annual basis to the Maltese parliament and is audited by the Court of Auditors.

The ETC is run by a **Chief Executive Officer together with senior management**. In addition to the Chief Executive’s Office, there are six Divisions (Employment Services, Training Services, Supported Employment and Administration, Research and Development, Finance and IT, Human Resources and Law). Altogether, the ETC employs approximately **150 staff**.

The ETC’s business plan

In line with the government’s EU policy, the ETC started to implement a **three-year business plan** in 2000, which was drawn up with the help of consultants from FAS in Ireland. The business plan takes into account the input received through intensive consultation within and outside the ETC and provides a sound framework

to operate on. It reflects the changing role of the ETC from brokering employment opportunities and providing training to **proactive services** to various clients and **preventive measures**.

It clearly expounds the European Employment Strategy based on the four pillars of employability, adaptability, entrepreneurship and equal opportunities. The plan also includes recommendations with regard to the development of **lifelong learning**. In 2001, most of the initiatives described in the business plan were already in place. The ETC has also been assigned the task to draw up a National Human Resources Development Policy.

The role and involvement of the social partners and other stakeholders

As in the boards of other institutions (MCAST, ITS, MPVQAC), representatives on the ETC’s board of directors are appointed **in their personal capacity** and therefore do not officially represent the institutions they are attached to. There are already long-standing relationships among the members of the board and other ETC stakeholders through their cooperation in various contexts, such as common membership in different boards or networking activities. However, the **informal character** of these connections is a **limiting factor** concerning employment policy development and prevents a more structured use of the potential available, even though this kind of networking may occasionally produce very positive results.

The following paragraphs give a brief overview of the main characteristics of primary stakeholders, which maintain specific relationships to the ETC:

- **The Malta Chamber of Commerce (MCC)** operates like a traditional “gentlemen’s club” with a membership of 1,100 representatives, mainly individual businessmen and manufacturers from the commercial sector. In addition to its lobbying activities and general services for members, MCC provides business education for its members and their

¹⁰⁹ Employment and Training Corporation, Business Plan: October 2000 - September 2003

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staff. These programmes are not linked to similar training activities carried out by the ETC, and potential synergies are not being exploited, due to the absence of formal links that would enable the ETC to increase awareness of the MCC and its members on the EU Employment Strategy and its implications.

- **The Federation of Industry (FOI)** is a breakaway group from the MCC with 300 members, two-thirds of which are from the manufacturing sector (mostly foreign), and one-third from the service sector (mainly indigenous). FOI considers itself to be a lobby group for the industrial sector, which acts at government level to formulate opinions in relation to industrial policy issues.
- **The Malta Tourism Authority** is responsible for promoting Tourism in Malta. It is funded by the Ministry of Tourism and supervised by an independent board of directors. Tourism in Malta's economy represents 25% of GDP, and the tourism sector employs around 10% of the working population. The tourism sector is subject to seasonal variations. In order to avoid an increase of the number of unemployed in the low season, continuing training pilot projects for tourism sector workforce are implemented on a regular basis in association with ETC support. The **5th ETC Clients Forum in 2001** was dedicated to the employment and training needs of the tourism industry.

Preparation for the European Social Fund (ESF)

The ETC is represented on the **ESF Preparatory Committee** that was set up in early 2001 and meets approximately once every two months. The committee is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social Policy and has also representatives of the SDO (the Staff Development Organisation) and the ministry.

The objectives of the committee are:

- to design an appropriate administrative framework for the ESF;
- to ensure capacity-building related to ESF programming and implementation; and
- to raise awareness among government, social partners and civil society of the opportunities and procedures pertaining to ESF support.

3.2 RESOURCE ALLOCATION TO THE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Funding

The ETC receives its **entire budget from the Ministry of Social Policy (MSP)** to cover its running expenses and to develop and implement active employment policy measures. The annual budget is prepared by the ETC and needs to be approved by the board of directors before being submitted to the MSP. The MSP in turn forwards its own budget proposal (ETC budget included) to the Ministry of Finance, which allocates funds to the ministries and departments from the National Consolidated Fund, i.e. the total of public revenues. This is the case also for the MSP budget, including the funds for social security and employment. The formerly separate fund for social welfare has recently been incorporated into the National Consolidated Fund in which all state revenue is concentrated. In 2001, the MSP received MTL 274 million (around € 685 million), which was increased to MTL 278 million (around € 695 million) for 2002.

The unemployment rate (registered unemployed) went up from 4.1% in 1994, i.e. 5,585 people (figures for 1992 not available) to 5.3% or 7,695 people in 1999, but decreased again in 2000 (4.5% or 6,583 people).¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ *Joint Assessment of the Employment Policy Priorities of Malta*, table 14 and *Background Study on employment and labour market in Malta*, Employment and Training Corporation, 2001.

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Development of unemployment rates¹¹¹

Year	Male %	Female %	Total %
1994	4.78	2.20	4.1
1995	4.28	2.20	3.7
1996	4.95	2.78	4.4
1997	5.75	2.80	5.0
1998	6.11	2.51	5.1
1999	6.28	2.63	5.3
2000	5.35	2.16	4.5

Since 1992, **expenditure on passive measures** has more than doubled, rising from 0.36% of GDP in 1992 to 0.56% in 1999¹¹². By 1999, the ratio of active to passive measures had decreased by half. Since then, the ratio of active to passive measures has improved which is illustrated by the fact that the ETC budget has doubled from MTL 1.2 million (around € 3 million) in 1998 to MTL 2.4 million (around € 6 million) in 2001.

In parallel, expenditure on active measures decreased from 0.11% of GDP in 1992 to 0.08% of GDP in 1999, which in absolute figures represents MTL 1.2 million (around € 3 million)¹¹³.

Development of expenditure on passive and active employment policy measures¹¹⁴

Year	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Passive measures								
% of GDP	0.36	0.45	0.45	0.36	0.42	0.50	0.53	0.56
Active measures								
% of GDP	0.11	0.11	0.08	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.08

Since the ETC was established in 1990, three-quarters of its budget have consistently been utilised for training purposes and employment measures, with the remainder spent on administration.

Major financial items of the year 2000/01

Expenditure	MTL	M EURO	2000/01 (%)	1999/2000 (%)
Staff costs	909,000	2.272	51	57
Operational programmes	458,000	1.145	25	17
Administration	341,000	0.853	19	20
Capital	67,000	0.168	4	5
Marketing	19,000	0.048	1	1
TOTAL	1,794,000	4.486	100	100

Source: ETC Finance and IT Department, October 2001

¹¹¹ Joint Assessment of the Employment Policy Priorities of Malta, table 14.

¹¹² Ibid., table 24.

¹¹³ Joint Assessment of the Employment Policy Priorities of Malta, table 23.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., table 23.

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In 2000/01, staff costs constituted 51% of the ETC's budget, compared to 57% in the year before. In parallel, the number of registered unemployed went down from 7,695 in 1999 to 6,583 in 2000.

The organisational structure of the ETC

As mentioned above, the ETC currently employs just under 150 staff. During the initial contact visit at the ETC, jobseekers are interviewed by an employee for around 30 minutes, mainly to fill in the necessary forms and to establish an individual job plan.

It provides services through its **central office** at Hal-Far and a network of **four regional job centres** that cater for the different geographical areas. These are in Valletta, Cospicua, Mosta and on the island of Gozo.

Jobseekers can access the ETC on line to fill in their personal data and register their interest in a particular employment area.

The **Valetta job centre** is the most important one on the islands. It is open six days a week and is managed by three counsellors. Centrally situated in Valletta, it is well equipped and jobs are advertised on the ETC website. At present, there **is no direct self-service based ICT provision** available to either jobseekers or employers¹¹⁵. User friendliness is further limited by the fact that there are no specific facilities that would support disabled to access the centre.

It gathers employer requests for labour and job applications from job seekers. Its main activity consists of advertising the available positions and guiding clients in their job search. Counsellors play an advisory role and inform their clientele about possible training opportunities. The job centres in Cospicua and Mosta have one counsellor, whilst the Gozo centre has one employment adviser for the whole of Gozo.

The current **ratio of employment advisers to clients is about 1:550**, which is not sufficient to provide detailed guidance and advice to individual clients. The ETC is aware of the need to increase the number of advisers to enable them to devote more time to the needs of individual job seekers. In order to improve the situation, the organisation of a vocational guidance diploma course at the university is planned in the near future. Staff from the ETC will be eligible to attend.

The ETC has a **Research and Development Division** which is responsible for (a) initiating and managing a labour market research programme of both strategic and operational issues; (b) maintaining labour market statistics; (c) promoting equal opportunity in the labour market; and (d) reporting in relation to EU issues. Since April 2002, the division is also responsible for the twice-yearly employment barometer which aims to capture the skill and labour market shortages experienced by employers. The ETC maintains a **database of people in gainful employment**. Employers are obliged to report any recruitment or termination of contract to the ETC. Every six months, the ETC researchers compile a report on labour force trends, which is submitted to the Ministry for Employment. The data is made available also to other governmental bodies, economists and statisticians and constitutes a **major tool for economic and social policy development**.

There are collaborative relationships with the Ministry for Social Policy, the Ministry of Economic Services, the National Statistics Office and the Central Bank. The Corporation's databases on the gainfully occupied population, part-time employment and the unemployed, as well as its surveys on the employment status of graduates and women, shed some light on the skills profile of the labour force, and how these match the national employment plan.

¹¹⁵ ETC has an extensive website which facilitates job matching, the application for courses, the exchange of information with employers and the provision of information about ETC services. Efforts are being made to develop this website further to make it more interactive.

The government's commissioning of the **ETC to develop a National Human Resource Development Plan** is supposed to further strengthen the link between human resource development and Malta's economic vision and objectives. With a view to improving the information base on labour market developments, the ETC is setting up a labour market forecasting function, which should be operational in March 2002. At present, a questionnaire survey on skill requirements is being carried out among employers. The first preliminary results are expected to be available in May. However, it is not very likely that any reliable forecasts can be made before a structured rapport with employers is established. It will take the unit two to four years to achieve this objective.

The ETC has set up a **Labour Market Policy Committee** with the task of analysing labour market issues, establishing and monitoring labour market indicators, and creating and managing a national network of employment focal points.

3.3 COVERAGE OF PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

From 1995 to 2000, 28,580 vacancies were registered at the Employment and Training Corporation offices. During the financial year 1999/2000, 6,591 vacancies were registered (ETC data). However this data does not reflect either the reality or the totality and types of vacancies generated in the Maltese economy. **While public sector organisations are obliged by law to inform the ETC of vacancies, this does not apply for the private sector.**

Applications for employment have increased steadily over the past six years from 38,593 in 1995/96; 56,278 in 1996/97; 61,074 in 1997/98; 77,777 in 1998/99 to 119,031 in 1999/2000. However, these data could be misleading because **one person can make more than one application when looking for a job, hence there could be a lot of multiple counting.**

An ETC report (*Labour Market Trends within the Maltese Islands*, March 1999, by

E. Camilleri, ETC), estimates a **market share of 16-21%** of all available vacancies within the islands - assuming that each registration at ETC corresponded to a vacancy. However, the data provided may not necessarily be representative of the overall vacancy data in Malta, as the private sector prefers to advertise job vacancies in the press, in particular for better paid jobs. This may result in an imbalance in ETC vacancy data through exclusion of higher level jobs.

Another problem with the relevance of data on jobseekers is caused by the fact that married women are not entitled to receive social benefits after the 156 days' entitlement to unemployment benefits (which are based on their own insurance contributions), if the husband is gainfully employed. This system leaves women without an incentive to register for work.

Local employment offices do not keep separate records, and therefore detailed data on regional performance or coverage are not available.

The above indicates a need to overhaul the current information system in order to understand better the unemployment situation.

3.4 RANGE AND QUALITY OF SERVICES

The services

The services currently provided by the Employment and Training Corporation in addition to matching job seekers with job vacancies include:

- registration of the unemployed;
- career guidance and counselling for job seekers;
- providing training services to job seekers;
- providing training to people in employment who want to improve their knowledge and skills;
- providing personalised assistance to people from disadvantaged groups;
- ensuring compliance with legal provisions concerning employment;

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- managing the Night Institute for Further Technical Education;
- managing apprenticeship schemes;
- administering training grants under the Industrial Relations Act;
- managing the occupational certification system; and
- maintaining labour market information.

Compared to job vacancies available, the situation does not look too bad, but as mentioned above, the figures do not give a full picture of the real situation, as many unemployed, in particular women, do not seem to register as they would not be entitled to payment of benefits.

General information

The ETC serves as a one-stop information shop. On registering for employment, the ETC offers this service to all clients (people registering for the first time, young job seekers, employers). Information includes channelling clients to the specific departments in charge, which the registrants are then required to visit, such as the Department of Social Security (responsible for unemployment and/or social benefits) and others.

Placement services

The following table gives an overview of the **development of placements** in the public and private sector.

Training schemes

The ETC offers several **training schemes for specific focus groups**, school-leavers, women returners, 40+, the disabled, and others. Chapter 2 provides more information on the apprenticeship schemes. A wide scope of programmes for various target groups are implemented by the ETC.

In 1998/99, 1,552 registered unemployed received training as part of active employment policy measures, representing 47% of the total number of training participants, but only 19.3% of the total unemployed. The 16-25 age group represented a share of 39%¹¹⁶.

Employment services, 1995/6 to 1999/2000¹¹⁷

				1998/99	1999/2000
Placement services					
Job vacancies	6,330	5,277	4,687	4,711	6,591
Placements	3,317	2,538	1,878	2,305	2,564
Placements to vacancies ratio	52%	48%	40%	49%	39%
Placements:					
● Private	2,811	2,212	1,511	1,697	1,814
● Public	506	326	367	608	750

Number of registered unemployed¹¹⁸

Year	Male	Female	Total
1995	4,433	814	5,247
1996	5,180	1,065	6,245
1997	6,047	1,102	7,149
1998	6,430	1,007	7,437
1999	6,611	1,084	7,695

¹¹⁶ E. Zammit, F. Borg, S. Vella: *Background Study on Employment and Labour Market in Malta*, ETC, 2001.

¹¹⁷ ETC Annual Report 1999 - 2000.

¹¹⁸ *Joint Assessment of the Employment Policy Priorities of Malta*, table 14.

In the operational year that ended in September 2001, the ETC held 397 training courses in total, the duration of which varied from one day to a year. The courses were aimed at the **registered unemployed and those who want to upgrade their skills**, and were followed by 4,564 people - 3,016 males and 1,548 females. The courses were divided into “**non-trade**”, covering various IT-type courses, middle management courses, courses in the caring professions, and entrepreneurship courses, and “**trade**” **courses**, such as electricity and plumbing, woodwork, welding etc.

Many of the courses in the “non-trade” sector are new and have been designed to respond to the high demand for IT literate personnel in the labour force. Courses to enhance entrepreneurship are a response to the basic principles of the EU Employment Strategy. Some of the “trade” courses have traditionally been part of the ETC’s course programme. Others such as health and safety courses reflect requirements arising from the new law on health and safety that has just been passed in order to comply with the body of EU law.

In terms of participation, the course “IT for You” had the largest number of female trainees and a high proportion of older workers (40 plus). Young people (16-24) predominated in the “core skills” programme. Overall, in both “non-trade” and “trade” courses the highest number of trainees (1,700) were young people.

The ETC is in the process of setting up a **Training Programmes Working Group** involving employers to review the programmes already offered by the ETC and to devise additional ones. It would be modelled on the NIFTE (Night Institute for Further Technical Training) Working Group, which focuses on technical education and embraces the ETC, the Federation of Industry and the Education Division. The new working group would have a wider role covering the whole spectrum of ETC training courses, both current and future provision.

Traineeships

The **traineeship schemes** offered by the ETC are similar to the **apprenticeship scheme** (see chapter 2), but are more flexible and can be adapted to satisfy a variety of individual and labour market needs.

According to recent information, the **apprenticeship schemes** cover a total of 1,719 apprentices, 760 apprentices under the extended skills training scheme (ESTS) and 959 in the technician apprenticeship scheme (TAS).

In the operational year 2000, about 470 trainees were assisted to find training placements in enterprises, which were supposed to provide adequate practical training related to the trainees’ occupational specialisation. It is intended to organise again a similar number of trainee placements as in the previous year.

In order to **identify new areas of competence**, a **Steering Committee on Training** will be set up. The terms of reference of this committee are currently being drawn up. The committee will be composed of representatives of the social partners, the ETC and employers. The committee will become operational in early May 2002, and meet every two months.

Traineeships in computer programming

They form part of the ETC’s National IT Plan. Their objective is to **provide high level IT skills to job seekers** interested in taking up a career in Information Technology. **It aims at tackling skill shortages** in this area. The ten-month programme is organised in training components on the job (three days per week) and off the job (two days per week), with theoretical and practical tuition delivered by a recognised training service provider.

Applicants with the necessary qualifications, who have identified an employer to provide the required on-the-job training, are accepted on filing an application with the ETC. Trainees follow eight modules: four mandatory core units

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and four optional units (“electives”) chosen by the trainees in consultation with the employer. At the end of the programme, the trainees are required to submit a project.

People following a traineeship are entitled to the national statutory minimum wage and their employment is regularised by the Conditions of Employment (Regulation) Act throughout the traineeship. The ETC is committed to pay employers a **training subsidy equivalent to 25% of the weekly national statutory minimum wage** for the ten months of the training. The subsidy may be increased to 50% of the weekly national statutory minimum wage for the disabled and over 40's.

At present, 54 trainees (52 are in the 16-24 age bracket, nine are women) participate in the traineeship, another 40 joined at diploma and advanced diploma level in January 2002.

The scope of courses were extended by the **National Computing Certificate Advanced Diploma**, started in April 2002. IT courses at various levels for 12 hours a day, six days a week will also be provided at the first ETC Community Centre which is expected to start functioning in April this year.

The ETC will also start holding on-line **European computer driving licence (ECDL) courses** leading to the recognised ECDL qualification. This scheme is designed specifically for those who wish to obtain **an international qualification** in basic computing to enhance their current job performance, develop their IT skills and ameliorate their career prospects.

Employment Training Placement Scheme

This scheme aims at **assisting employers to bridge training gaps of unemployed persons during a probationary period**. It also provides the opportunity for the unemployed to upgrade their skills or acquire new skills that are relevant to the present labour market. The concept of the scheme is to **provide hands-on training to obtain the required skills** while also acting as a buffer for the employees to

reintegrate themselves into the active workforce.

ETC subsidises 50% of the minimum wage (for a maximum period of 12 months) paid by private employers who recruit unemployed people requiring training. The scheme is eligible for long-term unemployed who have been registering for work more than one year, and also for those aged 40 and above. The maximum duration of the measure is 52 weeks.

The programme is developed by a training executive and a placement officer of the ETC in cooperation with the employer. The programme is **designed in line with the work the client will be performing** within a week of the approval of the application. The client is employed full time by the employer under the Conditions of Employment Relation Act (CERA). The training executive is responsible for monitoring the beneficiary during the training period. From October 2000 to September 2001, 120 persons participated in the programme, of which only eight failed and were re-entered into the unemployment register.

Entrepreneurship programme

This is a one-stop programme aimed at **promoting enterprise knowledge and culture** among clients interested in self-employment. Training includes components related to establishing and managing small enterprises (and not exclusively vocational skills) and new technologies as well as confidence-building and business skills. Training also covers legal and administrative aspects, availability of subsidies and other incentives, social security provisions, preparation of business plans and other important elements for the creation of small enterprises.

Main target groups are **unemployed people aged 40 and over** and **women seeking to re-enter the labour market**, but also university graduates and graduate apprentices. The ETC assesses the skills of applicants and provides individual guidance. Each client group will be assisted through a specific tailor-made programme (see Annex 4).

Cooperation with NGOs

Early in 2001, the ETC signed a **cooperation agreement** with the Arka Foundation in Gozo to ensure employment opportunities to persons with special needs. **“Employment for All” is a pilot project** that provides personalised training services to ETC clients with special needs. The project contains the following components:

A 150 hour (12 week) **transition training programme** aimed at providing clients with the **basic skills necessary to build up self-confidence** to prepare them for subsequent employment training.

A 400 hour (26 week) **work exposure programme** training clients on the job, taking into account the levels of aptitude of the client. This programme involves special assistance by employers and project workers.

A **job placement support programme** to place clients in gainful employment and to provide tailor-made support services. This scheme follows similar ones agreed with non-government organisations, Caritas, Richmond Foundation (for the mentally challenged) and Paulo Freire Institute. Discussions on the renewal of a comparable agreement with the Eden Foundation are under way.

Community work scheme

The objective of this scheme is to provide the **long-term unemployed, aged 40 and over**, with employment and training opportunities to enhance employability. In parallel, this scheme also helps NGOs and local councils implementing community projects to employ registered unemployed. (see Annex 2).

Other initiatives

Bridging the gap is a scheme designed to facilitate **transition from unemployment back into the labour market**. It allows employers to prepare trainees for specific skills and, in parallel, to assess them during the training period while giving the

trainee the chance to apply their skills in practice (see Annex 3).

The Training and Employment Exposure Scheme (TEES) under which people over 40 undertake employment and tailored training for up to one year.

Future plans of ETC include:

- a new initiative for the **adult unemployed** consisting of training in confidence building, job motivation and trade training components;
- a basic **employment passport initiative** (for about 250 young people), providing basic employment skills to young school-leavers with little or no skills/qualifications, academic or otherwise; and
- an extension of the applied **literacy and numeracy skills for employment programme implemented** at various training sites for about 300 trainees.

The ETC will be seeking the collaboration of public entities to hold trade courses to upgrade the skills of people seeking employment.

The ETC does not offer other services such as labour inspection or social security. The Ministry of Social Policy has been responsible for the new legislation that was passed in Act XXVII of 2000, setting up the Occupational Health and Safety Authority and supplemented by the publication of new regulations covering a number of specific areas including minimum health and safety standards. Assistance to develop the Authority has been provided through EU funding (see Annex 5). The Authority will continue to operate independently from ETC.

Monitoring mechanisms

At present, ETC activities are not assessed formally. The Ministry of Social Policy relies on the capacity of the ETC **board of directors** to monitor the implementation of the ETC business plan. In the past independent consultants were commissioned by the Ministry of Social Policy to analyse ETC performance.

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The **National Employment Authority**, established on the basis of the **Employment and Training Services Act 1990** (Act No XXVIII) monitors, investigates and adjudicates complaints on matters related to employment and training provided by the ETC. The National Employment Authority also acts as an appellate tribunal regarding decisions of the ETC in connection with registration for employment.

3.5 ROLE OF PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

At present, there are **33 registered private employment agencies** in Malta, of which only three are considered important. For all of them, employment services are not their main business. They are mainly accountants, travel agents or lawyers. The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations has been systematically recording the number of job advertisements issued by the private agencies that have been published in all the local newspapers since 1 January 1995. These advertisements are frequently linked with announcements related to other subjects, and it is not always possible to separate the data.

The Employment and Training Services Act mentioned above, establishing the Employment Training Corporation and regulating employment and training services also covers “matters connected therewith or ancillary thereto”. Part 5 of this Act dealing with private employment agencies was however not enforced until the actual Legal Notice No 16,164 came into force on 1 January 1995.

Applicants interested in setting up a private employment agency have to apply to the department of Industrial and Employment Relations to obtain a licence. They need to provide evidence of six years experience in human resource management, or a related university degree and pay a fee of MTL 150 (around € 375) on an annual basis.

The law stipulates that no fees are to be charged to job applicants for employment brokerage and no arrangement may be made for deducting any fees from related earnings. An amendment in 1997 states

that it shall not be lawful for any employment agency “to seek to provide employment in Malta for expatriates, unless such employment is authorised in accordance with the provisions of the Immigration Act”. Such an amendment would now have to be waived in view of the government’s EU policy.

Private employment agencies have to abide by special conditions issued by the department when it comes to placing advertisements in newspapers, interviewing, selecting and placing applicants for employment. They also have to ensure that the conditions of employment offered are not less favourable than the conditions prescribed in terms of the Conditions of Employment Regulation Act (Cap. 135) or any Wages Council Orders or National Standard Orders.

The private sector is not obliged by law to inform the ETC of job vacancies and neither are the private agencies obliged to inform ETC if an applicant approaches them for a job. However, the agencies are bound by law to inform the ETC on placements. From 1 January 1995 to 30 November 2001, the ETC received information from 25 agencies on a total of 419 full-time and three part-time placements, while the remaining eight agencies (including some of the biggest ones) did not submit any information. The breakdown of these placements by agencies does not correspond with the number of job advertisements published in the newspapers, as some agencies have a high number of advertisements but do not register any placements.

The private employment services (PRES) tends to **attract more qualified and more highly skilled applicants** than the ETC, and the private sector seems to approach private agencies more readily than the ETC for better paid assignments. The services of the PRES appear to be more sought after **by employed applicants who are looking for high salary jobs** and who have no problems with mobility in the labour market.

There is no exchange of information on job seekers between the agencies and the ETC. It is recognised that it is in the

agencies' interest to make immediate placements through the use of their own databases and networks as well as through their approach to advertising job vacancies in the press.

Likewise, **cooperation between the public employment services (PES) and the PRES** is non-existent. The mission of the PRES is to offer a **business service, mainly to the private sector**, which is very different from the mission and approach of the PES.

3.6 REFORMS OF THE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

During recent years, there have been major changes in the PES, the most noteworthy being the aforementioned business plan which radically changed the role of the ETC from that of assisting in the provision of employment and training to that of carrying out measures to prevent unemployment and offer proactive measures to various clients. Many of the initiatives outlined in the business plan are already implemented.

The ETC intends to decentralise the whole spectrum of services to its jobcentres at four key localities. To this effect, it has embarked on reinforcing its use of information technology. The launch of recent initiatives, including the **Gender Focal Point, the Training Advisory Committee, the Skills Forecasting and the Research Units**, reflects the way the ETC perceives its new proactive role. It also plans to place a **Labour Observatory** in the ETC infrastructure.

For the immediate future, the ETC has the task of drawing up a **National Employment Action Plan**, which will be based on the same guidelines as those of EU member states. It has also been given the task to develop a **Human Resource Development Plan for the Maltese Islands** and will soon be in a position to present the final document to the

government for consideration. This document will describe the current situation regarding human resources development in the Maltese islands and present a plan of action for the future that will include provision of more vocational training opportunities, vocational guidance and employment services, and will promote equality at work. The ETC will also play a central role in monitoring progress in the implementation of the JAP priorities.

3.7 SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTING THE EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

The PES is fully aware of the measures required to meet the priorities set by the European Employment Strategy, and is embarking in full swing with relevant activities and services in order to change the employment scenario of the Maltese Islands. It is difficult at this transition stage towards pre-accession, where everything is in a state of flux, to measure in quantitative terms the progress achieved by the ETC.

To meet the challenge, the ETC is putting emphasis on **improving existing staff profiles** through enhanced provision of staff training and regular staff seminars. Nearly one-third of the ETC staff hold qualifications at tertiary level and 14 others are pursuing further academic studies.

Recruitment procedures are rigorous in a sense that high-level qualifications are being sought of new professional and management staff.

Under the present circumstances, the PES bears the sole responsibility for implementing the Maltese government/EU employment policies, and although its budget has been doubled in recent years there is still a need for more resources, human, physical and financial to succeed in meeting the agreed goals.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4

Although there is **consensus across political parties, educational authorities, employers and other stakeholders on the importance of vocational education and training (VET)** in a lifelong learning perspective for social and economic development, a formal policy framework outlining the key objectives with regard to future development has not been elaborated yet.

- Compared to other future member states, **progress has been slow in developing a comprehensive legal framework.** Nevertheless, the Maltese education and training system has evolved through reforms initiated several years ago with the aim of gradually raising educational attainment levels and adapting the system to the requirements of the labour market, taking into consideration policy developments at EU level.
- As the JAP recognised, one of the main means of increasing productivity is by increasing the supply of skills at the professional and skilled worker levels of the labour force. This is currently being tackled through the **expansion of university education** and through the **rationalisation of VET.** Here the establishment of MCAST ensures a more coherent pattern of provision for those following the vocational route. MCAST is also seeking to improve the quality of vocational education, not least through the development of curricula that reflect the needs of industry but are not purely skills based. However, as MCAST has only just been established it is too early to evaluate this development. Moreover, not all vocational training has been placed within the MCAST umbrella as the Institute of Tourism Studies remains outside and there are still no linkages between the apprenticeship schemes.

- One of the most difficult areas facing the government in the fields of initial and continuing vocational education is that of **securing more input and commitment from employers**. This is primarily because of the lack of large employers to take a lead and the **absence of any formal mechanism for involving the social partners**. Thus, while the government has taken a number of initiatives, primarily through the ETC, the dominance of micro-enterprises means that the response from the private sector (with some important exceptions) remains relatively ineffective. Many young people are still entering low-skilled jobs which require little or no training.
- The attempt to make the system responsive to the needs of the labour market and individuals is underpinned by the establishment of the Malta Professional Vocational Qualifications Award Council responsible for the **introduction of a transparent and comprehensive national system of competence based qualifications**. This process, when completed, should encourage upskilling and also **mobility of labour by enhancing employability**.
- Responsiveness to the needs of the labour market also requires **more and better quality labour market information**. Here the ETC has been active in trying to improve its information through the activities of the Labour Market Research section and setting up of the Labour Market Forecasting Function and a Labour Market Policy Committee. However, the latter two bodies are still in their infancy and large gaps remain. For example, in the field of CVET, the recent survey was a step in the right direction but there are no mechanisms for ensuring that the information derived from it is fed into the broader policy discussions or the formulation of the wider lifelong learning policy.
- The **absence of any effective evaluation and monitoring of programmes** across the range of IVET and CVET remains a major weakness in the system. This will become more evident as the attempts to formulate a more coherent policy on LLL get underway.
- In the field of LLL, there is a **move to make the education system more learner centred**, while the **use of modular curricula by MCAST and ITS** ensures a more responsive system of initial and continuing vocational education, as does the proposal to use schools as learning centres. However, these are first steps, but a more overarching policy is required which links the system of initial and continuing education and training to a broader system of community based education of the type being developed by many Scandinavian countries.
- **The education and training system is responding to the needs of at-risk groups** through a series of new initiatives aimed at integrating them into the mainstream education system as well as developing targeted facilities for the blind, physically handicapped and other groups.
- The contribution to **entrepreneurship** has remained outside the mainstream education system with reliance on the use of special programmes such as the Young Enterprise Scheme.
- The **promotion of equal opportunities** is especially important given the low level of participation by females in the labour force. This is being tackled though the **New Minimum Curriculum**. However, education and training institutions face a particularly difficult problem here given the gender stereotyping in the labour market, and progress requires monitoring.
- At this stage in the development of the new approach adopted by the government it is **too early to make any firm evaluation of its effectiveness**. However, there are two **further areas where progress could be made**. The first is the need for the introduction of systems for **monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of programmes** and changes across initial and continuing education and training. The second is the need to **introduce mechanisms which can link the emergent body of information on VET and the labour market to the**

process of policy-making at the national level, in order to make the system as a whole more responsive to changes in the labour market¹¹⁹.

- With regard to employment policy, there has been **substantial progress made in moving the ETC away from a focus on reactive to proactive approaches**, including a **wider scope of active employment policy measures**. New programmes have been introduced to reskill groups at risk and to address areas of skills shortages. The system of guidance is being modernised as new skills are being delivered to the guidance counsellors to enable them to provide more personalised advice. All these measures should help increase employability.
- However, many of these new **initiatives and programmes have not been sufficiently coordinated**, and **systematic social partner involvement is lacking**. This creates a need for the ETC to consolidate and bring together into one coherent framework the new active employment measures and to avoid overlap with the new activities being undertaken by MCAST. In particular, there is a need to review the adequacy of the current measures designed to improve female participation rates and to continue to customise programmes to individual needs.
- At the institutional level, there remain **problems with relying on informal relationships with employers to provide private and public sector input into the policy-making process**. Until 2002, there were no formal mechanisms to bring the employers' perspective into the formulation of labour market policy or to inform employers of the policy directions and initiatives being pursued by the government through the ETC. The establishment of the Labour Market Policy Committee in early 2002, with the participation of social partners

representatives and the role to address employment policies **is already generating more structured involvement from social partners** and hence should improve the adaptability of the system. In pursuit of this, there is a need for a comprehensive strategy to enable the ETC to work more effectively with government departments, stakeholders and social partners. Such a strategy would allow the ETC to draw on outside resources that can feed into its efforts.

- Finally, at the level of policy implementation, there remains the **problem of institutional capacity**. The ETC has multiple functions that include helping formulate policy, providing appropriate labour market information and intelligence as well as delivering government programmes. In spite of the recent increase in resources, it still has a limited capacity to monitor what is underway in the private sector and does not yet have the capacity to establish and monitor the effectiveness of its own provision. These capacity problems are exacerbated by the small size of the country, the lack of possible economies of scale and the fact that senior staff have to be skilled in a wide range of specialisms.
- With reference to the **Lisbon conclusions**, some of the targets are already reflected in current policies (to increase investment in human resources development, to raise the numbers of students continuing their studies at upper secondary and tertiary level, to improve access to the Internet and to develop new basic skills). However, lifelong learning still needs to be tackled in a more strategic way. This requires enhanced cooperation at ministerial and institutional level, the development of a structured social dialogue, involving trade unions, and counteracting early school-leaving to raise the skills levels of the workforce.

¹¹⁹ These mechanisms have been developed in some of the Asian Tiger economies as a means of speeding up the responsiveness of the education and training systems to the needs of the labour, thereby facilitating more rapid economic growth, see D. Ashton, F. Green, J. Sung and D. James (2002) 'The Evolution of Education and Training Strategies in Singapore, Taiwan and S. Korea: a developmental model of skill formation,' *Journal of Education and Work*, 15 (1) pp. 5-30 and D. Ashton, F. Green, D. James and J. Sung, *Education and Training for Development in East Asia*, London, Routledge.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

Community Work Scheme

Participants are selected according to their registration priority. A registrant remains on a project for not more than 52 weeks. The organisation provides to each employed participant 32 hours of work, 4 working days per week. The ETC pays a subsidy of MTL 25 (around € 62) while the sponsoring organisation is expected to supplement the pay up to the minimum wage. Both the management company, Outlook Co-op, and the employees pay their part of the National Insurance contribution. Outlook Co-op is responsible for the employment and discipline of participants and is expected to monitor participants working on a project and draw up periodic evaluation reports. The scheme also has a training programme that includes IT orientation, introduction to entrepreneurship, establishing cooperatives.

ANNEX 2

Bridging the gap

The programme provides on-the-job training opportunities that may vary from a few weeks to a maximum of 52 weeks. This scheme enables the trainee to achieve the skills required for a particular job, at the same time improving employment prospects. After successful completion of the programme, the trainee is considered an unemployed registrant without the obligation to turn up at the registration office for his/her weekly signing-up. The ETC pays the trainee a weekly allowance of MTL 30 (around € 75) instead of social security benefits and monitors the scheme. This programme is targeted at vulnerable groups.

ANNEX 3

Entrepreneurship programme

Participants are selected based on an interview. Unemployed people are usually given preference, but those who are already employed are not excluded. The programme is made up of three phases. A pre-start-up phase of one month is followed by a start-up phase of three months, during which a business plan has to be prepared. At the end of this part, the business plans are assessed for feasibility. Funding will be available to those applicants whose business plan is found acceptable and they will be recommended to move to the third phase (after start-up).

Eligibility depends upon trainees having obtained the necessary registration and licensing for their business proposals. Those who are registered unemployed will either receive an enterprise grant of MTL 1,000 (around € 2,500) or an enterprise allowance of MTL 40 (around € 100) per week for six months. Participants who are already employed will receive either a lump sum of MTL 500 (around € 1,250) or an enterprise allowance of MTL 20 (around € 50) per week for six months. When applicants are on training during the first two phases of the entrepreneurship programme, they will not receive financial support, but those who are registered unemployed and eligible to social benefits will not forfeit these benefits.

Mentors offer voluntary one-to-one business counselling, sharing of experience, skill transfer, hands-on training and networking. They act as coaches, counsellors, guides and colleagues.

This programme, a novelty in Malta, will be a start towards filling a gap towards training in entrepreneurship, especially as it is also targeting women returnees. Around 100 applicants are presently being interviewed to follow the required training in the second phase of the scheme. It is anticipated that more than 50 participants will be accepted.

ANNEX 4

The Occupational Health and Safety Authority

A twinning agreement signed under the European Union's pre-accession funding programme, a project worth € 705,000, will assist the government on practical aspects of European health and safety legislation and will raise awareness of the hazards and risks at the workplace. Funded by the EU for one year, the project is a joint venture between the UK Health and Safety Executive and the Irish Health and Safety Authority. The first € 340,000 will be used for institutional capacity building for the Occupational Health and Safety Authority while € 365,000 will be spent on the purchase of monitoring and IT equipment and the setting up of a management information system for occupational health and safety.

The twinning project is supposed to assist the Occupational Health and Safety Authority to develop the capability to effectively adopt EU health and safety standards and legislation, design and put into practice management inspection and information systems and help the social partners understand their role in this field.

TABLES

Table 1. Government expenditure on education 1990 – 1995

Year	Total educational expenditure		Current educational expenditure		
	As % of GNP	As % of total government expenditure	As % of the total	As % of GNP	As % of current government expenditure
1990	4.0	8.3	94.4	3.8	10.9
1991	4.1	8.5	94.4	3.9	11.1
1992	4.6	10.9	97.1	4.5	12.5
1993	5.1	11.7	94.9	4.9	13.0
1994	5.2	11.4	93.4	4.9	12.3
1995	5.2	11.4	93.5	4.8	12.3

Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, 1996 and 1998.

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Table 2. Public expenditure on education in Malta (1998)

Budget item	Costs (Maltese pound)
Ministry of Education	22,299,000
Education Division	38,064,000
Ministry of Tourism	880,000
Ministry of Social Policy ETC	1,100,000
Parl. Secretary for Gozo	90,000
Capital expenditure	9,089,000
Total	71,522,000

Source: O. MacDaniel, *Malta: An Overview of Vocational Education and Training. ETF, (2000)*

Table 3. Public expenditure on vocational education and training in Malta (1998)

Budget item	Costs (Maltese lire)
Staff salaries	1,393,000
Materials and equipment	698,000
Capital	41,000
ETC	1,100,000
Student allowances	715,000
Total	3,938,000

Source: O. MacDaniel, *Malta: An Overview of Vocational Education and Training. ETF, (2000)*

Table 4. Relative percentage of education and vocational training as GDP in 11 acceding and candidate countries

	Malta (1998)	BG (1996)	CZ (1997)	EE (1996)	HU (1996)	LV (1977)	LT (1997)	PL (1996)	RO (1997)	SK (1997)	SLO (1996)
Education as % of GDP	7.98	2.8	4.74	6.95	5.22	5.1	5.8	5.6	3.73	4.5	5.84
VET as % of GDP	0.44	0.35	0.89	0.64	0.92	0.71	0.4	0.7	0.42	0.9	0.64
Total %	5.51	12.5	18.77	9.20	17.62	13.92	6.89	12.5	11.26	20	10.95

Source: O. MacDaniel, *Malta: An Overview of Vocational Education and Training, ETF (2000)*

Table 5. Participation rates in education for 14-19 year-olds and over 19s in total and vocational education and training

Age	Total	VET
14	5,525	575
15	5,336	968
16	4,000	939
17	2,673	874
18	1,045	633
19	1,336	393
19+	6,727	367

Total age groups include university students (ISCED 5,6).

Source: Ministry of Education (as cited in O. MacDaniel, *Malta: An Overview of Vocational Education and Training. ETF, (2000)*).

Table 6. Sectoral distribution of expenditure by private sector on CVET courses

Economic sector	Expenditure (MTL)	% Total
Quarrying	-	-
Manufacturing	873,134	27.03
Electricity, gas and water supply	212,181	6.57
Construction	68,180	2.11
Wholesale and retail, repair of vehicles, personal and household goods	211,982	6.56
Hotels and restaurants	192,799	5.97
Transport, storage and communication	750,940	23.24
Financial intermediation	316,577	9.80
Real estate, renting and business activities	570,117	17.65
Other community, social and personal service activities	34,516	1.07
Total	3,230,426	100.00

Source: National Statistics Office (2001) Continuing Vocational Training Survey (Valletta: Malta).

Table 7. Salaries and conditions of work for different teachers

Sector	Salary scales	Starting salary MTL	Top salary MTL	Total number full-time teachers	Entry requirements	Contact hours	Leave (days)	Contract
Preschool level	16-13	3,573	5,092	910	Diploma Voc. Course	27.5	60 (+ Christmas and Easter)	Permanent or supply
Compulsory education*								
Instructors	13-11	4,228	5,736	8177	BEd.(Hons) [#] or 1st degree + PGCE*	Primary: 27.5 Secondary: 19.5	60 (+ Christmas and Easter)	Permanent or supply (state and church schools) Contract - Independ.
Teachers	9-7	5,352	7,416					
University	7	6,364 Exclusive of performance bonus + work resources	11,880	522	1st degree, Master's or Doctorate	12 (highest grades) 15 (lowest grades)	40 (+ Christmas and Easter)	Permanent
MCAST	4	5,274	8,438	137	1st degree or full corporate membership [†]	19 (4-day week)	40 (+ Christmas and Easter)	Contract (three years renewable)
ITS	11-8	4,890	7,017	32	Recognised qualification in field + industrial experience - or degree	24	40	Permanent

* Teachers in the state and non-state sector generally enjoy the same salary structures.

The B.Ed. (Hons) degree lasts four years – around 200 students graduate every year.

* The PGCE is a one year course, and first degrees are either three or four years long. Around 100 students obtain their PGCE every year.

† The call for applications for the MCAST specified that the lowest grade – teaching assistants – would be in possession of relevant qualifications in the field applied for and five years of industrial/commercial experience. Assistant lecturers were expected to have either a Master's degree, or a Bachelor's degree, or recognised qualifications at full corporate membership level, or a permanent teachers' warrant with specialisation in the field applied for, or relevant qualifications and 15 years of industrial/commercial experience. Those appointed to the lecturer grade were to be in possession of a doctorate or recognised qualifications at full corporate membership level.

Table 8. Teaching staff classified by sector, qualifications and gender, 1999

	Teacher's certificate			Cert. or diploma (1)			First degree			Higher degree (2)			Other certificates (3)			Tech. qualifs (4)			Pedagogy course (5)			Other qualifs			Total		
	m	f	t	m	f	t	m	f	t	m	f	t	m	f	t	m	f	t	m	f	t	m	f	t	m	f	t
a.	241	231	472	63	50	113	528	602	1130	55	26	81	26	16	42	20	6	26	84	135	219	53	66	119	1,070	1,132	2,202
b.	40	3	43	32	4	36	81	13	94	4	2	6	4	-	4	152	1	153	109	32	141	-	-	-	422	55	477
c.	13	260	273	29	82	11	211	468	679	57	40	97	10	76	86	6	4	10	27	111	138	61	325	386	414	1,366	1,780

Source: Education Statistics, 1999 (Central Office of Statistics)

Horizontal axis: (1) University course (2) Ph.D., Master, doctorate (the Education Act of 1988 allows holders of such qualifications to teach without the requirement of pedagogical certification)
(3) Pre-school education course, kindergarten's assistants' course (4) HTD, OTD, CGLI, Journeyman's certificate (5) Instructors' course
Vertical Axis: (a) Government secondary and post-secondary schools (b) Trade and technical schools (c) private schools

Table 9. Number of students taking up technical tracks in the B.Ed. (Hons) course of the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta

	1993-1997	1994-1998	1995-1999	1996-2000	1997-2001	1998-2002	1999-2003	2000-2004	2001-2005	Total
Technical design and technology	-	-	-	-	-	6	9	3	7	25
Technical subjects	8	4	2	4	8	2	-	-	-	28

Table 10. Trends in destination of students completing compulsory education

Year	Education		Work		Others*	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
1990	1,961	56	1,102	31	353	10
1991	2,554	63	1,081	27	479	10
1992	2,653	60	1,237	27	599	13
1993	2,652	60	1,085	25	627	14
1994	2,790	61	1,292	28	538	12
1995	2,734	58	1,318	28	653	14
1997 [#]	2,787	65	861	20	616	15
1998	3,189	67	903	19	698	15
1999	3,496	66	961	18	845	16
2000	3,369	65	957	19	852	17

* Others = Students who declared that they were neither following a post-secondary course nor working, generally meaning that they were "at home", "registering for work", or "emigrated".

[#] Results for 1996 not available.

Source: Guidance and Counselling Services (2001), Tracer Study 2000 Report. Education Division (p. viii).

Table 11. Unfulfilled demand for IVET at the MCAST in September 2001

Course	Students not admitted
Foundation programme in computing	57
First diploma in computing	13
Diploma in computing	15
Telecommunications and electronic engineering	11
Certificate in insurance studies	18
Certificate in marketing	6
Accounting technician certificate	4
Diploma in design	48
Total	172

Source: MCAST administration.

Table 12. Most common work destinations of school-leavers

Work (as defined by students)	Number	%
Machine operators	286	29.9
Salesperson/shop assistant	182	19.0
Waiter/waitress	100	10.4
Labourer	95	9.9
Tile layer/plasterer	25	2.6
Chambermaid	23	2.4

Source: Guidance and Counselling Services (2001), Tracer Study 2000 Report. Floriana, Education Division (p. 4).

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Table 13. Educational attainment of working age population, 1995

	Total		Men		Women	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
ISCED 0-2	150,187	51.87	68,962	48.82	81,225	54.78
ISCED 3	104,331	36.03	52,415	37.10	51,916	35.01
ISCED 4	10,095	3.49	5,343	3.78	4,752	3.20
ISCED 5-7	21,029	7.26	12,728	9.01	8,301	5.60
Non-respondents	3,907	1.35	1,821	1.29	2,086	1.41
Total	289,549	100.00	141,269	100.00	148,280	100.00

Source: Census 1995.

Table 14. Educational attainment by age and gender, in % form: 1995

	Age 16-24		Age 25-39		Age 40-59		Age 60-64	
	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F %
ISCED 0-2	26.34	19.53	30.62	30.59	61.70	70.72	71.86	83.80
ISCED 3	52.87	57.40	52.08	57.49	27.53	22.75	19.40	12.00
ISCED 4	10.75	12.39	3.35	2.97	1.82	0.92	1.39	0.45
ISCED 5-7	8.10	9.02	12.80	7.88	7.89	4.68	6.51	2.68
Non-respondents	1.94	1.66	1.15	1.07	1.05	0.93	0.84	1.06
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Census 1995.

Table 15. CVET in the private sector

Number of enterprises surveyed	1,683	All employing ten or more
In-house training centre	237 enterprises	14.1%
Provided CVET to employees	991 enterprises	59.0% - of whom 85.4% managed externally 64.1% managed internally
Number of employees on CVET courses	28,705	Male = 20,013 Female = 8,692
Number of hours spent on CVET	1,068,232	Average working time on CVET courses for females = 48.3 hrs for males = 32.2 hrs

Source: National Statistics Office, Continuing Vocational Training Survey (2001).

Table 16. Language abilities of the Maltese population

Language	%
Maltese	98
English	76
Italian	36
French	9
German	2
Spanish	0.5
Arabic	2
Other	0.5

Source: Ministry of Education figures, 1995 (as cited in O. MacDaniel, *Malta: An Overview of Vocational Education and Training*. ETF, (2000)).

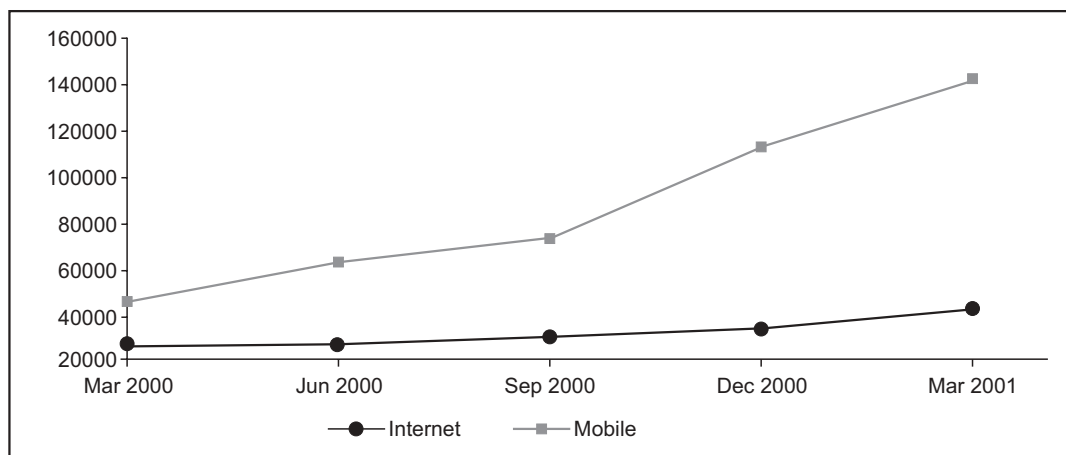
Table 17. Foreign languages in the lower secondary core curriculum

Core curriculum at lower secondary level	Sessions per week (1 session = 40 minutes)
Maltese	3
English	5
Foreign language	4
Mathematics	5
Religion	2
History	2
Geography	2
Social studies	1
Physical education and sport	2
Computer literacy	1
Expressive arts	2
Personal and social education	2
Technology and design	2
Science	4

Source: Ministry of Education (1999) *Creating the Future Together: National Minimum Curriculum*. [Sessions per week for each subject as currently allocated to a form 1 junior lyceum class]

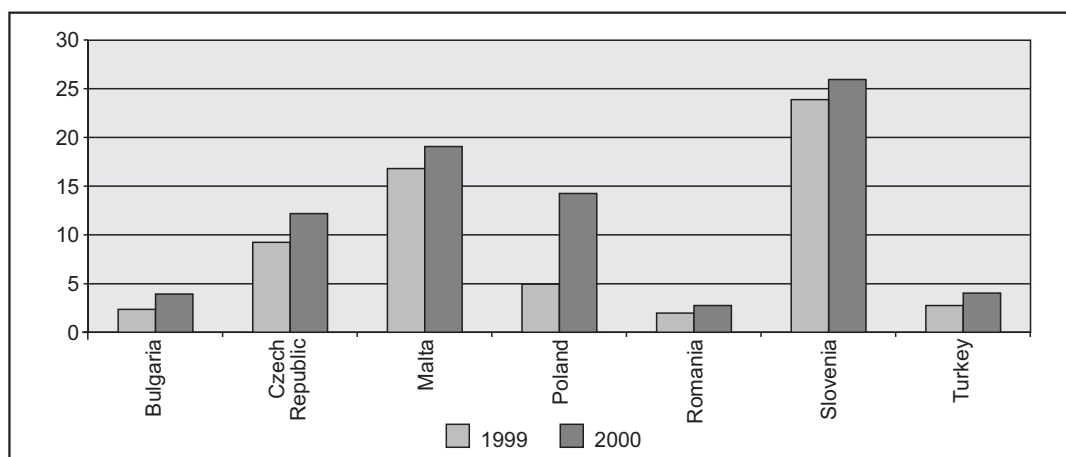
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Table 18. Internet/mobile phones growth rates



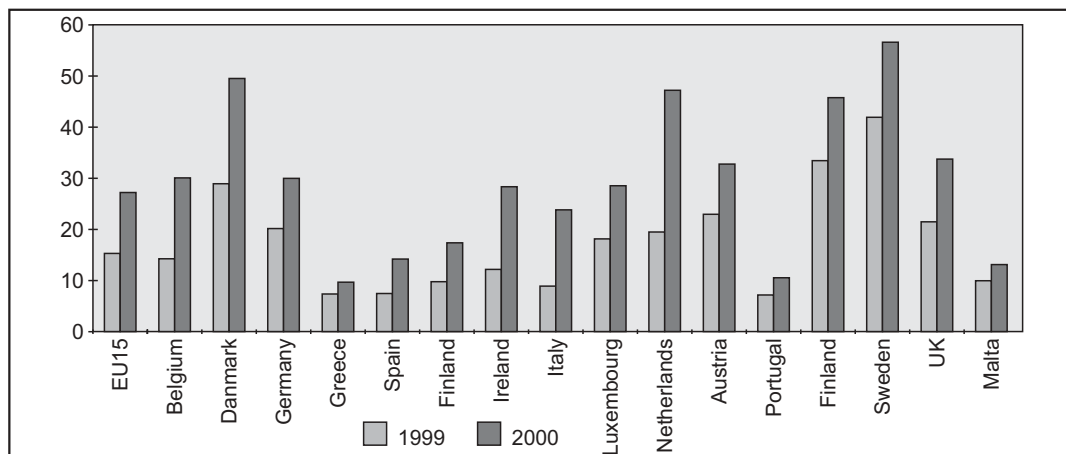
Source: National Statistics Office – News Release No 71/2001 – 23 July 2001.

Table 19. PCs per 100 inhabitants (Malta/acceding and candidate countries)

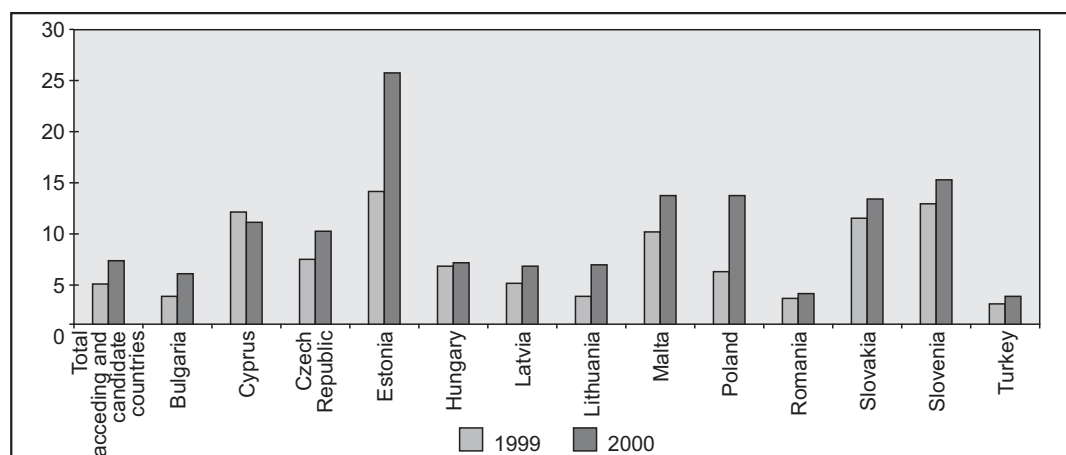


Source: National Statistics Office – News Release No 71/2001 – 23 July 2001.

Table 20. Internet users per 100 inhabitants (Malta/EU15)



Source: National Statistics Office – News Release No 71/2001 – 23 July 2001.

Table 21. Internet users per 100 inhabitants (Malta/acceding and candidate countries)

Source: National Statistics Office – News Release No 71/2001 – 23 July 2001.

Table 22. Growth in tertiary student population, 1991-2000

Year	Total (number)	Male %	Female %
1986*	1,447		
1987*	1,867		
1988*	2,354		
1989*	2,511		
1990*	3,242		
1991	3,602	53.8	42.2
1992	4,662	51.9	48.1
1993	5,177	51.2	48.7
1994	5,805	51.9	48.1
1995	6,263	50.3	49.7
1996	6,368	48.7	51.3
1997	7,146	49.5	50.5
1998	6,959	48.8	51.2
2000 ⁺	7,628	44.98	55.02

Source: Central Office of Statistics, except for:

* Baldacchino, G. et al. (1997) *The Graduating Workforce* (for which gender-segregated data unavailable) – as cited in the JAP Appendix, p. 36.

⁺ Provided by the University of Malta.

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**Table 23. Gender trends in subject choices at the secondary level
(Scholastic year: 2000/01) - Form 3 level, as on 1 October 2000**

Subject	Boys	Girls
Art	203	171
Biology	111	314
Business studies	205	427
Chemistry	166	209
Craft	552	50
European history	19	26
Geography	14	52
Graphical communication	243	78
Home economics	233	587
Needlework	/	155
Social studies	1	36
European studies	/	65

Source: Quarterly Returns, Education Division.

Table 24. University graduates by subject and gender, 1998

Subject	Total	Males	Females	Total %	Males %	Females %
Architecture and civil engineering*	32	24	8	1.8	2.9	0.9
Mechanical and electrical engineering	68	63	5	3.9	7.7	0.5
Medicine and surgery	77	30	47	4.4	3.7	5.1
Dental surgery*	11	8	3	0.6	1.0	0.3
Economics, management and accountancy	388	220	168	22.3	27.0	18.2
Arts	208	93	115	12.0	11.4	12.5
Science	13	7	6	0.7	0.9	0.7
Education	494	152	342	28.4	18.7	37.1
Law	128	61	67	7.4	7.5	7.3
Theology	58	34	24	3.3	4.2	2.6
Institute of Health Care	115	50	65	6.6	6.1	7.0
Institute of Gerontology	28	14	14	1.6	1.7	1.5
Academy of Diplomatic Studies	41	27	14	2.4	3.3	1.5
Institute of Forensic Studies	8	4	4	0.5	0.5	0.4
Institute of Agriculture	10	6	4	0.6	0.7	0.4
Institute of Youth Studies	6	-	6	0.3	0.4	0.2
Institute of Social Welfare	33	5	28	1.9	0.6	3.0
European Documentation Resource Centre	5	3	2	0.3	0.4	0.2
Board of Studies for IT	1	1	-	0.1	0.1	-
Mediterranean Institute	3	3	-	0.2	0.4	-
Institute for Masonry and Construction Research	4	4	-	0.2	0.5	-
Board of Studies of Islands and Small States	6	6	-	0.3	0.7	-
Worker Participation Development Centre	1	-	1	0.1	-	0.1
Total	1,738	815	923	100	100	100

* = biennial courses; graduates for 1997.

Source: University of Malta, as cited in the JAP Appendix, p. 37.

Table 25. Male and female students following a selection of post-16 VET courses in 1999 (prior to the setting up of the MCAST)

Courses*	Male	Female	Total+
Telecoms and electrical engineering course	60	-	60
Electrical and electronic servicing	84	-	84
Micro computer technology	69	3	72
Ordinary technician diploma	77	-	77
Higher tech. dip. mechanical engineering	48	-	48
Higher tech. dip. electrical engineering	16	-	16
Motor vehicle technicians	48	-	48
Refrigeration technicians course	32	-	32
Mechanical engineering technicians	64	-	64
Electrical motor winding	7	-	7
Draughtsmen course	62	6	68
Motor vehicles mechanics course	29	-	29
Computer-aided design	46	1	47
General course in engineering	13	-	13
Industrial electronics	141	4	145
Certificate of competency (deck officers)	31	4	35
Certificate of competency (engineering)	5	-	5
Engineer cadet	2	-	2
Commercial horticulture	8	-	8
Animal husbandry/Vet assistant	18	6	24
Hairdressing course	7	74	81
I.T.E.C. electrolysis	-	10	10
Journeyman's hairdressing certificates	3	74	77
Art and design	13	10	23
Industrial design	25	20	45

* These courses were being offered within Technical Institutes, some of which have become integrated in the MCAST.

+ Totals include 'part-time' students, meaning those following a government-sponsored scheme (such as ESTS/TAS) or are being sponsored by the private sector.

Source: Education Statistics, 1999 (Central Office of Statistics), p. 69.

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**Table 26. Intake into the first year of MCAST in September 2001
(gender breakdown for each institute and course)**

Institute and courses	Total M	Total F	Total no of Year 1 students
Electronic Engineering Institute	133	2	135
Certificate in electronics servicing	55	2	57
Telecommunications and electronics engineering course	23	0	23
Technician certificate in industrial electronics	48	0	48
Technician certificate in industrial electronics (evening)	7	0	7
Building and Construction Engineering Institute	204	6	210
Certificate in stone dressing	3	0	3
Certificate in masonry	5	0	5
Common core	124	0	124
Certificate in tile laying and plastering	5	0	5
Basic heritage skills certificate	4	2	6
Heritage skills craftsman certificate	9	0	9
Senior heritage skills craftsman certificate	15	0	15
Technician course in draughtsmanship and surveying	25	4	29
Technician course in heating, ventilation and air conditioning	14	0	14
Information and Communication Technology Institute	177	33	210
Foundation programme in computing	40	20	60
First diploma in computing	47	5	52
Diploma in computing	55	3	58
First diploma in computing (evening)	18	2	20
Diploma in computing (evening)	17	3	20
Business and Commerce Institute	133	293	426
Certificate in banking and financial services	20	28	48
Certificate in administrative and secretarial studies	3	52	55
Certificate in retailing	9	16	25
Certificate in insurance studies	19	40	59
Certificate in marketing studies	5	34	39
Certificate in business	15	23	38
Accounting technician certificate	11	30	41
Matriculation certificate course	51	70	121
Art and Design Institute	27	31	58
Certificate in arts and crafts	14	13	27
Diploma in design	13	18	31
Maritime Institute	9	0	9
OIC navigational watch	9	0	9
Total number of students	683	365	1,048

Source: Statistics provided by MCAST Administration Office: December 2001.

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