



PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TOURISM AND THE MINISTRY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, SECURITY AND EMPLOYMENT

Mandatory Pre-Departure course and examination before a person comes to work in Malta

• **Implementation of the Malta Labour Migration Policy continues**

The Government is continuing to deliver on its commitment to reform the way third-country nationals come to Malta for work — a promise that is now being translated into concrete action.

Following the publication of a public consultation document in January 2025, the implementation programme of the Malta Labour Migration Policy began last August, introducing a new framework regulating how non-EU workers may be employed in Malta. The policy aims to strengthen oversight by the Maltese authorities, safeguard the rights of all workers, and ensure that only workers who are genuinely needed by the Maltese economy and society are admitted.

During a press conference addressed by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism Ian Borg, together with the Minister for Home Affairs, Security and Employment Byron Camilleri, the Government announced the next phase of implementation: the introduction of a Pre-Departure Course for every third-country national seeking to work in Malta.

Minister Byron Camilleri stated that the objective is to ensure that Malta welcomes workers of quality — individuals prepared to understand and appreciate Maltese society while respecting the rights of all. He emphasised that those coming to Malta from third countries must adapt to Maltese society, not the other way around.

The Pre-Departure Course will cover essential elements including basic English language skills, cultural awareness, hygiene and basic conduct, rights and obligations in the workplace, respect for civil rights, among others.

Applicants will be required to sit for an assessment, and only those who pass may proceed to apply for work in Malta. Passing the test is the first step in the application process. The test, which will cost €250, will be mandatory for all workers.



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In sectors where the Skills Pass already applies — such as tourism — applicants must complete the second part of the Skills Pass linked to that sector. As the Skills Pass is expanded to additional sectors, the second-stage requirement will follow accordingly, with further details provided by the relevant authorities.

The Pre-Departure Course will commence on 5 January, and from 1 March 2026, Identità will only consider applications from individuals who have successfully completed the course and assessment.

Minister Camilleri noted that “we have no obligation to change for anyone — others must change for us. But we do have an obligation to offer those coming to work here the opportunity to learn about Maltese culture.”

“We need to ensure dignity and respect toward every person, regardless of where they come from. But equally, I believe it is not the Maltese who must adapt — it is those who come to Malta. We are also ensuring that workers understand their rights, because an important principle of the Labour Migration Policy is the safeguarding of workers’ rights. These rights are strengthened by stability in the labour market. This is why, from January, we will consider longer residence permits — two or three years — in cases where there is investment in skills, high-level competencies, or specialised training. Stability is better than constantly bringing in new workers.”

The Minister also explained that the Malta Labour Migration Policy aims to enhance long-term stability in the labour market. Workers who have been in Malta for at least one year may have their permit renewed for more than one year, subject to conditions. Low-skilled workers will be required to undertake a training programme, while a two-year extension will be granted automatically for higher-skilled roles, provided the worker has a valid employment contract.

The training programme — designed specifically for the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security and Employment — will be delivered by licensed Maltese institutions and will cover areas including Maltese culture and traditions, civic participation, legal and safety awareness, personal and professional development, and English and Maltese language learning.

Minister Camilleri continued that “we are taking these steps to practically and clearly incentivise skills development. And to employers we say: yes, we introduced stricter rules; yes, we doubled application fees for new workers; but if you invest in your employees and operate seriously, you too can benefit from greater stability in your business. Our message is clear: we will give greater advantage to those who respect our country — not to those who see Malta only as a gateway to Europe. We will not tolerate systems that incentivise abuse or treat workers as disposable. And we have already sent that message.”

Deputy Prime Minister Ian Borg added that “what we are presenting today is more than a technical adjustment — it is a clear declaration of the direction we intend to pursue. We want a Malta where everyone feels part of the



path forward, where with a sense of unity we can take pride in our country's success, shared by all. This reform strengthens our workforce, supports genuine integration, and safeguards the reputation of Malta's tourism product, while ensuring that our hospitality sector and others remain competitive, resilient, and prepared for the challenges of the future.”

Additional measures announced:

Suitability Check.

All applicants will undergo a Suitability Check conducted by Jobsplus. Applicants must provide documentation in the following four categories:

1. Certificate of the Pre-Departure Course or the Skills Pass.
2. Approval from the relevant regulatory body for regulated professions where required.
3. Recognition of qualifications from the Malta Qualifications Recognition and Information Centre (MQRIC), where applicable.
4. A declaration from the employer confirming the applicant's suitability for the specific role.

Jobsplus may request any further documentation or information as necessary.

Strengthened enforcement and stricter desk Investigations.

The Single Permit Directive will be amended to reinforce the enforcement of laws against worker exploitation. Maltese authorities will gain the power to disqualify employers from applying for third-country workers if they are found to have breached workers' rights.

Employers may not receive any financial compensation from workers in relation to recruitment or termination, which would be in breach of the law.

These measures build on reforms implemented in recent months, including:

- Minimum termination rates before new applications.
- Strengthened obligation to publicly advertise job vacancies.
- Restrictions preventing employers who dismissed workers unjustifiably in the previous 12 months from applying for new workers.
- Emphasis on timely submission of employment and termination forms.
- Doubling of fees for new worker applications (with exceptions in health, elderly care and disability services).



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- Restrictions for employers who fail to comply with disability employment quota obligations.
- New rules for applicants who do not enter Malta with a valid work visa.
- Mandatory payment of salaries through bank deposits or electronic means.

Further information is available on the Jobsplus website, and assistance is available via the dedicated helpline 153.