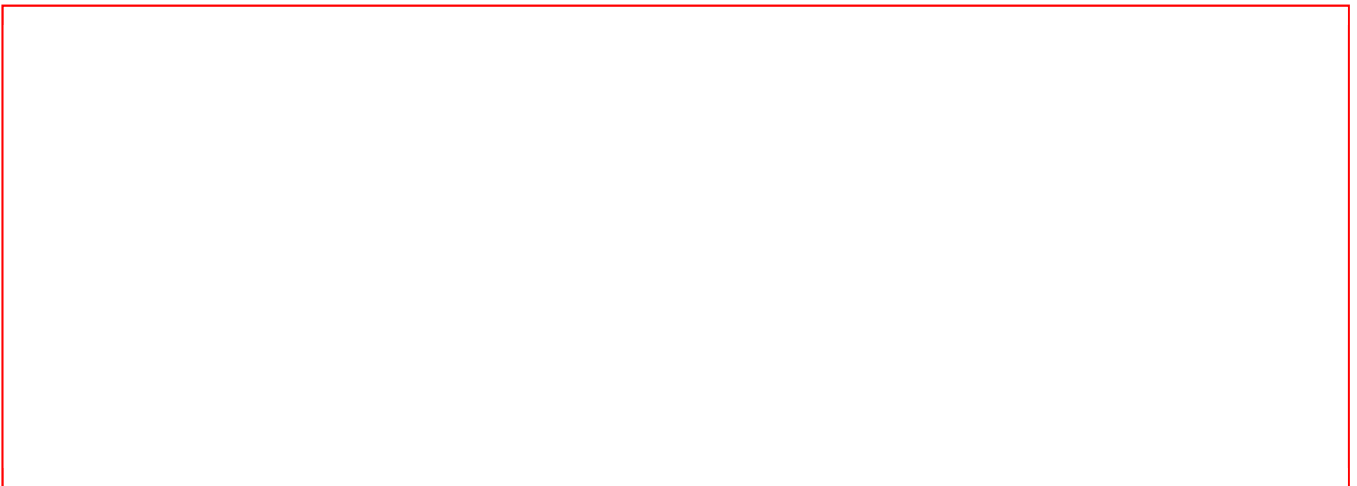




Country guide for new EPIET/EUPHEM fellows

**Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate,
Infectious Disease Surveillance Unit (IDCU)
Malta**

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EPIET/EUPHEM

Country Guide to Malta

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1. Before departure

The majority of things can be done on arrival. The department will give you plenty of time to sort all these things out during working hours and colleagues will be there to help. The official languages in Malta are Maltese and English.

A lot of information on Malta can be found online on various websites and blogs.

Examples:

<https://www.visitmalta.com/en/home>

<http://heritagemalta.org>

Information regarding Maltese public service information:

<http://www.malta.com/en/local-information/public-service>

1.1 Visa

Whether you need a visa or not depends on the country you come from as well. EU citizens do not need a visa for Malta. People from other countries do need a visa. If you are from one of the new Member States of the EU, please check whether some new rules apply for you. This information can be obtained from your embassy.

1.2 Removal

Claims for removal expenses are through the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate. This means that you will need to contact your supervisor who will direct you to the person responsible for your removal expenses. You may be asked to request three quotes and chose the cheapest. You will be asked you to complete a form with your expenses and provide receipts for your flight ticket to Malta and the cost of the removal company. After you submit the documents, it takes almost 2 months to get reimbursed. Please discuss the details with your supervisor as soon as possible.

1.3 Finances

At the beginning of the fellowship, you will have a lot of expenses (flight tickets, removal, deposit for renting a flat etc). Therefore, if possible it is advised to have a couple of thousand euros in your bank account at the start of the fellowship to help with cash flow (2,000-5,000€ depending on where you move from and the type of flat you intent to rent).

2. The Office

Your office will be in the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate, Infectious Disease Surveillance Unit (IDCU), which is located at 5B, the Emporium, Triq C. De Brockdorff, Msida MSD 1421. The office is located on the 3rd floor.

The office may be moved to a new location in 2019.

Your desk should be ready when you arrive with a computer connected to the internet.

Administrative procedures to follow upon arrival (if not already done by your supervisor):

- Contact MITA (IT department) to install the software you may need on your computer
- Contact MITA to set up a professional email address (@gov.mt)

There is no canteen in the institute but there is a small kitchenette area and fridge in the IDCU office where you can prepare tea/coffee at any time. For lunch, you can bring some food or take away at one of the local cafes or shops close to the institute (sandwiches, small salads, soups etc). There is a kitchen on the third floor with a microwave, dishes and cutlery.

Working hours for EPIET fellows are 40 hours per week (8 hours per day). You can start anytime between 7:30am and 9am and finish anytime between 3:00pm and 6:00pm. Also, you are entitled to 25 days per year of annual leave and all public holidays in Malta (around 14 public holidays / year).

Regarding your pension scheme, make sure that your site has asked funding from ECDC for your pension contributions. Please talk to your HR person for more information.

3. Maltese numbers

Maltese ID number

The Maltese ID number is a unique reference number that helps you access social welfare benefits, public services and information in Malta. It may take a few weeks to be ready but you need this to open a bank account.

Before obtaining the Maltese ID, you need a document from JobPlus that confirms that you have been employed. Contact the Human Resources responsible or your supervisor about it.

You will also need a permanent address (contract).

To get your Maltese ID card visit the Evans Building at St. Elmo Place in Valletta, across from Fort St. Elmo, on the perimeter road of the city. This office is open Monday to Friday, 730hrs/7:30am to 1400hrs/2:00pm, Wednesday 1500hrs/3:00pm to 1800hrs/6:00pm, and Saturday 730hrs/7:30am to 1030hrs/10:30am.

You will need the following documents to get your Maltese ID:

- **Your passport**
- **An application form.** (You can download applications online from Malta's Electoral Commission web site but they normally have them there as well).
- **A passport sized photo for your application form**
- **A copy of your EPIET work contract**
- **Copy of apartment lease contract or utility bill with proof of address**

When you arrive at the ID card Office, an appropriate authority will review your application form and documents. You will be directed to have your ID photo taken (free of charge). Make sure you are wearing suitable clothing – sleeveless or strapless tops are not permitted in ID photos. You will then proceed to another room where you will electronically sign your card.

You will receive a letter by post within 6 weeks of submitting your ID card application, notifying you to collect your ID card from the same ID card Office. Bring with you this letter, as well as your passport, to collect your new ID card.

ID cards for non-EU citizens are not to be used for travel purposes. They are only to be used for identification purposes in the Maltese Islands.

Social Security number

To apply for the social security number and for more details about which supporting documents you will need please use the following link

https://servizz.gov.mt/en/Pages/Inclusion_-Equality-and-Social-Welfare/Social-Solidarity/Benefits-and-Services/WEB632/default.aspx

An application normally takes 10 working days to be processed if all accompanying documentation meet the requirements.

Tax Identification Number (TIN)

For individuals who are Maltese nationals, Malta uses as TIN the Identify Card Number which is reported on official documents of identification. However, individuals who are not Maltese nationals can use a TIN issued by the Inland Revenue Department, which is a block of 9 digits.

To apply for the TIN you need to fill in the expatriate form at the Inland Revenue Department in Floriana. Once you have filled in the expatriate form you should receive your TIN by post within 8 working eight days.

You may not need this TIN.

4. Living in Malta

a. Housing

To find a place to live can be quite difficult.

Options to stay while looking for permanent accommodation is airbnb (www.airbnb.com) or hostels. You can choose from a variety of rooms and apartments rented out from local hosts. Also, contact people from IDCU and let them know about the type of accommodation you are looking for in case they have anything in mind.

Renting in Malta

Housing prices in Malta have increased drastically over the last few years. To rent your own flat will cost something between 600-1300 per month depending on the area and the size of the apartment. A room in a shared apartment will definitely be cheaper. In recent years, rental prices in the central areas (Sliema, Gzira and Saint Julians) have increased significantly so you will get more value for your money by living outside of these areas.

Unfortunately, traffic is generally a problem during rush hour. There is a good public Transport system consistent of an extensive network of buses, but it can be quite slow.

Know what is included in your rent because there are additional charges for:

- Electricity
- Gas
- TV, Internet

Please note:

- It is common to ask for 1 months rent in deposit!!
- It is very common in Malta to pay extra money each month for electricity and internet and then once the itemised bill arrives (normally every quarter) you will either be given back the difference you over paid or you will need to pay additional money to cover the rest of the bill)
- Many flats through agents are available on a first come first serve basis. If you see a flat you like and the price is acceptable, then it is advisable to take it as it could be gone within hours on the same day!! For apartments advertised privately, landlords/flatmates often like to meet their prospective tenants and then make a choice.
- You might call or e-mail people that will never get back to you. Don't get too disappointed! The demand is so high that they receive a lot of calls and e-mails from people looking for a house/room and you need to chase them up to arrange a viewing.
- Some agents may ask for very expensive fees to foreigners. Be always very careful.
- Asking colleagues and friends may be a very useful way to find potential places to rent.

There are many websites where you might be able to find housing. Be aware that you often have to pay an agency fee (normally half a months rent). Three of the biggest agents in Malta are Frank Salt, REMAX and Perry. Usually, when you rent a room privately with a landlord, you will not have to pay any agent fees but always clarify that in advance, especially if you are looking to rent a whole property.

Below are a few useful Facebook groups you can join to help you find accommodation.

Websites:

Rubs Apartments - RENT and SALE – Free <https://www.facebook.com/groups/RubsApartments/>

Rubs Property Lettings Malta <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1685839618356901/>

noagentsplease.com.mt <https://www.noagentfees.com>

maltapark <https://www.maltapark.com>

b. Transportation

Cycling

Although people do cycle in Malta, it is not very common primarily because of the high number of cars on the road and safety concerns but also because the current road infrastructure is not particularly cycle friendly. However, things are changing!! In 2018, nextbike arrived on the island. Nextbike is a public bike sharing system that provides rental bikes 24/7. All you need to do to join the network and download the app. Registration is free of charge and there are bike stations in the following locations: Pembroke, Sliema, St. Julians, San Gwann, Ta' Xbiex, Imsida, Gzira and Swatar, Vittoriosa, Valletta and soon in Bugibba and St. Paul's Bay.

nextbike Malta <https://www.nextbike.com.mt/en/malta/information/>

Second hand bikes are not very popular, but it is possible to find them in shops such as "The Cyclist" or online "Marketplace.com". If cycling, be aware that in Malta people drive on the left side!

Transport

Most Maltese people have their own car. If you don't have a car then the main way to get around the Maltese islands is by bus. A single journey costs 2 euros and a single ticket is valid for 2 hours and allows you to travel anywhere on the island. You can buy a Tallinja card which will allow you to travel for 0.75cents for 2 hours. Monthly travel passes are also available offering discounted travel.

Bus: <https://www.publictransport.com.mt>

To take a taxi would recommend using Taxify <https://taxify.eu/cities/malta/> or E-cabs (21383838).

N.B. Avoid the white taxis in Malta as they are not official taxi companies. They operate independently and often charge high prices. You need to negotiate a price with them in advance!!

c. Money, credit cards, banks and pension

The currency in Malta is Euros. Most credit cards are accepted in Malta although sometimes you pay an additional fee. Cash dispensers can be found everywhere, and bank cards, including the ones with a Visa/Maestro logo, work in these machines. Try to always have cash with you because you cannot pay everywhere by card.

Opening a bank account

To open a new bank account you will most likely be asked to provide the following supporting documents:

- Maltese ID card (not just the number! this can take a few months)
- Passport
- EPIET work contract
- Proof of address in Malta such as lease contract or utility bill.
- List of previous addresses

To open a new bank account you will need to make an appointment with the bank and due to the high demand of opening a bank account it is good to do this as soon as you arrive as the waiting list can be 1-2 months. However, if there are cancellations of other appointments then you might be able to open it sooner.

With some banks (such as HSBC), it is also possible to open the bank account online, and then, just attending the bank branch for signing the documentation.

Main banks in Malta:

HSBC <https://www.hsbc.com.mt>

Bank of Valletta <https://www.bov.com>

APS bank <https://www.apsbank.com.mt>

Note: Try to open your bank account as soon as possible and forward the bank details to Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate in order to receive your salary in a timely fashion.

However, your salary may be paid into your national bank account until you open a Maltese bank account.

d. Insurances

Public health insurance

Everyone residing in Malta has the right to health insurance services as well as hospital assistance. The services are not free and you have to pay for your visit to your GP/hospital.

It is good to have your European health insurance card in case you need it.

Other insurance

The ECDC recommends that you obtain additional insurance including: travel, disability, work liability, etc. Many of the former EPIET Fellows have recommended ExpatPlus. (<https://www.expatplus.com/English/international-healthcare-medical-insurance-for-expats.htm>).

e. Telephone

You can either get a pay-as-you-go SIM card or have a contract with one of the telephone companies. It is recommended to get a pay-as-you-go SIM card in the beginning. These can be obtained at local GO and Vodaphone stores.

There are two main phone service providers in Malta, GO and Vodaphone.

- Vodaphone <https://www.vodafone.com.mt>
- GO <https://www.go.com.mt/personal/mobile>

f. Internet

There are many providers – feel free to ask your colleagues for help. Keep in mind that price will be related to bandwidth so the more you pay the faster the connection.

Wifi may not be available at the office, and only internet via cable.

g. Language courses

For fellows based in Malta, there is funding provided by ECDC for language courses to learn Maltese. There are a few courses available including:
Maltese for Healthcare professionals at the University of Malta.

h. Shopping

There are three different types of supermarkets in Malta:

1. Small shops/snacks bar at the center points often frequented by many tourists and locals. These stores are generally open 07:00-07:00; Paceville and some other areas are open 24 hours. The prices in these stores are usually slightly higher and the assortment is similar to the small range of service stations.
2. Small shops outside the central points such as in residential or industrial areas. These stores are usually open 07:00- 07:00. The prices are usually 10-20% more than the big supermarkets. However, owners try to balance the difference in price by offering a good friendly service. The choice in these stores is not very big but they have a basic range of drinks, pasta, milk and a small selection of fresh dairy products.
3. The large supermarkets: The range is not particularly large but the prices are very cheap compared to the smaller shops. You can save up to 20% when you buy in big supermarkets rather than the small shops in residential areas.

Many of the large supermarkets allow you to order online and get home delivery. These include Park Towers (Saint Julians, Santa Venera), Smart (Birkirkara), Iceland (Birkirkara, Qawra), Scotts(Attard,

Burmarrad, Fleur-De-Lys, Naxxar, Santa Luċija, Sliema, Spinola, Żabbar), Greens (Swieqi), PAVI/PAMA (Qormi) and Malta supermarket.com <http://www.maltasupermarket.com>

Some tips!!

- There are a number of large supermarket chains in Malta so to help save money, it is recommended to do your grocery shopping at discounters like Lidl
- In the small village shops, outside of populated areas, the prices for the same goods are often considerably lower than in Sliema and Valletta
- It is recommended to buy fruit and vegetables from small street vendors that are run or are stationed in different cities with their trucks on a weekly basis (Wednesdays in Swieqi, Sliema Thursday, etc.). You can also buy directly from farms on the island.
- You can buy some products, such as frozen goods in specialized stores e.g. Miracle Foods. Their prices for frozen food are often much lower than most of the supermarkets on the island.

i, Food

Food and drink you must try on the island:

- Pastizzi – a greasy but really good Maltese snack (either with a filling of ricotta cheese or peas)
- Rabbit fried in garlic / snails
- Kinnoli filled with ricotta from Busybee (café in Ta'Xbiex)
- Kinnie (a soft drink made from bitter oranges)
- Twisties (crisps)

j, Sport and recreation

- If walking/hiking is one of your favourite activities - a good way to discover Malta and its nature is to join organised hiking trips in the countryside. You can find various groups on Facebook such as:
 - Miles Into Memories <https://www.facebook.com/groups/939833092738305/>
 - Trail makers <https://www.facebook.com/groups/150585445681072/>
- There are many groups on the island who organise regular clean ups which can be a fun way to socialize and keep fit!! The best way to see when these events are organised is via Facebook.
- Malta Cleanup is a very active and fun group to join <https://www.facebook.com/groups/315987838596769/about/>

k, Leisure

There is a lot to see and do in Malta, here are a few starting points:

Go to Valletta and visit:

- Upper Barakka (amazing views)
 - The grandmaster's palace and the palace armoury
 - St John's Co-Cathedral
 - Just walk around and visit some churches
 - Go down by the rocky beach and walk to the breakwater
 - If you want to have a crash course in Maltese history you can go to the Malta experience, it's a short documentary
- Go to Strait street in Valletta, lots of nice bars, some places to consider are Trabixu wine bar, Street whisky, Gin bar)
 - Café Society is a fun place to go later in the evening
 - Valletta Waterfront also has lots of bars and restaurants
 - For those who like jazz, check out the Bridge bar

The Three Cities

- Go by bus or catch a ferry from Valletta. Visit the Gardjola gardens in Isla (stunning views) and then walk to Birgu or else just wander around in Birgu. Visit the main church, go to the square, have something to drink from San Lawrenz (St Lawrence) band club over there.

Good places to eat over there are Enchante (specialises in seafood – situated along Isla waterfront) and Don Berto. Nice wine bars are Il forn and Del Borgo (both in Birgu).

Further tips: <https://www.maltauncovered.com/malta-island/birgu-vittoriosa/>

Mdina and Rabat

- Also a must see. Go during the day and walk around Mdina. Have coffee at the Fontanella (they have good cakes) and enjoy the view.
- The Mdina glass shop has some really nice stuff.
- Once you are done in Mdina, walk to Rabat which is the nearby town. Sit down with the locals at the Crystal Palace pastizzeria and eat pastizzi from there. They are amazing!!
- You can then walk to the centre of Rabat to see the parish church there and to visit St Paul's Catacombs (highly recommended).
- Another nearby attraction are Dingli Cliffs. Its beautiful going there for a walk in the countryside but getting there may be a bit tricky unless you have a car but you can take the bus

Mnajdra and Hagar Qim Temples in Zurrieq

- Go here!! You can also go to Wied Iz Zurrieq while you are there for something to eat by the sea. All restaurants here are pretty good but Congreve restaurant is one of the best. If the weather permits there are usually boat rides to Blue Grotto over there too.
- If you have time, go to Marsaxlokk (fishing village) with lots of restaurants specializing in seafood. It is a charming but very tiny place.

Other places to go and nice restaurants

- Another nice part of Malta is Sliema, famous for its seafront. It is just really nice to walk along in the evenings. Start from the top of Tower Road (find the Preluna Hotel on a map, it begins there) and just walk, starting with the hotel on your left and the sea on your right. In 45 minutes you'll reach Spinola Bay in St Julian's. This route is really nice and there are lots of places to stop off and get a drink or food along the way.
- Spinola Bay in St Julians is also a nice place to go in the evening and is packed full of good places to eat. Peppino's is nice which overlooks the bay. In Balluta Bay, there are two popular restaurants, Barracuda and Piccolo Padre's. Barracuda does great seafood, it's a bit fancy and maybe a bit pricey but definitely worth it if you want to try good seafood. Piccolo Padre does really good pizza/pasta at decent prices.
- A short distance from Spinola, up the hill, is Paceville. This place is really lively, full of bars and nightclubs and is basically the main party area.

Hypogeum

- Before you arrive in Malta (maybe even 2 months before), would highly recommend booking tickets to see the Hypogeum, the underground temple and burial site which dates back to 4000BC. They will give you a guided tour for 1 hour, maximum 10 people each tour.

<http://heritagemalta.org/museums-sites/hal-saflieni-hypogeum/>

Beaches

- All the main beaches in the centre of Malta are rocky (along the Sliema promenade) but there are sandy beaches in the north part of the island. One of the best is Riviera Martinique beach in Ghajn Tuffieha.

Useful newspapers/blogs/websites in Malta

<https://www.timesofmalta.com/>;

<https://lovinmalta.com>

<https://www.maltatoday.com.mt>
<http://www.independent.com.mt>
<http://www.maltaweather.com>
<http://www.it-temp.com>

A few last useful points:

Salary corrections: Please enquire with the Fellowship Programme Office at ECDC if you need to know the correction factor for salaries in your host countries. These can change and the most up to date information should be available from the Programme Office.

Language classes: Claiming money back for language classes can become complicated for budget reasons – if you are planning to claim back money, please talk to your host site to find out how they have budgeted this and talk to them about when you are planning to take classes and what the expected costs will be. Please do this at the beginning of your fellowship and ask the coordinator team at the intro course for a description of the funding allocations, as the rules are written in the contract between ECDC and host site, but it's not explained in the director's decision.

Parental leave benefits: Please note that you are employed under the respective rules of your host country, and this may have an impact on parental leave benefits if you have not worked in the country beforehand. This is something to look into if it may affect you during your fellowship, as ECDC cannot change the local laws on parental leave.

It is not easy to adapt to a new culture, and after an initial “enthusiastic” phase (which may last from weeks to months according to the person) almost EVERYBODY will then pass through a phase when you “reject” the new country/culture (“I want to go home”), followed by a positive phase again. In the “rejection” phase things can be quite hard (compounded by the fact that everything is in another language). It is important to know that these psychological phenomena are normal and they are part of the experience. Try to remember:

“It is not worse, it is not better, it is just different”.

Wikipedia gives a good explanation of this psychological phenomenon, and some way to overcome it http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_shock

