



**MALTA**

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## SIZE AND POPULATION:

- **316 km<sup>2</sup>**: ,01% of the European surface
- **563 443 hbts**= 0,13% of EU total population

- **smallest** state of the EU in term of size and population
- **most densely** populated EU member state



# PLACE ON THE MAP

- Capital: Valletta
  - Official language : English, Maltese
  - archipelago of 8 islands ( only 4 habitated)
  - no land borders
  - in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea
  - strategic position between Tunisa and Sicily
  - in the road of the Suez Canal to Europe
- trades routes
- strong cultural diversity



# HISTORY

- **Ancient presence:**  
ruled by Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, Normans
- **Holy Order of Jerusalem (1530-1789)**  
Fortified the archipel and built La Valette
- **Brief French occupation by Napoleon ( 1798-1800)**
- **Treaty of Paris ( 1800)**  
→ Malta became a **British colony**
- Malta becomes **independent** on  
September 21 (1964)
- It becomes a **republic while  
remaining a member of the  
Commonwealth.**( 1974)



# ECONOMY

## INDICATORS:

- **Growth rate:** 6% ( the highest in EU)
- **Unemployment rate:** 3.1%
- **National debt:** 47.4% of GDP
- **Public deficit:** 3.7% of GDP

## ECONOMIC SECTORS:

- **no natural resources \***
- **services baised economy :**  
tourism, maritime hub,
- finances : **foreign investments**

## COMPARATIVE INCOME AS % OF EU AVERAGE, 2024

GDP PER CAPITA IN PPS (*Eurostat*)  
11 countries above EU average

MEMBER-STATE	GDP per capita as % of EU average
LUXEMBOURG	242
IRELAND	211
NETHERLANDS	136
DENMARK	128
AUSTRIA	116
BELGIUM	116
GERMANY	115
SWEDEN	113
MALTA	109
FINLAND	103



## Characteristics

- favorable tax regime and strong links with both the EU and the Middle East  
→ foreign investment
- Malta's European trading partners  
→ highest growth rates in the eurozone

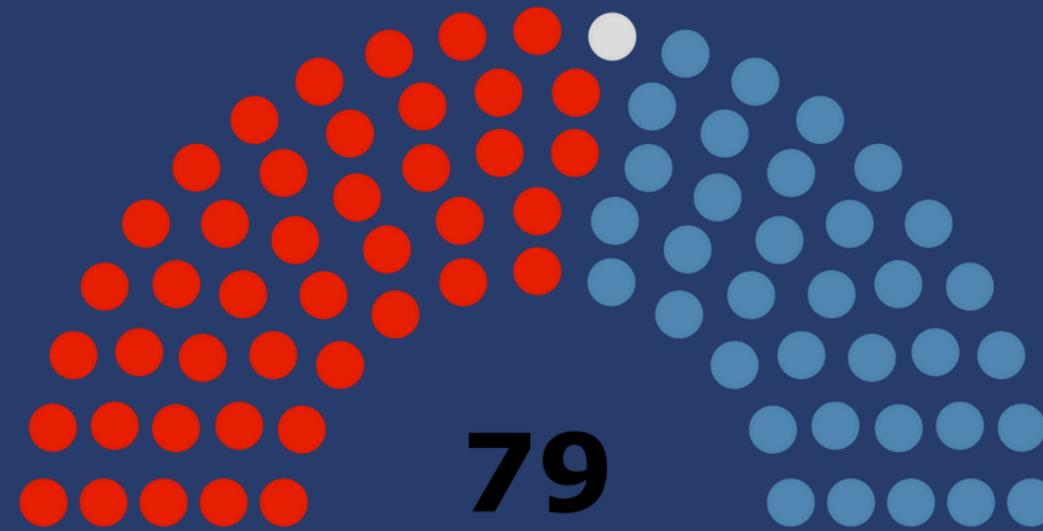
**\*water crisis**= no natural rivers or lakes, exacerbated by climate change, overexploitation of groundwater leading to salinization, and high demand from population and tourism

# DOMESTIC POLICIES

- Political system: **Parliamentary republic**

→ strong **biparty** between the **labour party** and the **nationalism party**

- Labour Party: **43**
- Nationalist Party: **35**
- Independant Party: **1**



**Next elections:**

2027 – General

2029 – Presidential

2029 – European



Head of State: **Myriam Spiteri Debono** since April 2024



Head of Government( prime minister): **Robert Abela** since 2020



## MALTA IN THE EU



### Reasons to join:

- Joined EU in **2004** in the **fitfh elargment** with 15 other countries (bing bang elargment)
  - Joined **Schengen in 2007**
  - joined **Eurozone in 2008**
  - **NOT member of NATO** (neutrality)
  - **First apply in 1990** by the Nationalist Party
  - **Frozed in 1996** by the **Labour party**( Don Mintoff)
  - **Nationalist renewed in 1999**,leads to the 2003 referedum
  - Labour party became pro EU in 2003
- overcome its **geographic isolation**
  - enhance Malta's security
  - access to its **main market** and more stable trade rules.
  - support **growth in services**
  - attract **investment** through access to the single market and **EU funds**.
  - align with **European values**

# MALTA'S NEUTRALITY



- Legacy of non-alignment after the british colony= **Enshrined in the Maltese Constitution since 1987**
- No foreign military bases
- Neutrality preserved upon EU accession (2004)=**Non member of NATO**

\*Flexible interpretation of neutrality  
=**Participation on a voluntary basis**

- Tension between neutrality and EU solidarity
- Increased pressure during international crises

# THE RULE OF LAW CRISIS

- Assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia (2017): investigative journalist revealed **corruption, money laundering, and political-financial** links.

→ Malta's connection to the **Panama Papers**.

**Concerns repeatedly raised by the European Commission, the European Parliament, and international watchdogs:**

- **Institutional weaknesses:** limited independence of the judiciary and law enforcement authorities
- **Corruption and conflicts of interest:** close ties between political elites, business interests, and organized crime
- **Threats to media freedom:** strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) and intimidation of journalists



## EU and Domestic Responses

- Constitutional and legislative reforms initiated under EU pressure
- Implementation remains partial, slow, and uneven
- Rule of Law Conditionality (2020): Froze/delayed €400M+ cohesion/recovery funds
- Muscat designation

- **“Golden passport”** scheme sold EU citizenship for over €1 million.
- EU institutions warned of **money-laundering** and security risks..

## What is it ?

- Citizenship by investment programme
  - launched in 2014
- EU citizenship for wealthy foreign investors with financial contribution and property investment required
- Justified by economic benefits

## BUT:

- lack of transparency
- Allegations of corruption and favoritism
- Security and money-laundering risks
- EU criticism and infringement procedure (2020)

- A total of **1,549 main applicants received Maltese citizenship through the citizenship-by-investment programmes.**
- Along with them, **3,754 dependents also received citizenship — making about 5,303 people in total** granted citizenship through the scheme in its first 10 years.



## SO:

- Suspended for certain nationals (Russia, Belarus)
- Tension: national sovereignty vs EU citizenship
- Ongoing EU concern over programme integrity

# UKRAINE WAR

- Condemns Russia's invasion and supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity

→ Political and diplomatic support, supports EU sanctions against Russia

- Provides **humanitarian and non-lethal aid, but no weapons deliveries**

→ Refuses military involvement to **preserve constitutional neutrality**

- **Cautious on EU security and financial mechanisms** (e.g. frozen Russian assets)

- Public opinion supports Ukraine and **support at 57%**  
**Ukraine's adhesion in UE**

- EU partners accept Malta's stance, despite occasional disagreements



- Since the early 2000s, Malta has become a **frontline EU state on Central Mediterranean migration routes**, receiving one of the highest numbers of migrants per capita.

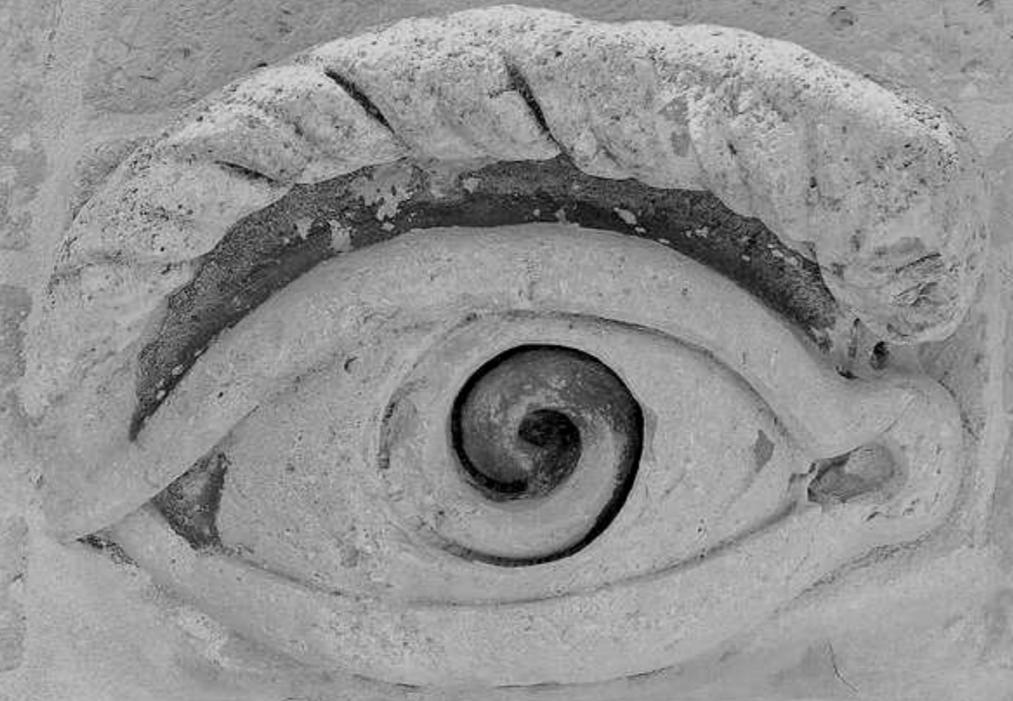
- Irregular sea arrivals peaked at over 5,000 in 2019 but fell by nearly 90% after 2020 due to **stricter policies, EU measures and cooperation with Libya**.

- Despite fewer arrivals, migration remains politically sensitive as Malta hosts thousands of refugees and relies heavily on **legal labour migration**.

- call for **stronger EU solidarity**: relocation quotas, shared responsibility, and joint missions.

→ 2025 debates focus on **enforcing the EU Pact on Migration** and easing the frontline burden.

## IMMIGRATION



# EUROSCPTICISM

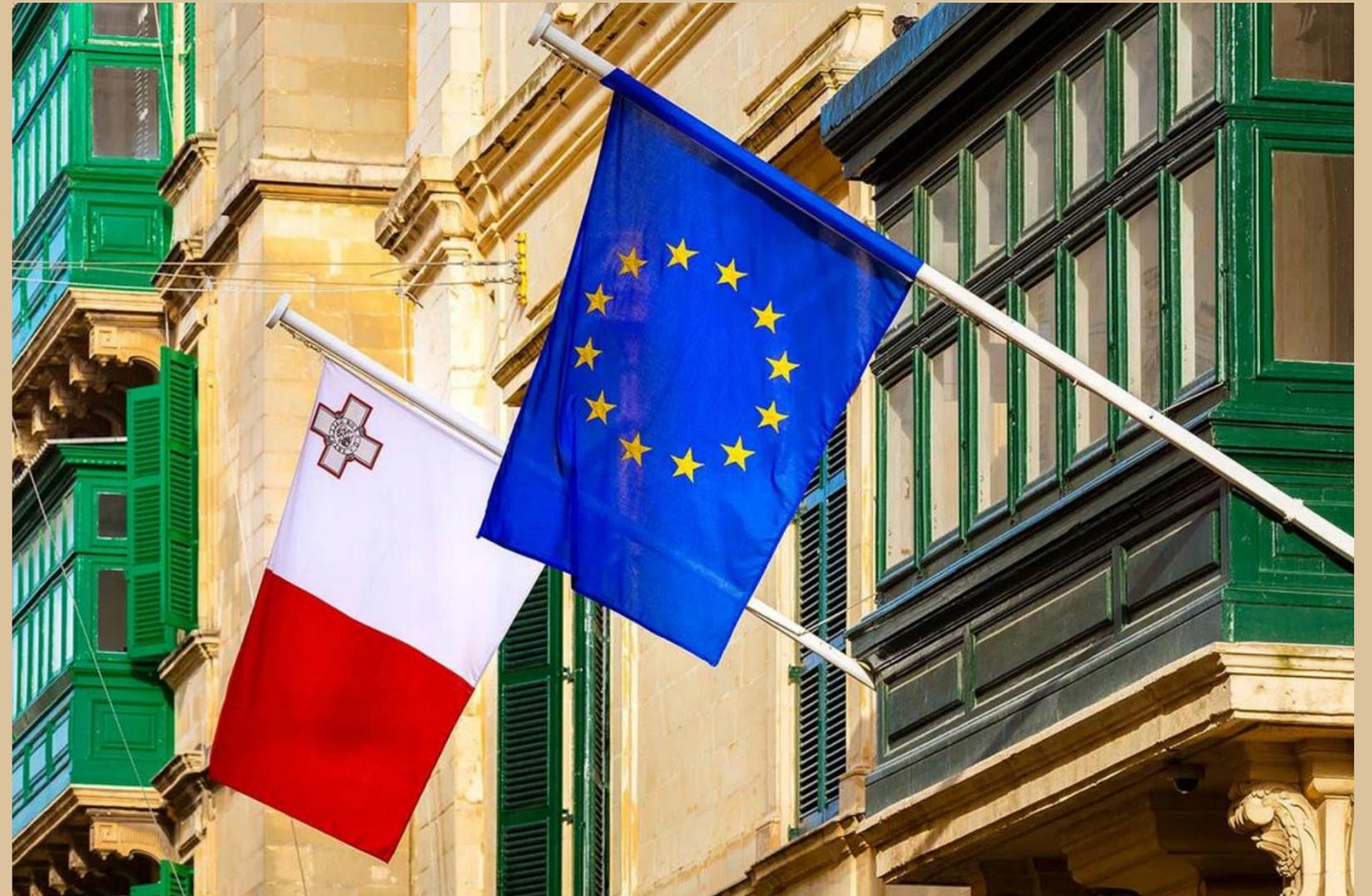
## Pre 2004 and DON MINTOFF:

key figure in Maltese politics : deeply **sceptical of European integration, fearing that joining Europe would limit Malta's independence** and replace British colonial rule with new external control.

→ promoted **non-alignment, building relations with Arab countries, China and the socialist bloc**. He consistently **opposed Malta's accession to the European Community, arguing that it would threaten Malta's neutrality, social model and decision-making power**. His views left a lasting legacy in Maltese political debates on Europe, **sovereignty and neutrality**.

## Opinion switch:

- 2010s: **strong EU support (70–90%)**, approval of euro & Schengen
- Euroscepticism **mainly issue-based**, not ideological
- 2025 Eurobarometer: **62% positive** when asked **whether the EU conjures up a positive, neutral, or negative image to them personally**.



- Small **Eurosceptic parties** exist (e.g., Alleanza Bidla) but **politically marginal**
- Malta: 6 MEP seats (S&D 4, EPP 2),  
→ **no Eurosceptic representation in Parliament**

**THANK YOU !**

