

MALTA

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda: Are “partners” delivering?

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The main thrust of the report is to build a picture of Malta’s efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The collection and analysis of relevant information and material already makes it possible to make a number of key observations. First, much of the policy and legislation referred to was in fact put in place before the SDGs were agreed, so that any targets referred to are only indirectly relevant to the themes, targets and goals of the SDGs. The foremost example of this is Malta’s Official Development Assistance policy which is yet to be aligned to the 2030 Agenda almost two years after the SDGs being launched.

The lack of any substantive cohesion between a number of policies, such as education or health, with sustainability is also a worrying factor. Yet, the general absence of statistical data, particularly of disaggregated data by various social and economic criteria, resulting from a lack of collection of such data or from the prevalent praxis of not making it public makes our exercise even more difficult. All these elements highlight the lack of coherent and comprehensive approach to the legal and policy framework relating to the SDGs. This also belies a weak vision both on the action required at a national level and in terms of Malta’s role within the international community and its contribution (despite it being a small country) at the global level.

SDG 1

With 22.4 percent of its population at risk of poverty and social exclusion (34% for the disabled population, 25% for children and 23.7% for those aged 65 or over) and 8.1 percent living with severe material deprivation, Malta’s poverty figures are consistent with the EU average.

However, despite having weathered very well the financial and monetary crises with a favourable economic performance over the last decade, the benefits of economic growth do not reach the most vulnerable.

Commenting on the Green Paper on the government’s framework on poverty reduction, Caritas Malta notes that the increase in the national minimum wage (NMW) has not taken into account changes in household expenses, such as internet, electronic devices and white goods which did not exist (or were rarer) in households in the 1970s. Thus, the NMW today is not enough to assure beneficiaries a decent standard of living. Whereas poverty risk gaps among age groups and genders are not as significant in Malta as in other European countries, people with disabilities are at a considerably higher risk of poverty and social exclusion. The Social Protection Gross Expenditure has fallen since 2010 (when it was 19.1% of GDP). Malta also encounters challenges in terms of opportunities for socio-economic mobility.

It is therefore recommended that Government streamline the social inclusion and protection system to focus on socioeconomic mobility, not limit itself to ‘harm reduction’. It should also urgently address intergenerational transmission of poverty by providing safety nets to families at risk as well as ensure that financial contributions by employers who are unwilling or unable to meet the disability quota are increased in order to improve the welfare of people with disabilities. Furthermore, a revision of income support to vulnerable groups would need to take into account the rising costs of living.

SDG 2

The first Food Consumption Survey which looked at foods consumed by the adult population showed that the Maltese have poor eating habits: they consume high amounts of sweets and sugary foods and consumption of vegetables is low. The incidence of no daily fruit and vegetable consumption was over 7 percent lower than the EU average. Obesity rates are alarmingly high in Malta at 29.8 percent for the population aged over 19, and even higher among children. In 2015, 13.1 percent of the population could not afford a meal with meat, chicken, fish or a vegetarian equivalent every second day. However, in 2016, this rate stood at 40 percent among asylum seekers, underscoring the higher vulnerability of this sector of the population.

Goal 2 also commits Member States to doubling agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers. In 2010, family labour accounted for over 90 percent of the volume of work carried out in agriculture in Malta. However, there are as yet no policies to strengthen family farming in general.

Malta does not yet have legislation which aims at reducing the impact of the marketing of HFSS (High Fat, Sugar and Salt) foods to children. No national studies have been conducted to determine the extent of micronutrient deficiencies amongst the Maltese population. These deficiencies may contribute to chronic diseases with impacts on women, children, middle-aged and older people. This presents a challenge for public health authorities to understand and prevent these deficiencies.

It is recommended that the government improve monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the current food assistance and healthy lifestyle schemes and revise them to meet the most pressing challenges. It should also invest in closing the gaps in fruit and vegetable consumption between the top and bottom income quintiles. Exploring good practices in other countries to reduce marketing pressures that favour unhealthy eating habits, using broadcast time regulations, taxation and subsidies should also bring about necessary improvements.

Finally, the government should also invest in improving the efficiency and reducing the environmental footprint of local farming practices.

SDG 3

The prevalence of diabetes amongst adults in Malta is 13.9 percent, compared to the EU average of 9.1 percent. In 2014, Malta had the highest rate of obesity in the EU, with 26 percent of the adult population being obese. That same year, coronary heart disease was the leading cause of premature deaths in males, accounting for 11.6 percent. In females, it was the second leading cause of premature deaths following breast cancer (7.4% and 6% respectively). The overall self-reported prevalence of hypertension in Maltese women is 23 percent and 22 percent in men.

The use of alcohol in Malta far outweighs all other substance use. Furthermore, a large number of road injuries and fatalities on the Maltese roads are a result of drunk driving. A 2010 Eurobarometer study found that 91 percent of respondents in Malta did not know the legal limit of alcohol consumption before driving. Although alcohol is illegal to consume or purchase under the age of 17, it is easily available to purchase and consume in public places.

There is still stigma surrounding sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in Malta, which often leads to lack of treatment and prevention, as well as lack of reporting. Limited awareness about contraception exacerbates this issue.

It is recommended that the government mainstream incentives for the Maltese population, of all ages, to engage in exercise, physical activity and sport and integrate these activities into education and other policies. It should also adopt a National Alcohol Policy, together with a strategy targeting alcohol use and abuse through a multi-sectoral approach. Furthermore, it should commission comprehensive research and data collection with regards to STIs in Malta so as to be able to better gauge the situation and how to combat it.

SDG 4

In 2013, the Early School Leaving Rate in Malta was 20.9 percent, well above the EU average of 11.9 percent. In 2011, its mean reading score for 10-year olds (477) was significantly lower than the international average (500) and was ranked 35th of 45 participating countries in the Progress in International Literacy Study. Fully 36.3 percent of 15 year-olds in Malta are low achievers in reading literacy – significantly higher than the EU average of 19.7 percent.

The key challenges in this sector start from a shortage of teachers in core subject areas (English, Maths, Science, Physical Education and primary schools in general). Moreover, various factors within the education system result in schools being only partially able to effectively implement inclusive education, resulting in an integrative approach for only some learners, rather than all learners. School staff do not feel sufficiently enabled to meet individual learning needs. Teacher training, provision of support, and the degree of centralization do not seem to reinforce inclusive practices.

Among the most vital recommendations is for the government to develop and implement incentives for young professionals to qualify and work as teachers. It should also further incentivize schools to be proactive and provide inclusive school environments, together with the setting up of induction, cultural orientation and integration programmes for migrant students and their parents. Finally, it should set specific benchmarks and develop indicators to measure the results of programmes and policies.

SDG 5

Malta ranked 46th on the Gender Equality Index in 2014. It was ranked 108 out of 144 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index based on economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. The main challenges lie in the unequal division of time spent on care, domestic tasks and social activities.

Women made up only 12.9 percent of the national parliament after the 2013 general elections. This increased to 14.9 percent in the 2017 general elections with 10 female parliament members out of a total of 67. Within the labour market, in 2015, the rate of female participation stood at 56.2 percent. The Gender Pay Gap in 2014 stood at 10.6 percent in hourly wage rates while it was 18.4 percent in monthly earnings. In terms of ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, Malta is part of a small minority of governments that oppose sexual and reproductive rights, notably the right to abortion (which is a crime in Malta).

It is recommended that the government develop a comprehensive policy and strategy for gender equality, promoting equality for women and girls in all spheres of life. It should strive to increase the number of women in the labour market through measures such as increased parental leave and flexible hours in all sectors, while also strengthening work-life balance for women, including recognizing and valuing domestic and care work. Finally, it should introduce incentives and temporary special measures for women, such as gender quotas on parliamentary lists, to enable them to reach and hold high-level positions in all spheres (including political and other work sectors).

SDG 6

Ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all is extremely relevant to Malta, which has the lowest level of annual water resources in the EU: 185m³ per person. Fresh water is a scarce natural resource, due to the country's high population density and arid climate. Malta has the least freshwater renewable resources in the EU with only 209.83 cubic metres of freshwater per inhabitant produced by renewable resources in 2014. It bases its water procurement on desalination through reverse-osmosis plants which translates into high costs and strong negative environmental impact. However, this has received little attention in public debate.

The key challenges in this area start from the absence of a comprehensive Water Policy even if various aspects are covered through more specific policy documents. It is critical that the government address the excessive consumption of underground water, primarily through regulation and enforcement.

The government should adopt a comprehensive Water Policy comprising, at a minimum, water extraction, management and use, and clearly identify the institutional framework responsibility for water management amongst government institutions. It should also strive to improve drastically the management of renewable freshwater through measures such as a better collection of rainwater and raising awareness on water use.

SDG 7

In 2014, Malta had the second lowest share of renewable energy in the gross final energy consumption (4.7%) in the EU. While the EU is on track to meet the renewable energy target for 2020, Malta is one of the few EU Member States that is not.

The country's renewable energy is mostly through solar water heaters (SWH) and photovoltaic (PV) installations and the use of bio-fuels. Solar water heaters are estimated to contribute 0.92 percent of the 10 percent national Renewable Energy Sources (RES) target by 2020. Installations of PV systems are expected to contribute 4.7 percent of that target.

However, since PV technology is land-intensive, it poses a problem as land is scarce and expensive in Malta, given its size and high population density: in 2012, almost one third (32.9%) of the country was classified as artificial land cover, by far the highest percentage in the EU, rendering visual impact inevitable. For this reason, the Draft Solar Farm Policy gives priority to large scale rooftops, car parks, industrial areas and quarries.

The main challenge hindering Malta's solar potential is the lack of legal protection of solar rights. Such protection interferes with other property rights which have developed due to the limited availability and high value of land, parcelling and inheritance.

Moreover, a trend in the building sector has seen the redevelopment of single unit households into multiple dwellings, rendering the installation of SWH ineffective due to the height of the building as well as limited roof accessibility.

It is recommended that better consideration be provided for the protection of solar rights as a result of an enhanced balance between solar and property rights. Malta should also explore alternative options of PV system installations that reduce the visual impact, such as the solar road recently built in France. PV systems and solar water heaters alone are inadequate to meet Malta's targets.

SDG 8

As a result of its robust economic performance, the country's GDP per capita is projected to reach 97 percent of the EU average in 2017. Malta is the only EU member state with a diminishing stock of capital per person employed in the recent past. Unemployment has reached an all-time low and fares well compared to other EU member states; in 2015 Malta had an unemployment rate of 5.4 percent, compared to the EU28 average rate of 9.4 percent. Among employers seeking candidates for high-skill positions in Malta, 55 percent report difficulty in recruiting appropriate candidates for these roles.

Malta also faces other labour market challenges. The Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) rate grew from 9.8 percent in 2009 to 11.1 percent in 2011, reflecting an increase in the number of inactive youths. Furthermore, despite longer hours worked, Malta's labour productivity per hour has declined consistently over the years due to rising labour costs, contributing to decreasing competitiveness in contrast to other EU member states.

Other challenges result from the fact that despite the general decrease in the government budget deficit, because primary current expenditure has been growing faster than potential GDP, it is difficult to maintain sustainable economic growth.

The limited investor base for the government, while shielding it from volatile global financial markets, also implies a lack of diversification and spillover risks between different domestic sectors. Inefficiencies in network industries, public administration and the judicial system obstruct the business environment.

Among recommended actions, Malta should explore the areas where public sector expenditure could be reduced or streamlined without undermining commitments to sustainable and inclusive society. Diversification in investments could become a higher priority. Streamlining the education system (general and vocational) would address the skills mismatch. A review of the tourism policy should encourage sustainable creation of quality jobs for the local population. The government should also revise labour market activation measures for people with disabilities and NEETs, using good practices from other EU countries and taking full advantage of EaSI, Erasmus+ and other mechanisms.

Goal 9

Malta ranks 1st for road density out of 141 countries worldwide, 85th for quality of roads, and 110th for quality of ground transport networks, underlining the pressing need for reduced road density. In 2015, Malta spent 0.77 percent of its GDP on research and development, compared to an EU28 average of 2.03 percent. The country's insufficient capacity to innovate is considered one of the most problematic factors for doing business in the country, making the goal of boosting investment in infrastructure and innovation extremely pertinent.

It is recommended that Malta should increase research and development expenditure from public and private sources as a percentage of GDP, aimed at least at reaching the EU28 average. It should also expand measures to foster employment of PhD holders in private enterprises to include professionals from fields not limited to ICT, engineering and science. Involving stakeholders to examine the feasibility of a more sustainable transport system would be another step in the right direction. This might include railroads, waterways and more sustainable vehicles. Road density

should be addressed with the target of a significant decrease that has to be consistent over time. Given its high ICT penetration, Malta is well-placed to explore the benefits of teleworking, ICT-based mobile work and similar new forms of employment that reduce daily commutes by personal transportation.

SDG 10

The Gini coefficient of equalized disposable income in Malta is 27.76 (average 2010 – 2015 period). Eight out of 100 people are living in relative poverty. In 2014, Malta ranked 33rd out of 38 countries for the overall integration of migrants, according to the Migrant Integration Policy Index.

Inequality encompasses many dimensions, including income, educational opportunities, access to the labour market, social integration, and all kinds of discrimination. While achievements have been made in recent years in terms of LGBTIQ rights, including the introduction of legislation against workplace discrimination and the right to civil unions for same-sex couples, other groups such as migrants still face inequalities. This is further compounded by the lack of a national integration policy, which the government has promised to develop in 2017.

Although income inequality in Malta is lower than the EU28 average the country is not on track for being an equitable and just society. Among EU member states, Malta has the largest persistence (73.5%) of low education, transmitted from parents to children. This intergenerational transfer can reinforce income inequalities by providing individuals coming from vulnerable groups with fewer job opportunities and less valued work skills.

Recommendations include the need for the government to commission reliable studies on the intergenerational transmission of inequalities (educational, income, etc.) with the participation of relevant stakeholders, to inform a new strategy to fight such phenomena. Priority should be given for the adoption of a National Integration Policy.

This should have the widest possible impact to respond to the key problems of integration on the Maltese Islands.

SDG 11

Fully 95 percent of Maltese population lived in cities in 2015. In 2014 Malta ranked as the 9th country in the world according to the number of motor vehicles per 1,000 inhabitants and 11 percent of the Maltese population lived in housing with leaking roof/ damp walls/ floors/ foundation or rot in window frames. Within the Maltese population, 37.7 percent of residents in residential areas suffered from pollution, grime or other environmental problems in 2014. Malta's municipal waste production is among the highest in the EU 28, with no improvement between 2005 and 2015. In 2012, 58.24 percent of waste generated in Malta is landfilled against the EU average of 22.75 percent.

Goal 11 is set to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". Making sure that urban areas are safe, sustainable, resilient and inclusive must be a priority of all governments, especially of those where urbanization is already quite high. This is a concern for Malta, which is ranked the eighth most urbanized country in the world.

Malta's situation as the most densely populated country in the EU and one of the most densely populated countries in the world is expected to put further pressure on the infrastructure as urbanization will continue growing to 97.2 percent by 2050. Illegal buildings deeply affect the sustainability of housing on the Islands. The lack of reliable data on existing illegal buildings and the scheme set up by the government to regularize unauthorized existing building developments are a deep concern for the sustainability of Maltese cities. An extremely poor quality of the ground transport network, together with the remarkably high number of vehicles per capita, threatens mobility on the islands.

Protecting and expanding green spaces, along with safe and resilient non-urbanized public areas is thus a high priority recommendation. This can be achieved by demolishing illegal, unsafe and unsustainable buildings

and creating parks and free, accessible, green areas.

The government should investigate and implement strategies to guarantee that property prices do not rise much faster than the national minimum wage, thus reducing the property purchasing power. This can be achieved either by providing vulnerable groups with subsidized mortgages, or by raising the national minimum wage at the same rate as average housing prices. The relevant authorities should set up a group of national and international experts to cooperate with stakeholders to find a definitive, sustainable solution for public transport on the Maltese Islands. This should be followed by raising awareness campaigns to reduce the number of vehicles per capita in the long term.

SDG 12

Hazardous waste generation increased by 36.4 percent in 2015 as a result of higher amounts of discarded vehicles and chemical wastes. The total amount of solid waste generated in 2015 amounted to 1.9 million tonnes, down by 2.4 percent from 2014. In terms of waste management, various factors including high population density, limited land space, lack of economies of scale, and the effects of climatic conditions make it difficult for Malta to move waste management up the waste hierarchy through increased prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery.

Among the initiatives government has taken to raise awareness on sustainable development is a National Education for Sustainable Development Strategy, for which public consultation closed in May 2016. The strategy would aim at ensuring that education for sustainable development reaches all the population. However, although this strategy was meant to be finalized by end of 2016, it has not yet been published.

Among the main challenges in this sector is the lack of facilities to store and treat hazardous substances, and they are thus exported. Although EU waste legislation promotes principles of self-sufficiency and proximity, Malta, as an island-state, encounters challenges such as the fact that the recovery of dry recyclables for recycling into new products abroad is expensive due to

the distances between Malta and mainland Europe and other countries. Further, limited availability of data and lack of reporting on successes and challenges in business and the public sector limit the authorities' capacity to develop evidence-based policies.

It is therefore urgent for Malta to develop a hazardous waste policy and action plan. The government needs to involve the relevant stakeholders, both national and international in order to have the most effective waste management possible for Malta as a small island state. Moreover, the relevant authorities should conduct a study to set the baseline for sustainability-related challenges and practices in business and the public sector.

SDG 13

In 2014, Malta had the highest greenhouse gas emissions (in CO₂ equivalent, indexed to 1990) of all EU member states. Due to its small size and its location in Southern Europe, Malta is vulnerable to the predicted climate change impacts. The country ratified the UNFCCC in 1994 and ratified the Kyoto Protocol in 2001. Yet it was the only EU member state to not reach its 2014 ESD (Effort Sharing Decision) target with regards to Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.

In 2013, 2014 and 2015, Malta failed to limit its GHG emissions to below its annual ESD targets. Despite a target that was higher than its 2005 base-year levels, Malta's emissions remained above its 2014 ESD target by 0.1 million annual emission allocations (AEAs), equal to a gap of 11 percent. Since the difference between Malta's actual emissions and its targets for 2014 and 2015 exceeds 5 percent, Malta needs to use additional flexibilities (e.g., buying AEAs from other member states) to comply with the ESD.

The key challenges in this area start from the continuing decline in bus travel, as well as the increase in car ownership; both contributing to high GHG emissions. Malta has started developing a national Low Carbon Development Strategy according to the requirements under the UNFCCC, although this is not yet finalized.

Introducing more incentives for bus travel (especially those of working age) through taxation, smart routing and priority lanes is seen as critical starting point, which could be linked with incentives to decrease car ownership and encourage carpooling. The government should also finalize and implement its Low Carbon Development Strategy.

SDG 14

Maltese fishing accounts for around 0.03 percent of the total EU catch. At the end of 2012, the annual volume of fish landings at the official market in Malta amounted to 141 tonnes less when compared to 2011. In 2010, the agriculture and fishing sectors constituted 4.4 percent of Gozo's Gross Value Added, well above the 1.6 percent contribution of this sector to the Maltese GVA. In Malta, all existing bathing waters met at least sufficient water quality standards in 2015.

While the fishing industry has a negligible economic contribution (equivalent to about 0.1% of GDP), it has a social and cultural importance. Most Maltese fishermen rely on the sale of prized species that are made available to the consumer as fresh fish caught during relatively short fishing trips. The status of 36 percent of Maltese species and 29 percent of Maltese habitats listed in the EC Habitats Directive is still unknown: a significant number of these habitats relate to the marine environment. Such gaps in knowledge obstruct the development and implementation of effective protection and conservation.

It is therefore recommended that the government ensure ongoing monitoring of fish stocks in the Mediterranean, with rapid interventions for short or medium term bans on particular types of fishing or of catching particular types of fish. It is also urgent to invest in research on Malta's habitats in the marine environment to develop and implement their effective protection and conservation. This could lead to a drive to improve and maintain conservation of coastal and marine areas, at above the 10 percent agreed threshold.

Malta should publish monitoring data relating to fisheries subsidies to ensure that they do not contribute to and collaborate with small island developing states to share knowledge and resources on the sustainable use of marine resources.

SDG 15

In order to protect its natural heritage, Malta has given legal protection to just over 13 percent of its land area and 11km² of its territorial waters. In addition, 64 percent of habitats and 44 percent of species have an inadequate or poor conservation status. Habitats and species continue to be threatened by land development, invasive species, over-exploration and the rising effects of climate change. Malta has committed to halting biodiversity loss by 2020, but urgent action is needed to meet this target.

Malta is not a resource-rich country and its key resources of fresh water, limestone, soil and land (particularly coastal land) are in short supply. Habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation caused by agricultural expansion, intensification and rapid development are the most significant threats at the European level to Malta's species.

Malta has a population of less than half a million but receives approximately 1.2 million tourists each year. This high human pressure as well as drastic changes in land use has had a direct impact on the degradation of ecosystem services. In particular, tourism has played a major role in the overdevelopment of coastal regions and this has accelerated a special form of desertification known as 'littoralization', while also increasing eutrophication of the Mediterranean Sea.

Malta's challenges lie in the fact that the environment is not seen as a fundamental cornerstone of the country's economy. Tourism, which is considered a key element in Malta's economy, plays a significant role in the degradation of ecosystems. A similar trend can be seen with Malta's ever-increasing infrastructure and its impacts on the country's ecosystems. Moreover, there is a lack of specialized skills and fundamental knowledge in areas such as biodiversity. Malta should therefore

support further studies and monitoring to sustainably address the threats to Maltese habitats and species, as well as to promote the skills and knowledge needed to protect from biodiversity loss. The relevant authorities should promote urban biodiversity through protecting, enhancing and increasing urban green spaces.

SDG 16

Between 2007 and 2015 Malta recorded an increase of 1038 percent in reported cases of domestic violence. In 2016 it scored 55 on the Corruption Perceptions Index, on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). More than 25 percent of the prison population was in pre-trial detention in 2016.

In this context, it is pertinent to highlight that since 2012, Malta has consistently held a Tier 2 Ranking in the US Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report. It is primarily considered a destination country for trafficking for sexual and labour exploitation as well as being a country of transit. Identification of trafficked persons and prosecution of traffickers remain a matter of grave concern despite a number of action plans having been adopted, capacity building sessions held and awareness campaigns undertaken.

In this case, Malta faces challenges in its endeavours to no longer allow the country to be used as a tax haven by international enterprises. Improving legislative, policy and other measures to address corruption at the administrative, political and judicial levels, thereby supporting greater trust by the Maltese public in these institutions has also been identified as a key stumbling block. Lack of enforcement and a sclerotic justice system pose difficulties in strengthening the measures that allow for the effective identification and prosecution of crime including homicide, violence against women and human trafficking.

It is therefore recommended that Malta update the Code of Ethics for Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and Parliamentary Assistants and create a commission to monitor compliance. The relevant authorities should study and set up practical approaches to limit the potential financial harm of international companies

registered in Malta. Malta should proactively engage in efforts to address all forms of crime including violence against women and human trafficking through the investment of greater resources in the capacity building of entities involved in the identification and protection of victims and the prosecution of offenders.

SDG 17

In 2014, Malta scored a “very poor” rating in an aid transparency index, ranking 64th out of 68 countries surveyed. Its total net disbursement for ODA in 2015 was 0.17 percent of its GNI despite the country’s commitment to reach the target of 0.33 percent ODA/GNI for 2015.

The fact that civil society is often unfamiliar with Malta’s ODA policy and the work of the Maltese government in the field of overseas development poses serious challenges for transparency, accountability and proper scrutiny to take place. Scarce funding opportunities, a lack of communication and information, and complicated bureaucracy procedures make it hard for NGOs to access the limited number of financial resources made available at the national level.

Over the last years, the funds allocated to NGOs for implementing projects overseas suffered a steady decrease, instead of the expected increase consistent with the commitment of dedicating 0.33 percent of the country’s GNI to ODA. The government should therefore separate the costs of refugee protection from ODA expenditure in its reporting. It should also increase the amount of funds available to improve the development impact of aid and make the national call for proposals for overseas development projects more transparent by publishing all of the necessary details and provide evaluation results to applicants. Finally, Malta should increase genuine aid by designing an effective new development cooperation policy, strategy and action plan.

Conclusion

Whilst much work has been done in addressing the areas of work that contribute towards achieving the SDGs, Malta is still a long way off from having a broad-ranging and truly comprehensive (inwards and outwards facing)

sustainable development agenda which sets out how and with which allocated resources this contribution will be made. Achieving the SDGs will require all UN Member States to come together and commit to prioritizing these targets. Given the current global climate of intractable conflict, mass displacement and rapid environmental degradation, not only must we strive to halt and reverse the short- and long-term impact of these factors through investment and expertise, but we must also play a strong role in advocating for those who are at critical risk of losing their lives (whether due to war, malnutrition, poverty), or of suffering long-term morbidity because of natural or human caused events.

Sustainable development relates to challenges that affect populations across the world, yet some populations are particularly vulnerable to these adverse conditions. Sustainability is about achieving better equity and representation, justice and safe environments, respect for humans, animals and trees, collaboration on a wider scale than ever seen before, and achieving significant positive social change at an unprecedented scale.

This report is submitted by Kopin¹ (VO/0200), the Social Watch reference for Malta, in collaboration with SKOP (The National Platform for Maltese NGOs – VO/0366)² and the People for Change Foundation.³ It relies heavily on the SKOP publication entitled Malta’s Progress Towards the SDGs: A Preliminary Review,⁴ prepared by the People for Change Foundation and financed through the Educating for Change⁵ presidency project.

1 www.kopin.org

2 www.skopmalta.org

3 www.pfcmalta.org

4 The People for Change Foundation, “Malta’s progress towards the SDGs: a preliminary review,” 2017.

5 The project “E4C – Educating for change: Capitalising on the 2017 EU Presidency in Malta to raise awareness on Agenda 2030” seeks to promote development education and raise awareness on development and cooperation policies by implementing a comprehensive capacity building programme to assist and support relevant national and local government representatives, civil society organizations and other members of the general public. It is implemented by SKOP with the support of the European Commission and the Maltese Ministry for Foreign Affairs, available at: <http://skopmalta.org/our-projects/e4c-the-presidency-project/>