



## Fact Sheet Briefing – Afrophobia in Malta

March 2016

This fact sheet is based on ENAR's Shadow Report questionnaire 2014/2015, answered by Dr Jean-Pierre Gauci & Christine Cassar from *the People for Change Foundation*, including qualitative and quantitative data.

Defining 'People of African Descent (PAD)/Black Europeans (BE) population' is no easy task and indeed various definitions and descriptions exist for the group. The UN Working Group on people of African descent proposed that: "People of African descent may be defined as descendants of the African victims of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (...) Africans and their descendants who, after their countries' independence, emigrated to or went to work in Europe, Canada and the Middle East."<sup>1</sup> The term 'Black Europeans' is used here to refer to Black people born or raised in Europe or with an EU citizenship. In some places the term 'Black people' is used to refer more broadly to all those individuals, groups and communities that define themselves as 'Black'. Accordingly, 'Black' does not necessarily refer to a skin colour so much as a sociologically constructed identity.

According to the 2011 census of the National Statistics Office, Somali nationals represent the second largest group of migrants in Malta at 1,041, followed by 548 Eritreans.<sup>2</sup>

### Key findings and examples

#### National politics

- The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality implemented a number of projects and initiatives to promote equality through public awareness campaigns and training, as well as research. The "I'm not racist, but..." project, for example, sought to examine the realities of discrimination in the housing industry. It is difficult to assess the impact of these projects as no impact assessment exists, however, the low level of awareness of remedies and the high levels of discrimination would indicate that the impact is limited.
- The government has yet to formally adopted its National Action Plan Against Racism despite being in development for several years and implemented in some areas.

#### Employment

- There is no recent information on disaggregated unemployment rates available in Malta. In 2011 the national average unemployment rate was at 6.4%, almost ten times lower than the

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<sup>1</sup> UN Working Group on People of African Descent, Identification and Definition of People of African Descent and How Racial Discrimination Against them is Manifested in Various Regions, E/CN.4/2003/WG.20/WP.3

<sup>2</sup> National Statistics Office. 2014. *Census of Population and Housing 2011: Final Report*. Available at: <https://nso.gov.mt/en/publicatons/Pages/Publications-by-Date.aspx> (page 154)

comparable number for people of African descent (54%).<sup>3</sup> It is reported that this figure is unlikely to have changed significantly over the last few years.

- Black people in Malta are reported to carry out work which is described as “dirty, dangerous and demeaning”. This is in part linked to racism and discrimination as further studies show that while Eastern Europeans were successful in finding jobs in the restaurant industry in Malta, migrants from Africa were severely limited in their job opportunities.<sup>4</sup>

## Migration

- For recent African migrants, gender roles, integration, education and employment have been raised as significant considerations for Black migrant women. Black female asylum seekers appear to be more vulnerable in a range of areas and in some cases this is traced back to their country of origin. For example, women who were previously denied access to education in their home countries (i.e. Somalia, Sudan or Eritrea) are likely to face difficult hurdles in accessing education, employment and other modes of integration once in Malta. Language barriers, illiteracy and gendered social norms hinder access to relevant information for these groups.
- Research shows that people who have been through the asylum process are over-represented in the informal economy, where exploitation and discrimination are especially common, including salaries below the minimum wage and working conditions below health and safety standards.<sup>5</sup>

## Policing, police violence and the criminal justice system

- The incident experienced by Daboma Jack, the Hungarian student of Nigerian descent, reflects Maltese police attitudes. A policeman stood by when Daboma Jack was spat at and slapped by a woman during a chaotic moment at the Valletta bus terminal and then the police used force to arrest Mr. Jack. They failed to arrest the other perpetrators, while subsequent videos from the incident suggest that they had started the argument.<sup>6</sup>
- The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) found that 85% of those who experienced racist incidents in 2010 did not report it to the authorities. Although this figure is from 2010, reporting rates are unlikely to have changed significantly.
- An NGO report reveals that 32% of the detained migrants who had been interviewed, claimed to have been assaulted by detention personnel and 40% suffered from verbal abuse.<sup>7</sup>
- The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) reported that certain detention service employees abused their authority and position by having sexual relations with detainees.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). 2011. EU-MIDIS European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey Main Results Report Available at:

[https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/663-FRA-2011\\_EU\\_MIDIS\\_EN.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/663-FRA-2011_EU_MIDIS_EN.pdf) (accessed on 12/02/2016)

<sup>4</sup> Kim Dalli, “Failure to Recognize Work Qualifications for Migrants,” Times of Malta (March 18 2014). Available at:

<http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20140318/local/Failure-to-recognise-work-qualifications-of-migrants.511079>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ivan Martin, “Updated: Woman Photographed in Hungarian Student Racial Abuse Incident Turns Herself In”, Times of Malta (4 July 2015). Available at: <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20150704/local/updated-woman-photographed-in-hungarian-student-racial-abuse-incident.575101> (accessed on 26/02/2016)

<sup>7</sup> Jesuit Refugee Service. 2010. Becoming Vulnerable in Detention Report. Available at:

<http://www.jrsmalta.org/content.aspx?id=254055#.VoaEmZN4bow>

<sup>8</sup> European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. 2013. ECRI Report on Malta (fourth monitoring cycle). Available at:

<https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Malta/MLT-CbC-IV-2013-037-ENG.pdf>

## Education

- Although there are no statistics available on the racial motivations in bullying cases, anecdotal evidence suggests children of African descent have been bullied because of their skin colour.

*In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Employment launched a new policy in Maltese schools called “Addressing Bullying Behaviour in Schools” which is – among other things – based on the human right to feel safe and treated equally. In particular, the policy focuses on vulnerable groups that are ethnic minorities.*

## Media

- It is reported that social media has become a forum for racist messages that target individuals and that are simultaneously broadcast across the internet to innumerable recipients.
- The term ‘migrant’ is usually used in reference to all Black people, even if they are born in Malta and have European citizenship. Negative values, such as criminality and prostitution, are attached to this term.

*The African Media Association Malta promotes integration and active communication and information sharing to the African community. Young professionals are involved in the project and work to improve their skills and knowledge in administration, management, finance and broadcasting.*

## Recommendations

- The government should update and adopt without any further delay a National Action Plan Against Racism and Xenophobia that addresses the various manifestations of racism. It will provide a solid framework for national actions, investment of resources, and a political statement that racism and xenophobia have no place in Malta.
- Ensure that the Human Rights and Equality Commission currently being developed is adequately resourced (legally, financially) to effectively address issues of racism and discrimination faced by people of African descent and Black Europeans.
- In partnership with civil society organisations, and according to data protection principles, collect equality data and monitor the outcomes of people of African descent/Black Europeans’ in key social indicators in employment, health, education and housing and develop policies in response to persistent racial inequalities.
- Ease and ensure the process of recognition of foreign qualifications and practical experiences.
- Develop ethnic and racial categories in the census, in consultation with civil society organisations and other stakeholders, and allow for self-identification.
- Ensure that national legislation and police guidelines prohibit ethnic profiling and establish a requirement for reasonable suspicion for all police stops.
- Ensure regular training of law-enforcement agents on unconscious bias.
- Ensure that performance appraisal systems for law enforcement sanction the use of ethnic profiling.