



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AND
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS AND
TRADE

INTELLIGENT TRAVEL GUIDE

Intelligent Travel

In recent years, there was a considerable increase in the number of Maltese nationals travelling abroad for business or leisure. While this is a positive sign, it has also brought about a new set of challenges and a significant increase in requests for consular assistance, the majority of which could be easily avoided if travellers are properly guided about what to do prior to travel.

This information leaflet seeks to address some common problems that are mostly the result of a lack of awareness when planning to go abroad. Stakeholders in the tourism sector are an important link in conveying our message that prevention through education is the best and most effective way to prevent the occurrence of consular cases.

Time is ripe to foster a culture whereby prior to travel, one ensures that everything is in place. Issues related to expired passports, travel insurance, adequate vaccinations and registration for the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) amongst others; are a good starting point to ensure that travellers will not encounter problems whilst abroad. Furthermore, the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade advises travellers to consult regularly with its **Travel Advice**. This information help travellers to acquaint themselves with the particular situation of the country they intend visiting.

It is a fact that more awareness on intelligent travel will translate into more peace of mind and a guarantee of a positive travel experience.

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Checklist

Before planning to go abroad, it is important to:

-  Seek guidance on travel-related issues and other useful information by referring to the Ministry's **Travel Advice** prior to make any plans for travelling.
-  Ensure that your **passport** is valid for at least **6 months** from your intended date of return to Malta.
-  Minor children (under the age of 18) who travel unaccompanied by their parents/guardians must have a consent letter signed by the parents/guardians and legalised at the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade.
-  Get **comprehensive travel and medical insurance** to cover all activities and any pre-existing health conditions and treatments.
-  Always carry a valid **European Health Insurance Card** (EHIC) to facilitate access to public medical care.

- ✔ Consult with a health professional at least **4 to 6 weeks** prior to visiting the country to check for any **vaccinations, certifications**, and other **preventive measures** required.
- ✔ Be careful if you are carrying pharmaceutical products or medicines; make sure that these are allowed in the country you are visiting.
- ✔ Check whether there are any entry and exit requirements (e.g. **visa, vaccinations**, etc.) for the country you are **visiting** and/or **transiting**.
- ✔ Make **copies** of important **personal documents** (passport, ID card, certificates, etc.) and always carry them and leave copies also with relatives.
- ✔ Organise your **finances** to cover your intended programme and notify your **bank** with the travel plans.
- ✔ Be **mindful** of the **local laws and customs** of the country your are visiting. Exercise respect towards the locals.
- ✔ Maintain regular **contact** with family and friends and inform them of your travel plans and whereabouts.

Travel Advice

Travel advice is an **official** warning issued by the Ministry that provides useful information for Maltese citizens visiting specific foreign countries. Warnings include brief information on topics such as the security situation of the country, health, and local laws and customs.

Why is it useful?

It provides updated and informed advice on any risks associated with any one destination as well as any precautions to take before travelling. Such information serves to guide Maltese citizens in making informed decisions prior to travelling abroad.

How is a warning graded?

A warning is classified across different levels according to the overall assessment of the security situation in the particular country concerned. Different regions within the same country may call for different security ratings. Travel advice is graded as follows:



- ❖ **Take normal precautions**
- ❖ **Exercise vigilance**
- ❖ **Exercise a high degree of caution**
- ❖ **Avoid all but essential travel to certain areas**
- ❖ **Avoid all travel to certain areas**
- ❖ **Avoid all but essential travel**
- ❖ **Avoid all travel**

How can the Directorate for Consular Services and Maltese Living Abroad assist me?

1. Accident or Illness Abroad

The Directorate provides practical assistance to Maltese travellers who, unfortunately, fall victim to an accident or illness whilst abroad.



What kind of assistance?

The invaluable assistance provided by the Maltese Missions abroad (i.e. Embassies, Consulates, and Honorary Consulates), in conjunction with the Directorate, amongst others, consists in:

- providing a list of local English-speaking doctors as well as locally available medical facilities;
- helping patients correspond with their local insurance agency or assist with a medical evacuation;
- contacting the patient's relatives in Malta;

- when required, communicating with health officials in the visited country;
- when required, facilitate money transfers from the patient's relatives in Malta;
- when possible and permissible, visit Maltese patients in hospital.



The EHIC card should not be considered a replacement of the travel insurance.



Ensure that you have the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), which entitles you to free or reduced cost medical treatment in the EU, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein.



It is important to have a travel insurance, especially in case of hospitalisation abroad.

2. Arrest or Detention Abroad

If you are arrested while abroad, you have the right to request the local authorities concerned to inform the nearest Maltese mission of your arrest.

Embassy and Consular officers abroad may:

- visit/contact you and assist in providing basic requirements;
- provide information about English-speaking lawyers in the country and the legal procedures of the country;
- only upon granted consent, the Ministry will inform relatives/friends about your arrest and assist in maintaining contact with them;
- ensure that you are not discriminated against as a foreign detainee;
- only upon formal request, look into the applicability of serving part of the prison term in Malta as stipulated in the Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons.

3. Death Abroad

It is understood that relatives of the deceased become emotionally distressed and require moral support. The loss of someone dear can be aggravated when this takes place abroad.

One may encounter bureaucratic and language difficulties when making transportation arrangements to repatriate the corpse to Malta or for the burial ceremony in the country where the death occurs.

The Directorate, together with the Missions abroad, will only assist with information and/or the next-of-kin/relative who has the required Power of Attorney.

Embassy and Consular officers abroad may:

- obtain a death certificate and other related documents from local authorities;
- provide a list of funeral organisers in the host country;
- establish contact with an undertaker to make the necessary arrangements for the burial (if the burial is taking place abroad);

- in case of need, officers guide relatives with the procedure to repatriate corpse/remains to Malta.



The time required to transport the remains back to Malta might vary according to the nature of death or the regulations of the country where the death took place.

4. Hostage taking or Kidnapping abroad

If a Maltese citizen is presumed or proven to have been taken hostage or kidnapped abroad, relatives of the victim/s may seek the assistance of the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade.

Issues related to Maltese citizens being taken hostages or kidnapped are dealt with extreme caution, especially in view of the negotiations, which may take place by the pertinent police authorities to obtain their release. On its part the Ministry help during the investigations process since each case is dealt with on an individual basis according to its particular circumstances.

5. Victims of serious crime

If you are a victim of serious crime, you should immediately contact our Embassy or Consulate for direction on how to proceed.

Embassy and Consular officers abroad may:

- provide you with a list of local English-speaking professionals which might come handy;
- give general information about local police and legal procedures;
- assist with the local police authorities, especially in cases of language barrier;
- help in making contact with health authorities, if you require medical treatment;
- visit you in hospital (whenever possible);
- establish contact with friends or relatives (if specifically requested by the victim);
- assist you with the necessary documents for your transfer back to Malta.

6. Loss or Theft of Travel Documents

In case of loss or theft of travel documents such as your passport or ID card, it is important to report the loss to the nearest police station, so that the police issue a report.

If the report is issued in a foreign language, it must be translated into English and then apostilled at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the country **where you are**.

In order to be issued with an Emergency Travel Document (ETD) to be able to travel back to Malta, the police report, together with your flight itinerary, should be presented when seeking assistance from the nearest Embassy or Consulate.



Always carry a scanned copy and/or a photo on your mobile of your passport and ID card.

7. Loss or Theft of Money/Credit Cards

In case of loss or theft of money/credit cards, it is important to report the loss to your bank immediately.

It is equally important to report the loss or theft to the nearest police station, so that the police issue a report.



If the report is issued in a foreign language, it must be translated into English and then apostilled (officially certified) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the country **where you are**. This report should be presented for bank/insurance purposes.

An Embassy or Consulate of Malta abroad can advise you on ways how to have money transferred from Malta and will assist you to contact your bank or insurance agency in case of need.

8. Financial difficulties

There may be cases where, due to unforeseen circumstances, travellers face financial difficulties whilst abroad.

How can my relatives transfer money?

The Directorate may assist by facilitating money transfers from your relatives.

Relatives would have to call at the Ministry to deposit the money. Once the money transaction is confirmed, the Directorate informs the respective Mission to forward you the money.

In case relatives want to deposit money with the Ministry, they should do so during office hours from Monday to Friday.



9. Missing relatives

Maltese Missions abroad may assist next-of-kin persons who request information regarding alleged missing family members abroad.

In accordance with General Data Protection Regulation, the Ministry facilitates contact between the person seeking information and the relevant police authorities of the country.

10. Major crisis abroad

If you are caught in a major crisis abroad, contact should be established immediately with the nearest Maltese Mission or directly with the Ministry.

Embassy and Consular officers may assist with the following:

- ❖ **Injury or death**
- ❖ **Alleged reported missing persons**
- ❖ **Arrest or detention**
- ❖ **Hostage taking or kidnapping**
- ❖ **Evacuation and repatriation**
- ❖ **Documentation**
- ❖ **Contacting family and friends**
- ❖ **Communicating with local authorities in order to provide information and support to those affected**
- ❖ **Communicating with the travel and/or insurance agency**



Where possible, it is recommended that you always establish contact with your relatives in Malta to inform them of your whereabouts.

11. European Consular Cooperation

If a Maltese citizen happens to be in a country where Malta does not have an Embassy or Consulate, as a European citizen s/he is entitled to request assistance from any other EU Embassy or Consulate.

How can any other EU Embassy assist me?

The EU Embassy may assist:

- in case of death;
- in cases of serious accident or illness;
- in cases of arrest or detention;
- victims of violent crime.

Further information on the subject may be found by visiting <https://ec.europa.eu/consularprotection/>

Useful Information

The Directorate assists all Maltese travellers who find themselves in distress whilst abroad. In such situations, the Directorate acts as the main point of contact between the individual who is abroad and his/her family in Malta, to facilitate any possible support and ensure that all services rendered are provided in the best possible manner and in a timely order.

Whom can I contact in case of Emergency?

The Ministry provides emergency consular assistance 24 hours a day including weekends and public holidays. If you are abroad and need help, you can call the Maltese Embassy, High Commission, or Consulate in the country you are visiting, when present, or the Ministry in Valletta. After office hours, the Ministry operates through a Duty Officer who takes note of your request and, if possible, assists immediately. When immediate assistance is not possible, your request will be referred for action to the officers in charge at the Consular Services and Maltese Living Abroad Directorate.

Disclaimer

It is important to note that the Ministry, the Embassies, and Consulates of Malta abroad are not authorised to lend money, pay hotel and hospital bills or repatriation costs, or any other expenses incurred on behalf of a Maltese citizen who encounters difficulty while abroad.

Embassy or Consular officers abroad cannot release anyone from prison, pay fines on anyone's behalf, or settle any debts with the local authorities. Moreover, they cannot offer legal advice, get involved in judicial procedures, and carry out investigations on anyone's behalf.

Useful Links

[MFET](#)

[Identity Malta](#)

[Malta Police Force](#)

[Find an EU Consulate/Embassy](#)

[Department of Customs](#)

[Plant Protection Directorate](#)

[List of Banks in Malta](#)

[List of Travel Agents in Malta](#)

[List of Insurance Agents in Malta](#)

[Malta Chamber of Advocates](#)

[Travel Vaccination](#)

[European Health Insurance Card](#)

Contact Details



Address

Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade
Palazzo Parisio
Merchants Street
Valletta VLT 1171
Malta



Telephone

21242191



Email

consular.mfet@gov.mt