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Universal periodic review

Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*

Malta

* The annex is being circulated without formal editing, in the language of submission only.



Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, held its forty-fifth session from 22 January to 2 February 2024. The review of Malta was held at the 15th meeting, on 31 January 2024. The delegation of Malta was headed by the Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality, Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality, Rebecca Buttigieg. At its 17th meeting, held on 2 February 2024, the Working Group adopted the report on Malta.
2. On 10 January 2024, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of Malta: Belgium, Benin and Dominican Republic.
3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21, the following documents were issued for the review of Malta:
 - (a) A national report submitted/written presentation made in accordance with paragraph 15 (a);¹
 - (b) A compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in accordance with paragraph 15 (b);²
 - (c) A summary prepared by OHCHR in accordance with paragraph 15 (c).³
4. A list of questions prepared in advance by Azerbaijan, Belgium, Germany, Liechtenstein, Pakistan, Portugal, on behalf of the Group of Friends on national mechanisms for implementation, reporting and follow-up, Slovenia, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay was transmitted to Malta through the troika. These questions are available on the website of the universal periodic review.

I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

A. Presentation by the State under review

5. The delegation noted that its review followed the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, commemorated in December 2023. Malta reiterated its support for OHCHR, including the universal periodic review, the treaty bodies and the special procedure mandate holders, to whom it had issued a standing invitation. The Working Group on discrimination against women and girls had thus visited Malta in 2023.
6. Malta underlined that the compilation of its national report had been undertaken in consultation with several line ministries, civil society organizations and the Office of the Ombudsman. The report had been built upon the 2022 mid-term report. Human rights were protected at the highest level, including in the Constitution. Malta had ratified most international treaties on human rights, while a few remaining instruments were being considered.
7. Among the initiatives carried out since submitting its national report, in October 2023, guidelines had been published to improve gender equality within public administration. Also that month, the Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights had announced the training of Maltese professionals on serious cases of domestic violence. In November 2023, Malta had also introduced a bill to ban virginity testing and launched its third National Strategy on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence (2023–2028). Moreover, a bill was due to be presented to amend the legal definition of domestic violence. In January 2024, a process had commenced to enact legislation to ban forced sterilization. The 2024 national budget dedicated €500,000 to financing a project providing free menstrual products in schools.

¹ [A/HRC/WG.6/45/MLT/1](#).

² [A/HRC/WG.6/45/MLT/2](#).

³ [A/HRC/WG.6/45/MLT/3](#).

8. Malta considered establishing a national human rights institution based on the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) as one of the major steps ahead. That process had been presented as its pledge during the December commemorations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Malta was committed to its completion by 2025.

9. The rights of persons with disabilities were prioritized through legal acts implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its incorporation into national law, as well as the national strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities.

10. Malta had, for decades, implemented compulsory free education for all between the ages of 5 and 16 years.

11. Regarding older persons, the Government provided services specifically designed for their needs and to promote their independence and continued contribution to society. In January 2023, Malta had launched the National Strategic Policy on Active Ageing 2023–2030.

B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review

12. During the interactive dialogue, 83 delegations made statements. Recommendations made during the dialogue are to be found in section II of the present report.

13. Azerbaijan expressed concern about reported cases of intolerance and discrimination and racially motivated crimes, and children in marginalized situations being at risk of trafficking in persons.

14. The Bahamas positively acknowledged training and professional development on diversity, social justice and inclusion, the promotion of women's participation in public life and cooperation with United Nations mechanisms.

15. Belarus noted that problems persisted in ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities, refugees and migrants.

16. Belgium commended progress on gender equality and the rights of LGBTQI+ persons. It noted challenges regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights, migrants and the protection of journalists.

17. Brazil commended efforts to combat money laundering and terrorist financing, and enhance women's access to health-care services. It expressed concern about the security of journalists and the rights of migrants.

18. Bulgaria praised legislation to further promote gender equality, the establishment of the Anti-Human Trafficking Inter-Ministerial Committee and implementation of the national strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities.

19. Burkina Faso noted government efforts to raise awareness of female genital mutilation, ensure equal access to employment and equal pay for work of equal value and combat segregation.

20. Burundi recognized the establishment of the national strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities, and capacity-building on non-discrimination for staff of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality.

21. Cabo Verde congratulated Malta for its efforts to improve the legislative and policy framework against trafficking in persons and the increase in the female participation rate in the labour market.

22. Cameroon welcomed the measures taken to manage migration flows and encouraged Malta to ensure respect for the rights of migrants.

23. Canada acknowledged the steps taken to improve the living conditions of asylum-seekers and the adoption of laws, strategies and policies regarding the rights of women and migrants and anti-corruption.

24. Chile commended Malta for making progress towards gender equality, especially the economic participation of women and ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
25. China praised measures taken against racial discrimination and trafficking in persons, and to protect the rights of migrants, expand human rights education and address domestic and sexual violence.
26. Colombia welcomed the actions taken by Malta to promote equality and protect the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons.
27. Costa Rica congratulated Malta on the implementation of its Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan.
28. Croatia commended new measures in the 2023 Domestic Violence Prevention Act. It encouraged Malta to review the trafficking victim referral mechanism and standard operating procedures to protect children in marginalized situations.
29. Cuba praised Malta on the results of its implementation of the accepted recommendations from previous cycles of the universal periodic review.
30. Cyprus welcomed ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the incorporation of the legal obligations of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) into Maltese law.
31. Czechia commended Malta for the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
32. Djibouti welcomed the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and efforts to combat gender-based violence.
33. The Dominican Republic congratulated Malta for the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
34. Egypt lauded efforts to establish a national human rights mechanism, to combat money laundering and terrorist financing and to strengthen the work of civil society institutions against trafficking in persons.
35. Estonia commended Malta for combating trafficking in persons and gender-based and domestic violence, and welcomed the adoption of the Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan.
36. Finland commended Malta for making progress in the promotion and protection of human rights and for its commitment to a strong and effective multilateral human rights system.
37. France noted with satisfaction the upgrading of the Maltese legislative framework on press freedom, implementing the recommendations made during the third review cycle.
38. The Gambia commended Malta for its commitment to quality education through investments in infrastructure, teacher training and curriculum development, ensuring a brighter future for its children.
39. Georgia praised efforts to combat the trafficking of women and assist victims, ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and promote gender equality.
40. Germany commended Malta for its role in protecting human rights in international forums, notably at the Security Council, and its stance on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex rights at home and abroad.
41. Ghana positively noted the amendment to the Protection of the Whistle-blower Act, the Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan and the Domestic Violence Prevention Act.

42. Greece commended Malta for incorporating the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into Maltese national legislation, a corresponding national strategy, and the Fourth National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Persons.
43. Iceland welcomed the delegation of Malta and its national report and made recommendations.
44. India commended Malta for implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the related national strategy, extending the Free Childcare Scheme and amending the Criminal Code to decriminalize abortion in certain circumstances.
45. Indonesia acknowledged the efforts of Malta to combat trafficking in persons and to protect the rights of victims through policy and legal measures and a national public awareness campaign.
46. The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomed progress in women's economic participation, but expressed concern about work-life balance, violence against women in the workplace and the gender wage and pension gap.
47. Iraq recognized the efforts made to improve the human rights situation in the country and urged Malta to do more to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.
48. Ireland welcomed the criminalization of female genital mutilation, forced sterilization, forced marriage and virginity testing, and noted Criminal Code amendments allowing the termination of pregnancy in limited circumstances.
49. The delegation of Malta stated that migration remained a challenge for countries, such as Malta, that were located on major migration routes. With more than 8,700 migrants having arrived over the preceding five years, Malta had been put under disproportionate pressure, given its small size and population. Despite that, the country continued to investigate, assess, prioritize and act on distress calls, in accordance with relevant international law instruments and its human rights obligations.
50. Malta had increased financial allocations and human resources and enacted new laws and policies for migration management. Improvements included enhanced reception and living conditions in accommodation facilities, a significant reduction in the backlog of asylum applications and enhanced pre-integration and integration opportunities. A new care-oriented policy covered additional training of staff, ensuring personalized care programmes and the provision of material aid. The Government had also augmented the provision of health-related services.
51. The International Protection Agency, tasked with taking decisions on applications for international protection, had implemented changes, such as reducing bureaucracy and establishing a quality control mechanism. Return management had also improved, notably through the setting up of the Returns Unit in 2021, providing voluntary return services aimed at sustainable reintegration into local communities in the country of origin with reintegration support.
52. The economy continued to be resilient, with a sustainable labour market achieved by focusing on quality employment and ensuring a level playing field for all. The employment rate in Malta had continuously increased since 2014, including during and after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, reaching 81.1 per cent in 2022. Through its National Employment Policy 2021–2030, Malta prioritized ensuring a human-centred approach towards economic growth by facilitating equal access to the labour market. It had implemented initiatives, such as free training courses, free childcare and tailored schemes, such as the VASTE Programme, the Access to Employment Scheme and the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, which ensured the integration of vulnerable groups, including women, young persons, migrants, the long-term unemployed and persons with disabilities, into the labour market. Malta had made it legally binding for entities employing more than 20 employees to have at least 2 per cent of their workforce composed of persons with disabilities.
53. Malta had taken measures to enhance the independence and efficiency of, and access to, the national justice system. Following the 2020 constitutional reforms, judges at the national level were now appointed by the President, following a public call, solidifying a

complete separation of powers. With reforms in the Office of the Attorney General, the 2019 State Advocate Act designated the Office as a specialized prosecution service, leaving the role of legal counsel to the State solely to the State Advocate. The ongoing recruitment of prosecutors continued to reinforce those reforms.

54. The country now had its largest number of members of the judiciary: 29 judges and 29 magistrates. The Government prioritized increasing the physical working space of courts, as well as digitalizing the justice system through the first national Digital Justice Strategy (2022–2027) and legislative reforms to shorten procedural time frames. Other efforts were also being expended to create a specialized Commercial Court and to facilitate reforms of the Family Court.

55. Malta had strengthened its legislative framework to ensure that LGBTIQ+ persons could enjoy their rights in full. To facilitate mainstreaming LGBTIQ+ rights in society, Malta had organized the LGBTIQ+ Human Rights Conference, which delved into the various issues affecting the LGBTIQ+ community. The Government launched its third LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy and Action Plan (2023–2027), addressing 10 core areas and incorporating 90 actions. Malta had also adopted Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex, Sexuality and Gender, aimed at assisting the public administration in correctly interpreting legislation related to LGBTIQ+ equality. Measures were also being strengthened to prohibit the promotion of conversion therapies. The Government was engaged in discussions with non-binary individuals with a view to introducing a third legal gender option “X”, while the LGBTIQ+ Consultative Council had played a vital role since 2013 in advising the Government and recommending policies to advance LGBTIQ+ rights.

56. Malta launched its first Anti-Racism Strategy in October 2022, with more than 500 people from public service trained on anti-racism during 2023. The I-Belong programme, part of the integration strategy, had registered more than 10,000 applicants since 2018. Research on hate speech and the Anti-Racism Policymaking Tool had also been developed through the “Towards the Implementation of an Anti-Racism Strategy for Malta” project, which had been co-funded by the European Union. In the area of integration, Malta had worked with foreign experts through the Technical Support Instrument. The European Union co-funded project “Strengthening Knowledge on Integration and Non-Discrimination” further aimed to identify the needs of minority groups, focusing on racism, Islamophobia and Afrophobia.

57. The 2022 Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan aimed to integrate a gender perspective in policymaking processes to ensure equality in various sectors. It focused on eight strategic objectives, and their effective implementation was ensured by an interministerial committee, while the Human Rights Directorate was responsible for coordinating the strategy process. The Directorate also played a crucial role in combating trafficking in persons, coordinating efforts through the Anti-Human Trafficking Inter-Ministerial Committee to address legislative changes and raise awareness.

58. Through its National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, Malta investigated complaints of alleged discrimination. The Commission awarded equality mark certifications to organizations that prioritized gender equality, with 136 organizations thus certified so far. The Government also promoted a gender mainstreaming strategy within the public administration, prioritized the publication of research on gender issues and promoted awareness-raising campaigns on gender stereotypes. With its Equal Pay Tool, Malta aimed to facilitate the application of equal pay for equal work between genders, and a gender-corrective mechanism was being applied in the House of Representatives.

59. Italy lauded the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as recommended by Italy in the previous cycle.

60. Kuwait congratulated Malta on progress made in combating discrimination against women, and asserted that, although human rights were part of the Constitution of Malta, more needed to be done.

61. The Lao People's Democratic Republic commended Malta for adopting the Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan and increasing the representation of women in Parliament and the labour market.
62. Lebanon recognized the legal framework to combat violence against women and children, and programmes aiming to increase protection from such violence and to combat its root causes.
63. Libya thanked Malta for its engagement with the human rights mechanisms and commended it for taking steps to increase education and awareness-raising on human rights.
64. Luxembourg commended Malta for making progress on gender equality and Criminal Code amendments prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender and religion. It hoped that Malta would further ensure the rights of persons with disabilities.
65. Malaysia commended Malta for promoting and raising awareness of human rights through education, and adopting the first Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan.
66. Maldives commended Malta for ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopting the Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence Act and combating money laundering and terrorist financing.
67. The United States of America commended Malta for supporting individuals with disabilities, as reflected by the 2022 Special Olympics Malta Invitational Games, and advocating strongly for gender diversity and inclusion.
68. Mexico welcomed the visit of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls to Malta and acknowledged efforts to eliminate gender-based and domestic violence, including criminalizing forced marriage and sterilization.
69. Mongolia welcomed the continued development of the legislative and policy framework against trafficking in persons and measures to promote employment, including by enhancing worker capacity.
70. Montenegro acknowledged the incorporation of the Istanbul Convention into domestic law and legislative amendments to include sexual orientation, gender identity and religion as prohibited grounds for discrimination.
71. Nepal praised efforts towards enhancing equal access to health, education and employment, and the action plans to promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming, and combat trafficking in persons.
72. The Kingdom of the Netherlands lauded Malta for adopting the National Action Plan on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence and decriminalizing abortion in certain circumstances, and expressed hope for further reforms on abortion.
73. New Zealand welcomed steps to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ensure gender equality in political decision-making and introduce draft legislation establishing a national human rights institution.
74. Norway commended the steps taken by Malta to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
75. Pakistan expressed appreciation for measures taken to combat racial discrimination and promote the protection and social integration of migrants, and for launching awareness-raising programmes against racism and Islamophobia.
76. Panama thanked Malta for its national report and made recommendations.
77. Paraguay praised Malta for making progress on strengthening institutions and policy, particularly with respect to combating violence against women, racial discrimination and trafficking in persons.
78. The Philippines commended Malta for ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and measures to combat domestic and gender-based violence and trafficking in persons.

79. Poland commended Malta for adopting a series of legal acts to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the related national strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities.
80. Portugal commended Malta for fully transposing the Istanbul Convention into national law.
81. Romania welcomed progress in protecting women, including countering domestic violence, whilst noting that more efforts should be expected as regards women's enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and rights.
82. The Russian Federation noted persistent human rights challenges, including the protracted investigation into the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, and the deteriorating situation for asylum-seekers and migrants.
83. Serbia commended Malta for integrating the legal obligations of the Istanbul Convention into national law, introducing the Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan and raising awareness on trafficking in persons. It encouraged efforts to address the gender pay gap and migration.
84. Slovakia expressed appreciation for the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, and welcomed the amendment to the Criminal Code that criminalized female genital mutilation, forced sterilization and forced marriage.
85. Slovenia commended Malta for ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and expressed concern that abortion was a criminal offence.
86. The delegation of Malta reported that health care, including mental health services and sexual and reproductive health-care services, was available for free for all eligible persons. All migrants rescued at sea and third-country nationals seeking work were provided with free medical care. Training for health professionals and frontliners on migrant issues was provided by the Migrant Health Liaison Office, including on cultural sensitivity, female genital mutilation and trafficking in persons. Sessions with migrant communities were also organized, including on emotional and family wellness.
87. Following enactment of the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act, 2015, and the Embryo Protection (Amendment) Act, 2018, the Government had improved the availability of preventive and primary sexual and reproductive health-care services and raised awareness on related rights. The Gender Well-Being Clinic offered multidisciplinary services to transgender, intersex and gender diverse individuals.
88. Regarding abortion, a bill passed in Parliament in June 2023 had amended the Criminal Code to provide an exception for circumstances in which a doctor could intervene to save the life of a woman experiencing complications during her pregnancy. Comprehensive sexuality and relationships education was a statutory subject for schoolchildren.
89. With respect to the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia in 2017, the Government had redoubled its efforts since the event to strengthen the protection of journalists and worked with international institutions. In October 2022, two persons had been found guilty and sentenced to 40 years' imprisonment.
90. In 2018, the Media and Defamation Act had been enacted, establishing a revised legal framework in terms of media law, libel, defamation and slander. It abolished criminal libel and introduced the civil tort of slander. For allegedly defamatory statements, a plaintiff must now provide proof of serious harm or a likelihood thereof, while a number of provisions in relation to strategic lawsuits against public participation had also been introduced.
91. In October 2022, the Government tabled three bills in Parliament, aiming to further protect the democratic way of life and the rule of law, to strengthen the fundamental rights of freedom of expression, privacy and media freedom, and to further safeguard journalists and media professionals in relation to strategic lawsuits against public participation.
92. Following the report of the public inquiry on the assassination, the Government had appointed the Committee of Experts on Media to provide, inter alia, recommendations on the

draft legislation. The proposed amendments had been prepared in consultation with stakeholders and opened for public review, a process concluded in June 2022. An updated report had been issued in July 2023.

93. Malta had prioritized the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention. In 2018, Malta had incorporated gender-based violence into law through the Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence Act and broadened the remit of the Commission as the national coordinating body. Malta sought to prevent violence and enhance support for victims. Therefore, the Commission coordinated training programmes and carried out awareness-raising campaigns.

94. The Domestic Violence Prevention Act had been adopted to safeguard persons who might be at risk of an abusive relationship by allowing a check on whether partners had a history of related convictions. The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Meeting evaluated high-risk cases and developed individualized safety plans. Malta had amended its Criminal Code by including femicide as an aggravating offence and excluding the “crime of sudden passion” as a defence. The Commission on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence also conducted research to address harmful gender stereotypes among adolescents.

95. The action plan for the next five years encompassed measures addressing intersectional discrimination, training programmes for professionals working with migrants, increased capacity of emergency shelters, introducing electronic tagging and panic buttons and enhanced treatment programmes for perpetrators.

96. Malta had made progress in strengthening its anti-money laundering framework and countering the funding of terrorism. After being placed on the list of jurisdictions under increased monitoring by the Financial Action Task Force in June 2021, Malta had made efforts to address the strategic deficiencies identified, leading to its delisting in June 2022.

97. Substantial investment had been made in the Financial Intelligence Analysis Unit, with a significant overall staff increase and the launch of its four-year strategy in November 2022. Since 2018, the overhauled compliance monitoring methodology had facilitated an increase in the total number of investigations in relation to money laundering and the financing of terrorism, with 146 having been conducted in 2023. The Unit had imposed more than €3 million in administrative penalties, along with non-pecuniary and remedial measures; its objective was to promote a culture of compliance. A greater awareness among obliged entities had led to a fourfold increase in reports of suspicious transactions or activities received by the Unit, with more than 9,300 reports in 2023 alone. The Unit had established the Centralized Bank Account Register and monitored compliance with the Use of Cash (Restriction) Regulations.

98. Spain congratulated Malta on the legislative progress made in relation to the recognition of gender equality and the fight against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

99. Sri Lanka commended Malta for taking measures to adopt the Domestic Violence Prevention Bill and the establishment of two regional hubs to address domestic violence.

100. The State of Palestine welcomed the efforts made by Malta towards the promotion and protection of human rights in the country.

101. Switzerland welcomed the delegation of Malta, thanked it for the report and made recommendations.

102. The Syrian Arab Republic welcomed the delegation of Malta, took note of the national report and made recommendations.

103. Timor-Leste welcomed the adoption of the Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Act, as well as progress made in the field of gender equality, particularly women’s economic participation.

104. Togo lauded the significant progress made by Malta since the previous review cycle.

105. Ukraine welcomed efforts to ensure equal access to education, employment and health, the adoption of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, and important steps made to combat discrimination, hate speech and trafficking in persons.

106. The United Kingdom welcomed the strong record of Malta on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex rights, and noted continued efforts towards rule-of-law reforms, notably the public inquiry into the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia.

107. The United Republic of Tanzania commended the Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence Act, the Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan and efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

108. Mauritius commended Malta for providing free access to education for all children, irrespective of their status, in all public institutions.

109. Uruguay congratulated Malta on progress made with regard to the consolidation of a national human rights and equality commission.

110. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela encouraged further progress in combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism, noted legislative initiatives to address domestic violence and urged additional efforts to combat racism.

111. Viet Nam acknowledged efforts made by Malta to address gender-based and domestic violence, in particular through the adoption of the Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence Act.

112. Albania praised progress regarding the participation of women in public life, efforts to combat domestic violence and trafficking in persons and measures to ensure the protection of journalists.

113. Algeria acknowledged efforts made on migration, to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and to combat various forms of discrimination, racism and xenophobia, through awareness-raising and legislation.

114. Argentina welcomed the enactment of the Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence Act and the signing of the Safe Schools Declaration.

115. Armenia took positive note of the efforts made by Malta to prevent and combat trafficking, including the establishment of the Anti-Human Trafficking Inter-Ministerial Committee in 2022.

116. Australia commended the National Strategy on Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence, incorporation of the Istanbul Convention into domestic law and the third LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy and Action Plan.

117. Austria welcomed efforts to combat domestic and gender-based violence and protect the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons. It urged Malta to ensure unhindered investigations into the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia and expressed concern about many strategic lawsuits against public participation.

118. In its concluding remarks, the delegation of Malta thanked the 83 States Members of the United Nations for their active participation in the review. It stated that it would carefully consider all the recommendations made.

119. Regarding recommendations to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the delegation noted that the provisions of the Convention fell partially under the competence of the European Union and that, as a European Union member State, Malta could not unilaterally ratify the Convention. Migrant workers were, however, provided protection under national legislation, European Union law, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (European Convention on Human Rights) and other international instruments. The international conventions and optional protocols thereto yet to be ratified by Malta were under ongoing government review.

120. In addressing advance questions, the delegation stated that implementation of recommendations accepted within the universal periodic review was the responsibility of the ministries concerned within their respective remits. LGBTIQ+ issues remained at the core of the Government's continuing work and it was actively working towards establishing an LGBTIQ+ hub to encompass all services for the community under one roof, while its strategy envisaged further legislative changes.

121. With respect to the inquiry into the murder of Daphne Caruana Galicia, Malta was committed to making all efforts to ensure the safety of journalists and media professionals and to guarantee freedom of the press in line with international human rights standards. The Government was engaged in dialogue with all relevant parties and would continue to deliver on bold legislative, institutional and constitutional reforms, implement the remaining recommendations of the public inquiry and provide the necessary resources. In its new role leading the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Malta had made an unequivocal statement supporting media freedom and safety among its list of priorities.

122. The delegation stated that the review session had been a positive experience and the feedback presented in the spirit of cooperation was a useful tool for future action at the national level.

II. Conclusions and/or recommendations

123. The following recommendations will be examined by Malta, which will provide responses in due time, but no later than the fifty-sixth session of the Human Rights Council:

123.1 Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Colombia) (Ghana) (Mexico) (Philippines) (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);

123.2 Reconsider ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Indonesia);

123.3 Accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Paraguay);

123.4 Accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (Uruguay);

123.5 Consider acceding to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (Austria);

123.6 Sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Portugal);

123.7 Consider acceding to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Italy);

123.8 Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure (Czechia);

123.9 Consider ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure (Slovakia);

123.10 Accede to the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), of the International Labour Organization (France);

123.11 Lift reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (France);

123.12 Withdraw its reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Montenegro);

123.13 Withdraw the interpretative declaration to article 25 (a) and the reservation to article 29 (a) (i) and (iii) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Luxembourg);

123.14 Remove its reservations to article 29 (a) (i) and (iii) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and take measures to empower and promote persons with disabilities to participate effectively and fully in political

and public life without discrimination and on an equal basis with others (New Zealand);

123.15 Consider withdrawing the reservation to article 29 (a) (i) and (iii) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and take the necessary steps to ensure that persons with disabilities can fully exercise their right to vote (Austria);

123.16 Continue promoting and protecting the human rights of vulnerable groups by further strengthening its national institutions and national legislation (Georgia);

123.17 Further strengthen institutions and protect the rights of children, women and persons with disabilities (Nepal);

123.18 Accelerate efforts to establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Dominican Republic);

123.19 Accelerate the process of establishing its national human rights institution in compliance with the Paris Principles (Mongolia);

123.20 Accelerate internal processes to establish a national institution for human rights, in accordance with the Paris Principles (Australia);

123.21 Accelerate the establishment of an independent and impartial national human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles (Russian Federation);

123.22 Establish, in full conformity with the Paris Principles, an independent national human rights institution (Finland);

123.23 Expedite work on establishing a national human rights institution in compliance with the Paris Principles for the promotion and protection of human rights (India);

123.24 Ensure progress to establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Indonesia);

123.25 Pursue efforts to establish a fully fledged, independent national human rights institution in compliance with the Paris Principles (Montenegro);

123.26 Continue efforts towards establishing a national human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles (Nepal);

123.27 Fast-track domestic processes to establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Philippines);

123.28 Conclude the adoption into law of the bill establishing a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Portugal);

123.29 Continue to undertake efforts to establish a national human rights institution that is in line with the Paris Principles (Timor-Leste);

123.30 Pursue efforts in finalizing the establishment of a consolidated and impartial national human rights institution (Ukraine);

123.31 Continue efforts to establish a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);

123.32 Continue the parliamentary debate regarding the adoption of the law establishing the national human rights institution, also with the involvement of public consultations (Slovakia);

123.33 Establish a national mechanism for the implementation, reporting and follow-up of human rights recommendations and consider the possibility of receiving cooperation for this purpose (Paraguay);

123.34 Adopt a comprehensive national strategy that addresses all forms of discrimination, especially racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance (Chile);

- 123.35 **Adopt a comprehensive strategy to address all forms of discrimination and strengthen efforts to combat racism and social discrimination (Ghana);**
- 123.36 **Adopt a comprehensive strategy to combat all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in particular those that negatively affected children in asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant situations (Islamic Republic of Iran);**
- 123.37 **Take effective steps to address all forms of discrimination and strengthen efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (Azerbaijan);**
- 123.38 **Take further measures to combat all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia and related intolerance, including against migrants (Belarus);**
- 123.39 **Take steps to combat racism and racial discrimination, especially against children seeking asylum, refugees and immigrants (Iraq);**
- 123.40 **Increase awareness-raising programmes on equality and non-discrimination, especially in relation to migrants and refugees (Egypt);**
- 123.41 **Continue efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia (Egypt);**
- 123.42 **Continue efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (Syrian Arab Republic);**
- 123.43 **Continue efforts towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination, including racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (Cyprus);**
- 123.44 **Promote ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity and pursue efforts to strengthen the anti-discrimination legal framework in line with international obligations (Azerbaijan);**
- 123.45 **Continue to develop national policies and programmes for the elimination of discrimination in all its forms and manifestations (Cuba);**
- 123.46 **Intensify measures to combat racial discrimination by effectively sanctioning hate speech and all manifestations of racism and racial hatred in public spaces (Djibouti);**
- 123.47 **Continue adopting legislative measures that contribute to the effective fight against discrimination based on race, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity (Spain);**
- 123.48 **Continue commendable efforts in promoting equality and non-discrimination (State of Palestine);**
- 123.49 **Strengthen the social inclusion of all segments of the population (Cameroon);**
- 123.50 **Adopt legislation to combat discrimination based on religious belief, so as to promote diversity within the country (Kuwait);**
- 123.51 **Take additional steps to prevent children from being detained with adults in detention facilities (Iraq);**
- 123.52 **Consolidate the reform of the detention system to ensure that no minor is detained and to ensure that the detention of refugees and migrants is not arbitrary (Kuwait);**
- 123.53 **Continue with initiatives aimed at combating and eradicating corruption, including the investigation of all cases and the prosecution of all persons considered liable (Dominican Republic);**
- 123.54 **Introduce legislation imposing criminal and administrative responsibility for abuse of power for those in public office, as well as for obstruction of justice (Germany);**

- 123.55 Take measures to increase the efficiency of the judicial system in order to ensure court procedures in a timely manner (Germany);
- 123.56 Pursue efforts to use modern technologies in the administration of justice to expedite trials, by allocating sufficient financial and human resources (Lebanon);
- 123.57 Increase efforts to adopt laws that ensure the strengthening of accountability and the rule of law (Iraq);
- 123.58 Take all measures necessary to guarantee the full exercise of freedom of expression and of the press, as provided for by its own Constitution, in particular to ensure the protection of journalists (Switzerland);
- 123.59 Adopt thorough and effective measures and legislative reforms to bolster the safety of journalists and reinforce freedom of expression, including through the establishment of an independent oversight body dedicated to monitoring, addressing and preventing threats and attacks against journalists (Brazil);
- 123.60 Continue working on the reform promoted by the Government in 2022 to introduce constitutional changes that guarantee freedom of the press and the reform of the Freedom of Information Act (Spain);
- 123.61 Reform its Freedom of Information Act, as recommended by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to ensure the right to access information of public interest held by public authorities (India);
- 123.62 Conduct a thorough review of domestic legislation to strengthen the protection of human rights related to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and expression (Gambia);
- 123.63 Finalize legislative measures aimed at ensuring protection of journalists and media professionals (Albania);
- 123.64 Ensure the full implementation of the media law reform project to better protect journalists (France);
- 123.65 Adopt further legislation in the area of protection of journalists and media freedom (Slovakia);
- 123.66 Engage with authorities, media professionals and civil society to create an enabling environment for investigative journalists and open reporting (United States of America);
- 123.67 Guarantee freedom of expression and the press, adopting measures to prevent that judicial actions against journalists inhibit them from carrying out their work independently and impartially (Chile);
- 123.68 Take additional measures to strengthen the independence and freedom of the press and reinforce the protection of journalists (Belgium);
- 123.69 Advance work on ensuring the effective safety of journalists and guarantee proper and impartial investigations (Czechia);
- 123.70 Consider taking a further measure to strengthen the protection of journalists and bring to justice perpetrators of crimes against them (Italy);
- 123.71 Take further steps to establish a conducive environment for media pluralism and independence, including by assessing the appointment system of the Broadcasting Authority to ensure its independence (Czechia);
- 123.72 Take all necessary steps to guarantee the right to freedom of expression and the safety of journalists and media workers (Norway);
- 123.73 Ensure the freedom of expression and of the media, ensuring journalists are able to protect their sources (Russian Federation);

- 123.74 Keep up the efforts to safeguard the right to freedom of expression, privacy and media freedom, by further strengthening the independence of the media (Greece);
- 123.75 Take concrete steps to ensure a safe working environment for journalists, including by ensuring editorial independence for public media organizations (Kingdom of the Netherlands);
- 123.76 Carry out the necessary measures to improve the work environment and protection of journalists (Spain);
- 123.77 Continue efforts to ensure the safety of journalists and media freedom (State of Palestine);
- 123.78 Take steps to further increase the protection of journalists from threats, attacks, reprisals or strategic lawsuits against public participation (Austria);
- 123.79 Investigate and prosecute cases of intimidation and violence against journalists, and enact reforms that support freedom of the press and journalists' safety (Australia);
- 123.80 Implement robust measures to improve media safety in line with the full recommendations of the 2021 independent public inquiry (Ireland);
- 123.81 Identify all those involved in the assassination of the journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia and ensure no impunity for this crime, as previously recommended (Slovenia);
- 123.82 Investigate effectively the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia (Russian Federation);
- 123.83 Implement the recommendations of the public inquiry report into Daphne Caruana Galizia's murder (United States of America);
- 123.84 Review progress against all the recommendations of the public inquiry into the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia to make clear what the next steps will be (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
- 123.85 Strengthen the promotion of freedom of religion (Cameroon);
- 123.86 Enable family reunification for all beneficiaries of international protection, including beneficiaries of subsidiary protection (Canada);
- 123.87 Ensure that all child victims of trafficking in persons are afforded special protection measures (Azerbaijan);
- 123.88 Establish mechanisms to identify and protect child victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation (Cyprus);
- 123.89 Take measures to ensure that cases of trafficking in persons are proactively investigated and result in effective sanctions, and provide regular training on trafficking in persons to judges, members of the Office of the Attorney General and police officers (Costa Rica);
- 123.90 Continue to strengthen investigation services and the judiciary and to fight better against trafficking in persons (Albania);
- 123.91 Take measures to ensure that cases of trafficking in persons are investigated proactively and lead to effective sanctions, and provide regular training on trafficking in persons to public officials (Sri Lanka);
- 123.92 Bolster the enforcement of laws and policies on combating trafficking in persons, including migrant women and girls (Philippines);
- 123.93 Strengthen the capacity of police officers, border guards and social workers to identify and protect victims of trafficking, particularly women and children (Croatia);

- 123.94 Continue to take effective measures to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, especially women and children, to provide adequate protection and assistance to its victims (Armenia);
- 123.95 Continue to conduct specialized training for law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges on a human rights-based approach to handling trafficking cases, particularly those involving women and girls (Philippines);
- 123.96 Boost efforts against trafficking in persons with better law enforcement, victim support and awareness campaigns to prevent and address this grave violation of rights (Gambia);
- 123.97 Develop government mechanisms for the prevention of trafficking in persons (Cuba);
- 123.98 Step up efforts to combat trafficking in persons (Nepal);
- 123.99 Promote the necessary efforts to implement more effective policies in the fight against trafficking in persons (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);
- 123.100 Renew its action plan to combat trafficking in persons with a victim-centred approach, providing resources, awareness-raising and training for the detection, referral, care and support of victims, and the investigation and punishment of traffickers (Paraguay);
- 123.101 Increase efforts to prevent trafficking in persons and ensure that victims of this crime receive information about their rights and have access to legal assistance (Cabo Verde);
- 123.102 Continue and intensify efforts to combat trafficking in persons with greater emphasis on prevention, protection and rehabilitation of victims of trafficking (Djibouti);
- 123.103 Take further steps to assist the victims of trafficking, such as guaranteeing their access to justice and psychological support (Ukraine);
- 123.104 Pursue building partnerships that support concerned authorities to address trafficking in persons, by promoting the reporting system of potential victims, namely children, and referring them to specialized entities that will provide the needed protection (Lebanon);
- 123.105 Integrate a comprehensive child rights perspective into its action plans on combating trafficking of persons, including children, with a particular focus on children in the most marginalized situations (Mongolia);
- 123.106 Implement programmes that assist vulnerable jobseekers to access the labour market (United Republic of Tanzania);
- 123.107 Continue to increase investment in social protection and protect the rights to subsistence and development of vulnerable groups (China);
- 123.108 Refrain from applying unilateral coercive measures (Belarus);
- 123.109 Decriminalize abortion in all cases (New Zealand);
- 123.110 Decriminalize abortion and develop a sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents (Mexico);
- 123.111 Decriminalize abortion and revise its legal framework in order to guarantee women the right to terminate their pregnancy safely and legally, in line with international standards (Switzerland);
- 123.112 Take further steps to decriminalize abortion in all circumstances and ensure that safe and legal abortion services and post-abortion care are available (Kingdom of the Netherlands);
- 123.113 Completely decriminalize abortion up to 12 weeks (Luxembourg);

- 123.114 Repeal legislation providing criminal punishment for abortion, particularly in cases of sexual violence or grave risks to the physical or mental health of the pregnant person (Germany);
- 123.115 Reform its legislation in order to guarantee that women can access voluntary termination of pregnancy in cases of rape and foetal non-viability (Chile);
- 123.116 Ensure legal, timely and effective access to both safe abortion and contraception (Belgium);
- 123.117 Broaden criteria under which abortions are legally permitted, including where there is a serious threat to health (Ireland);
- 123.118 Fully implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the decriminalization of abortion and on exceptions to the general prohibition of abortion for cases of therapeutic abortion and when the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest (Finland);
- 123.119 Ensure access to safe and legal abortion services by decriminalizing and legalizing abortion (Iceland);
- 123.120 Ensure that the physical and mental well-being of women are considered when determining the permissibility of an abortion (Canada);
- 123.121 Ensure women and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights, especially access to safe abortion, including through revision of restrictive legislation (Norway);
- 123.122 Guarantee the enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and rights and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services (Iceland);
- 123.123 Continue efforts, through policy development and the allocation of increased financial and human resources, to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health services for women, adolescents and girls; and provide more formal and informal education and awareness-raising programmes in this area (Uruguay);
- 123.124 Continue its efforts to promote access to sexual and reproductive health education, particularly for women and adolescents (Viet Nam);
- 123.125 Strengthen women's sexual and reproductive rights by embedding comprehensive sexual education into the national curriculum, expanding access to contraception and legalizing safe abortions (Australia);
- 123.126 Continue efforts to put in place a system of comprehensive sexuality education (Austria);
- 123.127 Ensure comprehensive sexuality education in school curriculum and out-of-school settings (Iceland);
- 123.128 Ensure comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education within the mandatory school curriculum (Ireland);
- 123.129 Develop a sexual and reproductive health and rights policy for adolescents and ensure that sexual and reproductive health and rights education is part of the mandatory school curriculum (Estonia);
- 123.130 Further increase the accessibility of mental health services for children and adolescents (Georgia);
- 123.131 Continue its efforts to raise awareness about the harmful effects of female genital mutilation and strengthen protection mechanisms and programmes to support the victims (Burkina Faso);

- 123.132 Improve the accessibility and the quality of education, including for asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children and children with disabilities (Azerbaijan);
- 123.133 Consider the adoption of measures to guarantee quality and accessible education for all children, especially those with disabilities, and regardless of their social or migration status (Argentina);
- 123.134 Strengthen existing policies and enact new measures to ensure that the right to education is guaranteed to all without distinction (Maldives);
- 123.135 Consider enacting the appropriate legislation to ensure at least one free year of pre-primary education as recommended by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Mauritius);
- 123.136 Build on efforts through the personal, social, career development, ethics and social studies curricula to progress human rights culture among students (Bahamas);
- 123.137 Ensure that national and international climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies integrate a human rights-based approach, gender equality and the best interests of the child (Panama);
- 123.138 Ensure the effective implementation of its regulatory framework and expedite the implementation of plans to reduce air pollution, including the National Air Quality Plan (Timor-Leste);
- 123.139 Expand the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality's study to also explore the relationship between gender equality and climate change (Bahamas);
- 123.140 Enhance the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights with a view to fighting inequality (China);
- 123.141 Enact legislation on conflict-affected areas and to provide guidance and advice for business enterprises on ensuring respect for human rights, and to prevent and address the heightened risk of corporate involvement in the gross human rights violations in conflict-affected areas, including situations of foreign belligerent prolonged occupation (State of Palestine);
- 123.142 Continue its efforts to eliminate gender-based discrimination and promote women's economic participation and representation in leadership positions (Greece);
- 123.143 Continue efforts aimed at promoting and protecting women's rights, expanding their participation in public life and increasing their representation in leadership positions (Libya);
- 123.144 Continue to take steps to combat gender-based discrimination and promote the representation of women at the highest levels of public life (Luxembourg);
- 123.145 Continue implementing temporary special measures to increase women's representation at the highest level of public life (Timor-Leste);
- 123.146 Continue taking necessary measures to increase women's representation in decision-making positions (Mongolia);
- 123.147 Continue strengthening initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality in employment and the participation of women in decision-making positions (Romania);
- 123.148 Continue effort towards promoting gender equality to ensure women's full and equal participation in political and public life (Lao People's Democratic Republic);
- 123.149 Make efforts to achieve gender equality and improve the representation of women in public life (Colombia);

- 123.150 Conduct awareness-raising campaigns to eliminate gender stereotypes and ensure the engagement of men and boys as a critical tool to promote gender equality (Estonia);
- 123.151 Eliminate gender stereotypes (Iceland);
- 123.152 Continue taking the necessary measures to end gender-based discrimination in the workforce, especially wage disparities (Norway);
- 123.153 Address gender inequalities in the workplace across all sectors and continue advancing in the decriminalization of voluntary termination of pregnancy in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Spain);
- 123.154 Enhance measures to address the gender pay gap (United Republic of Tanzania);
- 123.155 Continue to drive progress on gender issues, in particular women's rights, as well as to use its seat on the Security Council to advocate for women, peace and security (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
- 123.156 Consider taking the necessary measures to raise the age of marriage to 18 years old as recommended by the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls (Mauritius);
- 123.157 Increase actions to eliminate violence against women and promote their participation in the public sector (Burundi);
- 123.158 Enhance the application of a gendered perspective in legislation and policies on violence against women (Iceland);
- 123.159 Strengthen the implementation of its Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan, to effectively prevent violence against women (Malaysia);
- 123.160 Strengthen the implementation of existing legal regulations against gender-based violence and domestic violence (Cuba);
- 123.161 Strengthen the normative framework, policies and strategies on gender-based violence, and include comprehensive measures to combat all forms of violence in addition to domestic violence, and ensure specialized protocols and services for the care and support of victims (Paraguay);
- 123.162 Continue efforts to ensure effective protection and remedies for survivors of domestic and other forms of gender-based violence (Ghana);
- 123.163 Ensure protection and remedies for survivors of all forms of gender-based violence (Iceland);
- 123.164 Ensure the availability of comprehensive services for the support and care of victims of gender-based violence and trafficking in persons, especially women and children, including medical care, psychosocial support, safe shelters, legal aid and social services (Panama);
- 123.165 Develop a comprehensive strategy for preventing and combating violence against or abuse or neglect of children in all settings (Montenegro);
- 123.166 Formulate and implement a comprehensive mechanism for preventing and combating violence against or abuse or neglect of children in all settings (Maldives);
- 123.167 Take steps to investigate crimes of sexual and economic exploitation of children, hold perpetrators of such crimes accountable and provide rehabilitation services and appropriate means of reparation to the victims (Syrian Arab Republic);

- 123.168 Conduct awareness-raising activities on child sexual abuse in the home and online and establish child-friendly procedures to ensure reporting of sexual abuse cases (Croatia);
- 123.169 Ensure the entry into force of the Minor Protection (Alternative Care) Act and the implementation of the child protection measures that it entails (Cyprus);
- 123.170 Conduct awareness-raising activities on child abuse, establish child-friendly procedures to ensure reporting of cases and ensure the effective investigation of all cases, the criminal prosecution of alleged perpetrators and the adequate criminal punishment of those found guilty (Sri Lanka);
- 123.171 Consider conducting awareness-raising programmes on child sexual abuse at home and online (Greece);
- 123.172 Continue to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to the Office of the Commissioner for Children to carry out its functions effectively (Bulgaria);
- 123.173 Strengthen its public awareness programmes on the damaging effects of child marriage and female genital mutilation on the health of children; provide systematic training to officials so that they are able to recognize potential victims of these phenomena and refer them to the appropriate services; and reinforce victim protection and care programmes (Togo);
- 123.174 Strengthen awareness of the harmful effects of child marriage and female genital mutilation, improve early detection of those at risk and ensure protection and care for survivors (Iceland);
- 123.175 Consider the adoption of necessary measures to protect the children in the most vulnerable situations, especially asylum-seeking, migrant and refugee children and reduce the risk of their becoming victims of trafficking in persons (Argentina);
- 123.176 End the sexual exploitation of children in the travel and tourism context (Islamic Republic of Iran);
- 123.177 Ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for the effective implementation of the National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing 2023–2030 to guarantee decent, affordable and easily accessible services to all older persons (Dominican Republic);
- 123.178 Continue strengthening measures aimed at respecting and promoting all rights of persons with disabilities through an effective national disability strategy, fully compliant with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and with the participation of the persons concerned (Romania);
- 123.179 Continue the implementation of national policy and measures to promote the rights of persons with disabilities (Lao People's Democratic Republic);
- 123.180 Strengthen collaborations with civil society organizations and academia to ensure effective implementation of the national strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities (Bahamas);
- 123.181 Take measures to improve the system ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities (Belarus);
- 123.182 Take further appropriate measures to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in political, economic and cultural life (Bulgaria);
- 123.183 Work towards better integration of the concerns of persons with disabilities into public policies and strategies (Burkina Faso);
- 123.184 Adopt an effective disability assessment system, based on human rights, and evaluate the guardianship system and all prohibition or incapacitation regimes still in force (Chile);

- 123.185 Expand further the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups, such as women, girls, older persons and persons with disabilities (China);
- 123.186 Harmonize the Mental Health Act, in particular the legal provisions that legitimize forced confinement and non-consensual psychiatric treatment, with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Costa Rica);
- 123.187 Continue strengthening the social protection programmes for persons with disabilities (Malaysia);
- 123.188 Recognize the legal capacity of all persons with disabilities, revise the current guardianship system and interdiction regimes and reform the Mental Health Act to eliminate forced institutionalization and forced treatment of persons with disabilities (Mexico);
- 123.189 Restore the legal capacity of all persons with disabilities and abolish discriminatory legal provisions (Poland);
- 123.190 Revise national legislation on forced internment and non-consensual psychiatric treatment (Poland);
- 123.191 Revise the provisions of the Mental Health Act to fully harmonize it with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, especially to strengthen the protection of persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities (Panama);
- 123.192 Ensure the implementation of its national laws on education and accelerate the adoption of the bill on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Poland);
- 123.193 Continue efforts to ensure equal access to quality education for all children, especially children with disabilities and children in vulnerable situations, such as migrant children, and further develop inclusive practices and policies (Romania);
- 123.194 Take measures to improve the accessibility and the quality of education for children with disabilities (Islamic Republic of Iran);
- 123.195 Continue to take the necessary measures to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and develop programmes that guarantee the enjoyment of their rights, especially in education and health (Algeria);
- 123.196 Take additional measures to facilitate the employment of persons with disabilities, and to increase actions to raise the awareness of employers about the rights of persons with disabilities in the workplace (Burundi);
- 123.197 Take steps to help persons with disabilities to find employment in the mainstream labour market (Togo);
- 123.198 Strengthen the protection and non-discrimination of minorities and other vulnerable groups (Cameroon);
- 123.199 Establish a mechanism to collect disaggregated data on the incidence of hate crimes, including hate speech, based on race, colour, language, religion, ethnicity, citizenship, sexual orientation and gender identity (Costa Rica);
- 123.200 Intensify efforts to ensure an effective response to tackle hate crime, Islamophobia, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other related intolerance directed at ethnic and religious minorities (Malaysia);
- 123.201 Intensify efforts to provide religious minority communities with equal access to opportunities (Pakistan);
- 123.202 Respect intersex children's right to self-determination and ban medically unnecessary surgeries (Iceland);
- 123.203 Implement legislative and institutional reforms to ensure that the human rights of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers are respected and

protected, particularly by preventing arbitrary detention and decriminalizing humanitarian rescue operations (Brazil);

123.204 Review laws, regulations, policies and practices on immigration, refuge and asylum, and prohibit the detention of migrant children in line with the recommendations made by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (Colombia);

123.205 Improve migrant and refugee rights through comprehensive policies ensuring access to services, legal protection and integration (Gambia);

123.206 Rethink its immigration policy, guaranteeing the freedom of civil society organizations that provide assistance to migrants and that the rescue of migrants is not considered an offence (Cabo Verde);

123.207 Take all necessary measures to ensure that distress calls from refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers at sea are responded to in a timely manner (New Zealand);

123.208 Decriminalize the rescue of migrants at sea and guarantee the rights and freedom of action of civil society in this matter (Luxembourg);

123.209 Meet search and rescue obligations, including those related to seaborne migrants (United States of America);

123.210 Review its migration policies and practices with regard to rescue, refoulement, automatic detention, detention conditions, administrative and judicial procedures and legal aid (Paraguay);

123.211 Adopt and apply policies guaranteeing appropriate protection mechanisms in the reception and support of vulnerable migrants, particularly unaccompanied minors, and revise the policy of systematic detention of immigrants (Djibouti);

123.212 Review its migration laws, regulations, policies and practices and transform its humanitarian protection policies with regard to unaccompanied children in the context of migration (Islamic Republic of Iran);

123.213 Strengthen the protection of the rights of all migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian laws (Indonesia);

123.214 Improve the process of issuing and reviewing detention orders and ensure that migrants and refugees rescued at sea are promptly disembarked with full respect for their human rights (Norway);

123.215 Take measures to address the practice of arbitrarily detaining refugees and migrants and ensure that no child is detained (Pakistan);

123.216 Ensure that immigration detention is only used as a means of last resort, refrain from detaining children and vulnerable persons and improve conditions in detention centres (Belgium);

123.217 Ensure migrants entering Malta irregularly are provided humane and just treatment; and continue to address poor sanitation and other inadequate conditions in detention centres (United States of America);

123.218 Continue efforts to strengthen legislation and the public infrastructure and services system to ensure the rights of vulnerable groups, such as women, children, persons with disabilities and migrants (Viet Nam);

123.219 Continue to strengthen efforts against any form of violence against children, women or migrants (Algeria);

123.220 Effectively put in place ethical recruitment practices for migrant workers (Nepal);

123.221 Strengthen and safeguard the economic and social rights of migrants and foreign workers (Pakistan);

- 123.222 Continue national efforts in the effective implementation of the action plan for the integration of migrants into the public life of the country (Cuba);
- 123.223 Continue the work of the Migrant Learners Unit, which supports newcomer migrant children to learn the languages of schooling in Malta, to assist their access to the mainstream curriculum through teaching and learning material and to support them to overcome related challenges (Sri Lanka);
- 123.224 Improve the availability and accessibility of mental health services for asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children and allocate adequate resources to these services (Burkina Faso);
- 123.225 Step up efforts to eradicate stereotypes and discrimination against migrants by conducting public awareness campaigns to promote tolerance and respect for diversity (Uruguay);
- 123.226 Allow the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to provide information upon arrival to all migrants who access Malta and allow it to visit the living quarters of all migrants in detention centres (Canada);
- 123.227 Ensure that asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants, particularly unaccompanied minors and children, are given all necessary protection and social support; this includes the continued refurbishment of detention centres and other living quarters (New Zealand);
- 123.228 Provide greater transparency and control over the conditions of detention and treatment of asylum-seekers and other categories of migrants (Russian Federation);
- 123.229 Work urgently to address the complex humanitarian situation of migrants and refugees in the country and treat them fairly, in accordance with its international human rights obligations (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);
- 123.230 Eliminate or minimize the risks of violence, ill-treatment and economic exploitation of asylum-seeking children, refugees and migrants (Cabo Verde);
- 123.231 Establish a statelessness determination procedure to ensure the identification of stateless persons on its territory (Costa Rica);
- 123.232 Improve the registration of stateless persons through their inclusion in the national census and the training of officials; and amend the law to ensure that all children born on Maltese territory who would otherwise be stateless acquire a nationality as soon as possible after their birth (Mexico).
124. All conclusions and/or recommendations contained in the present report reflect the position of the submitting State(s) and/or the State under review. They should not be construed as endorsed by the Working Group as a whole.

Annex

Composition of the delegation

The delegation of Malta was headed by Hon. Rebecca Buttigieg, Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality, Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality, and composed of the following members:

- H.E. Christopher Grima, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Malta, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Malta to the UN – Geneva;
 - Ms. Simone Mousu, Director General, Ministry for Justice and Reform of the Construction Sector;
 - Ms. Christianne Caruana, Director Global Issues, Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade;
 - Dr. Karen Vincenti, Director International Affairs and Policy Development, Department for Policy in Health, Ministry for Health and Active Ageing;
 - Ms. Diandra Buttigieg, Director – Migration Directorate, Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality;
 - Ms. Renee Laiviera, Commissioner of the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality;
 - Mr. Michael Camilleri, Head – Human Rights Directorate, Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality;
 - Ms. Eunice Fiorini, CEO of the Court Services Agency, Ministry for Justice and Reform of the Construction Sector;
 - Ms. Graziella Caruana, Unit Manager (EU and International Affairs, Research, and Intelligence), Jobsplus;
 - Dr. Maria Chiara Zappala', Manager, Legal and International Relations, Financial Intelligence Analysis Unit;
 - Ms. Alexandra Galea, Counsellor, Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade;
 - Mr. Bernard Charles Mifsud, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Malta to the UN – Geneva;
 - Ms. Michelle Baldacchino, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Malta to the UN – Geneva;
 - Ms. Melanie Falzon, Private Secretary to the Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality;
 - Ms. Cecilia Brocca, Intern, Permanent Mission of Malta to the UN – Geneva;
 - Mr. Austin Tufigno, Delegation Photographer.
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