

A New Life Chapter in the European Union: the Malta option

Relocating to a new country is a life-changing decision that cannot be taken lightly. Immigration status, residence permit, job availability

By **Andrea Nurchi**, 15th July 2024

Relocating to a new country is a life-changing decision that cannot be taken lightly. Immigration status, residence permit, job availability, healthcare and education are just a few of the many elements individuals and their families need to assess before taking such an important step in their lives.

Malta is a strong option to consider for several reasons. Two of the main reasons to consider Malta is their economy, which has been constantly growing year after year and needs to increase its pool of workers. This trend is set to continue, with EU growth forecasts constantly placing Malta in the first position among EU countries. In addition to this, the Mediterranean climate and the island's lifestyle are attractive for many foreigners.

Definitions, Visa and Legal Basis to Stay in Malta

Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) are individuals who are not citizens of the European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EAA) or Swiss Nationals. To enter Malta, a Schengen visa is required. The Schengen visa would allow a TCN to stay in the Schengen area for a maximum of 90 days over a period of 180 days. Once this visa has expired, a TCN can remain in Malta only with a valid legal basis: this can be related to employment, self-sufficiency, family reunion, study, health or refugee status.

Planning to Work in Malta?

The Schengen visa does not allow its holder to work in Malta. To be able to reside and work in Malta, TCNs need to obtain a single permit, a document that combines residence and work permit. The single permit is valid for 1 year and indicates both the employer and the position/job title of the TCN. Should any of these details change a new single permit needs to be issued.

Highly skilled individuals can also benefit from the [Key Employment Initiative \(KEI\)](#), or the [Specialist Employee Initiative \(SEI\)](#), which provides a fast-track work permit for highly specialised TCNs who are employed in Malta.

Thinking of Self-Employment?

The single permit does not allow self-employment. TCNs who wish to set up a business in Malta, will require an employment license issued by Jobsplus, the Maltese Job Agency, which will grant it if one or more of the following conditions are met:

- a) the TCN makes a minimum capital investment of €500,000;
- b) the TCN is a highly skilled innovator who commit to recruit at least 3 people (EU, EEA or Swiss nationals) within 18 months;
- c) the TCN has a project approved by Malta Enterprise, the Maltese Government FDI Agency. The TCN will be able to apply for a residency permit once the employment license is granted.

Are you able to Sustain your Residence in Malta Without Employment?

TCNs can apply for a residence permit via the following routes: [Global Residence Programme](#), the [Malta Permanent Residence Programme](#), and the [Malta Retirement Programme](#). These are the only routes through which a TCN can obtain a residence permit based on self-sufficiency. For more information on these residency routes, we invite our readers to [visit this page on our website](#).

Alternative Options for Startups and Digital Nomads

There are two additional routes for TCNs to work and obtain residency in Malta.

The [Malta Startup Residence Programme](#) targets founders and co-founders of innovative start-ups. Such individuals can relocate and live in Malta and can apply for a 3-year residency permit, together with their immediate family. It is possible to include Key Employees for the startup under this route.

TCNs can also apply for the [Nomad Residency Permit](#), which is designed for individuals who wish to maintain their current job in another country, but legally reside in Malta and work remotely.

Individual Cases: Study and Health

TCNs may apply for a residence permit for the purpose of study. It is to be noted that, in this case, they are not allowed to work, unless they obtain an employment license by Jobsplus, which would allow them to work for up to 20 hours per week.

A residence permit can be granted to a TCN who intends to seek medical treatment in Malta. In this case, particular documentation needs to be submitted to Identità, the Maltese agency responsible for passports, visa, identity documents, work & residence documents.

Additional Information and Assistance

Our staff at the Dixcart Malta Office can assist in providing advice as to which route would be most appropriate for each individual or family.

We can also assist with visits to Malta applications, and provide a comprehensive range of individual and professional commercial services once relocation has taken place.

For further information about moving to Malta please contact:

advice.malta@dixcart.com.

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