

# Small States Security and Defence

Malta

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# Small States

## Security and Defence – Country Overview

- Overview for your country
  - Historical background
    - The Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans and Byzantines all left their mark on Malta, as did the Arabs who left their imprint on the Maltese language. Subsequently Malta was ruled by the Normans, the Aragonese and between 1530 and 1798 by the Knights of the Military Order of St. John. In 1798 Napoleon Bonaparte took the islands on his way to Egypt but after two years the inhabitants rose against the French helped by Britain, Portugal and the Kingdom of Naples. A few years later the islands became a British colony, a status that lasted until 1964, when Malta became independent. In 1974 Malta became a Republic, in 2004 it joined the European Union and four years later the Eurozone.

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## Security and Defence – Country Overview

- Overview for your country
  - Geographical location
    - Central Mediterranean. Between Sicily and Libya.
    - Three inhabited islands - Malta, Gozo and Comino.
    - Land area of 320 km<sup>2</sup> and a total population of 475,000 (2017), Malta is one of the most densely populated countries in the world
  - Main challenges – Especially related to the size of the country
    - Population growth and density
    - Climate change and its key impacts (heatwaves, increased temperatures, water scarcity)
    - Cybersecurity. Given its size and lack of resources, Malta relies on digital innovation and services to increase size of its economy. Increased dependence on cyberspace, both for GOV and Private business renders it more vulnerable (new national strategy being developed)

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## Security and Defence – Country Overview

- Government and administration
  - Which administrative bodies are involved?
    - Human security. CC, food security, human trafficking according to the line Ministries
    - Traditional defence in the hands of the Minister of defence and interior affairs, mostly through the army
    - Constitution says that Malta should not belong to any alliance given its neutrality status
  - What emergency plans are in place?
    - Food, fuel and water security plans given the size of the island and interdependence are very difficult to implement. Oil spill would jeopardise water supply (reverse osmosis); 3 months worth of fuel?
    - Malta's security relies on treaties, especially with Italy (guarantor of Malta's security in cases of threats). Issues related Italy's membership of NATO, which would contrast theoretically with Malta's neutrality status
    - What about the treaty that followed the soviet union collapse that passed the former treaty with the soviet union to the Russian federation? It was never rescinded

# Small States National Defence

- National armed forces
  - Army (2,200 personnel). No air defence, except for search & rescue. Naval vessels being modernised only recently, and through EU funds and agreements
- Agreements with other countries/international organisations
  - NATO partnership for peace (controversy on whether this goes against the neutrality and non-alliance requirement);
  - European Defence Agency (initially Labour party said they would drop out).
  - Not joining PESCO but adopted a 'wait and see' attitude;
  - Part of the OECS (active member)
- Where does your country seek shelter in security and defence matters?
  - Italy, officially. Recent trends confirm this, although around migration there are growing tensions that can undermine long-established relations.

# Small States National Defence

- Provide examples of costs and benefits that your country gets from EU cooperation in security and defence. What is the national debate?
  - Schengen. Supportive, Malta gained in terms of free movement (tourism, both inbound and outbound, and business in general).
  - Police cooperation, especially for EuroPol and Terrorism units.
  - Hard core defence. Participated in all peace keeping mission. Actively supported cooperation with Libyan coast guard and recently expansion in Ghana and Ethiopia.
  - PESCO. Given that it is described as the European army, it still seen as too close to participating to an army, which goes against the neutrality status. Therefore Malta has not participated in key projects where it could lead (cybersecurity) or gain in terms of security skills.

# Small States Role in Peacekeeping

- Provide examples of your country's work in peacekeeping
  - EU missions / international missions?
    - UN, OECS, Electoral monitoring of behalf of the OECS
  - Other international engagements? Include international agreements and conventions with an indirect target of peacekeeping, e.g. the International Criminal Court.
    - Malta is part of all the conventions ratified by the EU, and by default it participates, often actively, into all (ex. financing of terrorism).

# Conclusion: Main future security challenges

- Looking forward, what are the main future challenges for your country in security and defence matters?
  - Consider challenges beyond military aspects - include all threats and challenges, such as natural hazards, food security, societal security, cyber security, etc.
    - Climate change. Water, food, temperature, fuel, migrations.
    - Instability due to lack of coordination in the migration crises, especially in terms of rescuing.