



Il-perspettiva tas-soċjetà ċivili organizzata fl-Istati Membri tal-UE dwar il-proposti nazzjonali ta' riforma u investment u l-implimentazzjoni tagħhom

Il-Ġimgħa, 7 ta' Frar 2025 mid-09:30 sal-11:00

fil-Kunsill Malti għall-Iżvilupp Ekonomiku u Soċjali 280, Triq ir-Repubblika, Valletta, Malta



Report

Organisers of the consultation meeting

- European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD)

Background

This round table was organised as part of the consultation carried out by the European Semester Group for the preparation of an information report entitled: 'The point of view of organised civil society in the EU Member States on national reform and investment proposals and their implementation (2024-2025 European Semester cycle)' ([ECO 651](#)).

This consultation primarily focuses on reform and investment measures in the Member States, particularly those based on the 2024 country-specific recommendations and their implementation. The aim is to assess just how effective these measures are and what can be done to better target the proposals, improve implementation and step up monitoring by organised civil society and its involvement. The consultation also looks at the medium-term fiscal structural plans, proposed in the wake of the revision of the economic governance framework, the preparation, implementation and monitoring of which have been incorporated into the European Semester. Finally, this consultation follows up on previous consultation exercises by examining the progress made in the implementation of the reforms and investments provided for in the national recovery and resilience plans, which are financially supported by the Recovery and Resilience Facility funds.

The results of this consultation will be summarised in the above-mentioned information report (ECO/651) as well as in an annex to this report. In this report, the Committee will continue to promote a more participatory European Semester and governance framework, with greater ownership at national level and closer involvement of organised civil society.

Statements by the members of the European Economic and Social Committee

- The members of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) presented in brief the structure of the EESC, its activities and the work carried out by the European Semester Group.
- They also explained the way the consultation is being carried out for the preparation of the [ECO/651](#) report: through a questionnaire, and visits to eight Member States.
- In 2024, Malta received a number of country-specific recommendations covering several areas. This consultation meeting focused on the following areas: education and skills, renewable energy and transport.
- Participants were asked to give their views on whether initiatives being taken by the authorities in the field of transport, energy, education and skills would be sufficient and how these initiatives could be improved. They were also asked to give their views on the consultation exercise carried out: whether sufficient and adequate consultation is taking place.

Statements by participants

With regard to the consultation exercise

- Some participants explained that in general, public consultations are well conducted, but the quality of the consultation varies from one ministry to another. However, it was not always clear what is being done after the consultations end. Some participants felt that sometimes they are not given enough time to give their feedback and views.
- Although there is still room for improvement, participants generally considered the situation of social dialogue in the country to be rather positive. The importance of coordinating the initiatives taken in the various fields, and of carrying out the necessary work beyond the political cycles, was stressed.

Transport

- While the country has put a strong emphasis on infrastructure, for example the widening of roads to address the problem of traffic congestion, not enough has been done to change people's habits in the way they commute. More emphasis must be placed on services within the community, so as to reduce the need to commute to other towns and villages, for example after school for children to attend extra-curricular activities.
- Transport and connections, particularly between the island of Malta and Gozo need to be given priority.

- While there has been an increase in the number of hybrid and electric cars, no plans have been made as regards how to scrap them once they are discarded from service.
- In order to reduce road congestion, the possibility of providing certain services, for example deliveries, at night could be explored. However, in such initiatives it is important to always consider work-life balance.
- It is important that if measures taken to reduce transport problems and congestion are not effective, they are withdrawn and not maintained anyway.

Education and skills

- Not enough was being done in the field of skills and training, for example to train people in new skills, and the social partners are not being sufficiently included in this regard. While examples of trade unions providing courses in partnership with the government were mentioned, these were too few and not at a steady pace. It was noted that certain trades, for example masonry and limestone, would be lost in a few years.
- Not enough was being done to train women and girls in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) fields. Moreover, in general, many young people were not choosing science subjects in their studies, which could undermine the country's ambition to take a digital leap.
- While a strong emphasis is being placed on the low birth rate in the country and on the importance of increasing it, as this has been low, much more has been needed in the field of online learning, so that people still remain informed with respect to developments in the world of work.
- A lot of training is taking place within companies due to the skills card. However, the certification of acquired skills is taking the form of a certificate issued by the company itself. Certification was to be carried out by means of the skills card by people trained in this field.
- Workers from abroad were being brought in to work in certain healthcare areas where there is a shortage of workers, thus compensating for gaps. Although it was generally easy to access a doctor in Malta, there was still work to be done to address the problem with hospital waiting lists and strengthen resilience in the field of healthcare.

Energy

- With regard to renewable energy, although efforts have been made over the years towards the transition, they have had a rather slow and unstable pace. This may also have been due to the fact that workers' and employers' organisations are not always in favour of the actions that were envisaged. Moreover, certain laws introduced, for example on solar panels, were not coordinated.
- It is important that everyone is included in the actions taken in the field of the green transition, thus strengthening the sense of ownership. In addition, it was necessary to change the general idea of waiting for the government to take the necessary steps and actions.

General comments

- The situation in Europe was of concern as its two largest economies were experiencing a crisis and many Member States were heavily indebted. This is in addition to other uncertainties at international level.
- Solutions to the country's challenges should be tailored to the situation and realities of the country, always taking into account the general picture outside the country.

List of participants

Representatives from ministries and the government

Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry

General Workers' Union

Voice of the Workers

Confederation of Malta Trade Unions (CMTU)

Forum of Maltese Unions (For.U.M.)

Civil Society Committee

Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association (MHRA)

Malta Chamber of SMEs

European Economic and Social Committee

Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD)