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THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE MALTA POLICE UNION



December 2025



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Newspaper Post - Issue 16



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Editorial

Neville Mercieca

As we approach the festive season, it is a time to pause, reflect, and celebrate what unites us. Christmas is not only a season of joy and goodwill, but also a reminder of the values that guide our profession, service, solidarity, and sacrifice.

For members of the Malta Police Union, this time of year brings unique challenges. While families gather to share in peace and celebration, many of our colleagues continue their duty, safeguarding our communities with dedication and courage. To them, we owe our deepest gratitude. Their service ensures that the spirit of Christmas, safety, compassion, and togetherness remains protected for all.

This season is also a moment to remember those we have lost, to honour their memory, and to support one another as a family. The Union remains committed to standing shoulder to shoulder with every member, ensuring your voices are heard and your wellbeing remains a priority.

On behalf of the Malta Police Union, we extend our warmest wishes for a Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year. May this season bring comfort to your homes, strength to your hearts, and renewed hope for the future.




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Remembering Those Who Keep Malta Safe This Christmas

Marlon Hili, MPU Chairperson

As Christmas approaches and Malta's towns and villages fill with festive lights, bustling markets, and the joy of family gatherings, it is easy to be swept up in the spirit of the season. Yet, amid this warmth and celebration, we must take a moment to think of those whose duty often keeps them away from their loved ones, the men and women of the Malta Police Force.

While most of us enjoy the comfort of our homes, police officers continue their work quietly and steadfastly. They are the ones ensuring that celebrations remain peaceful, that our roads stay safe, and that our communities are protected. Their presence may often go unnoticed, but their contribution is felt in the calm and order we sometimes take for granted.

The Malta Police Union has long spoken about the challenges faced by officers, especially during demanding periods such as Christmas. Behind every uniform is a person there is a mother, a father, a son, or a daughter who sets aside family time to serve the public. Their dedication reflects a deep sense of duty to both the Force and the nation it serves.

Christmas is a season of gratitude and reflection. It reminds us that safety and peace do not happen by chance; they are upheld by the commitment and professionalism of those who protect our communities day and night. The work of the Police Force often stressful, sometimes dangerous is a year-round act of service that deserves recognition and respect.

This Christmas, the message is simple yet profound: gratitude. Gratitude to every member of the Malta Police Force for their tireless service, and to the Malta Police Union for its ongoing advocacy and support of those who dedicate their lives to keeping our country safe.

May this season remind us that true peace is built on the courage and compassion of those who protect it.

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Building on Our Achievements, Strengthening Our Future

James Saliba Lorenzen, Secretary General

Over the past years, the Malta Police Force has undergone important changes and modernisation of its structures, greater investment in technology, and a stronger focus on community policing. These steps have brought us closer to a professional service that not only enforces the law but also earns the trust and respect of the public we serve. As a Union, we take pride in the role our members have played in making this progress possible.

But achievements are not a destination. They are milestones. The challenge before us now is twofold: to preserve the progress we have made, and to build upon it with a renewed commitment to accountability, efficiency, and fairness.

For police officers, accountability is not a threat, it is a cornerstone of professionalism. When the public can see that we operate with integrity and transparency, their confidence in us grows. That confidence, in turn, makes our work more effective. This is why the Malta Police Union supports reforms that strengthen accountability, provided they are balanced, fair, and respectful of the realities of policing.

At the same time, we must ensure that output is not measured only in numbers or targets, but in the real impact we deliver safer streets, stronger communities, and the wellbeing of citizens. Improving our output means equipping officers with the right tools, training, and conditions to succeed. It also means ensuring that improvements do not come at the cost of overburdening the very people who make them possible.

The Malta Police Union remains vigilant and proactive in safeguarding our members' rights while encouraging reforms that enhance the credibility and effectiveness of the Force. We will continue to insist that every initiative respects the dignity of police officers, protects their wellbeing, and acknowledges their sacrifices.

As we look ahead, let us commit to striking the right balance—holding firmly to the progress we have achieved, while embracing the responsibility to do even better. Together, we can shape a Police Force that commands respect, delivers results, and supports its people at every step.

On behalf of the Malta Police Union, I extend my warmest wishes to all our members and their families this festive season. May this Christmas bring you peace, joy, and strength, and may the New Year be one of continued progress, safety, and unity.



Join Us!

The Malta Police Union is open to all sworn members of the Malta Police Force, including Reserve Police Constables.

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Christmas in Uniform

What the Festive Season Means for Our Police Officers.

For most people, Christmas is a time of gathering with family, sharing traditions, and enjoying the peace of the season. For members of the Malta Police Force, however, Christmas takes on a deeper meaning, one that blends duty, sacrifice, and community spirit.

While others are at home celebrating, many of our officers spend Christmas on duty. They patrol our streets, safeguard events, and respond to emergencies, ensuring that everyone can enjoy the holidays in safety. For them, Christmas is a reminder of the sacrifices they and their families make so that the wider community can celebrate in peace.

At the same time, Christmas highlights the unique bond between police officers and the public. It is during the festive season that communities come together in town squares, churches, and family gatherings. Officers are there, not just as protectors, but as part of the very fabric of society. Their presence embodies the values of trust, service, and solidarity that give Christmas its true meaning.

The season is also a moment of reflection. Officers look back on the year and its challenges, achievements, and sacrifices with gratitude for the support they receive both within the Force and from the public. And for those working shifts on Christmas Day, colleagues often become like extended family. Sharing duty during the holidays strengthens the sense of brotherhood and camaraderie that is so vital in policing.

Above all, Christmas reminds every officer of the importance of family and balance. Even if celebrations are reshaped around shifts, the season offers a chance to reconnect with loved ones, to pause, and to find strength in the values of compassion and goodwill.

For the Malta Police Force, Christmas is not only about tradition and festivity, it is also about hope. The hope for safer communities, stronger unity, and a renewed commitment to serve with integrity in the year ahead.

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“Safer Communities, Smarter Policing”

The Malta Police Force Strategy 2025-2030

In September 2025, the Malta Police Force formally launched its new five-year corporate strategy, titled “*Safer Communities, Smarter Policing*”. This plan sets the course for how the Force will respond to emerging challenges, build trust with the public, and modernise its services between now and 2030.

What’s new: Key features

- The strategy is organised around three core pillars:
 1. Ensuring Public Safety and Security
 2. Strengthening Public Trust and Police Legitimacy
 3. Delivering Smarter Policing
- It contains 15 priority areas and 75 specific commitments. These build upon the previous 2020-2025 Transformation Strategy by refining and expanding efforts.
- There is a clear emphasis on community engagement, visible policing, modernisation, accountability and effectiveness in resource deployment.

Some of the concrete goals in *Safer Communities, Smarter Policing* include:

- Expanding community policing nationwide, introducing more patrols and support officers to improve visibility and connection with local communities.
- Strengthening infrastructure and facilities, including renovating police stations, improving the tools and technology available to officers, and ensuring that systems are equipped for modern demands.
- Enhancing police legitimacy and accountability, through better communication, transparency, and building public trust. This covers both how the public perceives policing, and internal standards of conduct.
- Using data, technology, and smarter resource allocation to ensure that policing efforts are efficient, proactive, not just reactive. This includes aspects like electronic monitoring, more sophisticated intelligence systems, and better alignment between where the problems are and how resources are deployed.
- Supporting victims of crime more effectively, including services for domestic violence, and ensuring that support structures are in place when people need them.
- Improving workforce wellbeing and capability: ensuring officers have the training, support, leadership, and working conditions needed to meet the demands of modern policing.

This strategy is more than a document of good intentions: it reflects how policing must evolve in response to shifts in society, technology, and public expectations. Some reasons why these matters:

- Changing nature of risk: Crime and threats evolve—organized crime, cybercrime, border security, public safety issues demand modern tools and agile responses.
- Public expectations: Citizens increasingly expect transparency, accountability, fairness, and responsiveness; simply enforcing laws is no longer enough without legitimacy and trust.
- Efficiency and resources: With finite resources, it’s essential to use them smartly—directing manpower where it has the greatest impact, adopting technological tools that amplify capacity.

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- Community-centred policing: Closer relationships between police and communities help in prevention, detection, even in reporting crimes; people are more likely to co-operate with forces they trust.

To succeed, the strategy will need to overcome certain challenges:

- Implementation: Turning strategy into practice is always difficult. It will require strong leadership, continuous monitoring of progress, and willingness to adapt when things don't work as expected.
- Resourcing: Many of the goals require investment—in facilities, technology, personnel. Budget constraints may slow some initiatives unless well-planned.
- Cultural change: Some priorities, like increased transparency, higher public scrutiny, or changing internal norms, require shifts in mindset, which often take time.
- Maintaining momentum: Over five years, there is the risk that initial enthusiasm fades. Clear milestones, accountability, and visible results will be needed to sustain support among both police personnel and the public.

If *Safer Communities, Smarter Policing* achieves its objectives, by 2030 we might expect:

- More neighbourhood police presence, with better relationships between officers and communities.
- Quicker response times, improved crime prevention, and increased detection rates thanks to better use of data and technology.
- Greater public trust in the Police Force, measured by more public cooperation, fewer complaints, or perceptions of fairness and effectiveness.
- A workforce better supported: more training, better leadership, recognition, and higher morale.
- Clearer systems for victim support, transparency, and accountability that help citizens feel the system is fair.

The 2025-2030 Strategy lays out an ambitious but necessary roadmap. As the Malta Police Force steps into this new era, the success of *Safer Communities, Smarter Policing* will depend not only on policy and investment, but on people—officers, leadership, and the public—coming together with trust, collaboration, and determination.

For its part, the Malta Police Union will continue to stand firmly by its members, ensuring that every change introduced under this strategy is carried out with respect, fairness, and transparency. Above all, we will remain vigilant that no additional burden is placed on individual police officers without the necessary support, and that reforms truly translate into benefits for those who serve as well as for the communities they protect.





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Policing with Purpose: Meeting the Expectations of Our Communities

Measuring public expectations for a police service, even in a small country like Malta, requires a thoughtful combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. While the population is smaller, citizens' expectations are still diverse, and effective assessment must capture both perception and priorities. One of the most common methods is through surveys and questionnaires. Citizen satisfaction surveys can measure residents' satisfaction with police services, including response times, visibility, professionalism, and fairness. By asking about what people *expect* versus what they *experience*, authorities can identify gaps between expectations and actual service delivery. Even in Malta's small population, careful sampling across regions, age groups, and communities ensures that results are representative.

Community consultations are another key method. Focus groups or town hall meetings allow residents to discuss their priorities in depth and offer insights that surveys might miss. These interactive sessions reveal what communities value most, whether it is safety in neighbourhoods, traffic enforcement, or engagement with youth and allow police services to align their strategies accordingly. Complaints and feedback can also provide valuable insights. Tracking patterns in complaints, compliments, and service requests helps highlight areas where public expectations are not being met. In Malta, anecdotal evidence, such as social media commentary or posts on local forums, can also give a clear picture of citizen sentiment.

Benchmarking against similar countries or regions is another useful tool. International surveys, such as those conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights or Eurobarometer, can provide a reference point for understanding public expectations in a Maltese context. In addition, analysing crime data alongside community priorities can help infer expectations indirectly. For example, if petty theft is rising but citizens expect heavy patrols in residential areas, this provides guidance on how to allocate resources effectively.

Engaging local stakeholders, including religious leaders, school authorities, and community organizations, offers further insight into specific community expectations. Local councils and neighbourhood representatives in Malta are especially valuable, as they can act as direct conduits for understanding local priorities. Social media and other digital platforms also provide a real-time pulse on public sentiment, highlighting spikes in concern or satisfaction that may not be captured elsewhere.

Finally, it is essential to establish regular reporting and feedback loops. Conducting surveys or consultations periodically allows police services to monitor changes in public expectations over time, and reporting back on actions taken reinforces trust. Public expectations are not static, but they evolve with social changes, emerging safety concerns, and shifts in community priorities. By combining personal interaction, hard data from crime statistics and complaints, and soft data from surveys and social media, a police service in Malta can develop a nuanced understanding of what the public expects and ensures that service delivery is both effective and aligned with those expectations.

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1955: When Malta's Police Took a Stand

The Malta Police Association (MPA), now known as the Malta Police Union (MPU), was founded on July 25, 1955, marking a pivotal moment in the professional evolution of the Malta Police Force. This establishment was driven by a confluence of internal challenges within the police force and broader societal changes in Malta during the mid-20th century.

In the early 1950s, members of the Malta Police Force faced several pressing issues that highlighted the need for a collective representation. These concerns included Excessive Working Hours: Officers often endured long and demanding shifts, leading to fatigue and diminished morale, Pension Discrepancies: Service reserve time was not always considered valid for pension purposes, affecting long-term financial security for officers, Wage Issues: There were calls for increased wages and the granting of allowances to better compensate officers for their duties, Uniform Concerns: The existing uniforms were deemed uncomfortable and unsuitable for the local climate, impacting officers' comfort and efficiency and Disciplinary Measures: Punishments for breaches of discipline were considered excessively harsh, leading to concerns about fairness and justice within the force.

In response to these challenges, the government of Malta sought the expertise of W.A. Muller, the Colonial Inspector of Police, to prepare a detailed report on the prevailing situation within the Malta Police Force. This initiative underscored the government's recognition of the need to address the concerns of police officers and improve the overall functioning of the force.

The formation of the MPA was a direct response to these issues, aiming to:

- **Protect Junior Officers:** Safeguard younger or less senior members from potential victimization and unfair treatment.
- **Foster Cooperation:** Encourage better understanding and collaboration among officers, bridging gaps between different ranks and fostering a sense of unity.
- **Advocate for Rights:** Represent the collective interests of police personnel, ensuring their voices were heard in discussions about working conditions and policies.

By establishing the MPA, the police force took a significant step towards professionalization, ensuring that officers had a platform to address their concerns and contribute to the evolution of their profession.

Since its inception, the MPA has played a crucial role in advocating for the rights and well-being of police officers in Malta. Over time, it has evolved into the Malta Police Union, expanding its influence and continuing to serve as a vital representative body for police personnel. The union's ongoing efforts have contributed to the enhancement of working conditions, fair treatment, and the overall professionalism of the Malta Police Force.

The founding of the Malta Police Association in 1955 stands as a testament to the commitment of Malta's police officers to uphold the values of justice, fairness, and professionalism. It highlights the importance of collective action in addressing challenges and driving positive change within institutions.

In 2021, the Malta Police Association has been registered under the name of Malta Police Union.

Updated: Pension Measures for Malta Police Officers

Enhanced Pension for Extended Service: Officers who choose to serve beyond the standard 25 years will receive a 23% increase in their pension if they retire after 29 years. Additionally, a lump sum equivalent to six months' basic salary for each year beyond 29 years of service is now available, payable over four years. This initiative aims to retain experienced personnel within the force.

Service Pension Guarantee for Extended Service: A guarantee has been introduced ensuring that officers who continue their service after 25 years will have their pension secured, addressing concerns about potential loss of pension rights due to unforeseen circumstances.

Widow's Pension for Off-Duty Deaths: Spouses of disciplined forces members who pass away due to non-duty-related causes are now entitled to a five-year service pension, provided the deceased had served for at least ten years. This measure also applies retroactively from January 1, 2022, and extends to unmarried partners in civil partnerships or cohabiting relationships.

It was also announced that retired members of Malta's disciplined forces, including the Police Corps, will now receive the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) as part of their pension benefits. This measure was implemented following the publication of a Legal Notice and was announced during a press conference at the Civil Protection station in Hal Far. The COLA bonus will be distributed twice a year, in June and December, and will accumulate annually with each new COLA increase granted by the government.



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Caring for the Mind: The Importance of Mental Wellbeing for Malta Police Officers

Police work is inherently demanding, both physically and emotionally. Members of the Malta Police Force are routinely exposed to stressful situations, high-stakes incidents, and traumatic events. While the focus often falls on operational readiness and physical safety, the mental wellbeing of officers is equally critical, particularly following major accidents or traumatic incidents. Addressing mental health is not only essential for the welfare of individual officers but also for the effectiveness, resilience, and professionalism of the Force as a whole.

After a major accident, whether a traffic collision, an armed confrontation, or a critical incident involving civilians—officers can experience a range of psychological responses, including shock, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress. These reactions are natural, yet if left unaddressed, they can have lasting consequences on personal health, professional performance, and interpersonal relationships. Recognizing these effects early and providing appropriate support is therefore vital.

The Malta Police Force has increasingly emphasized mental health initiatives, including access to counseling services, peer support programs, and psychological debriefings. These resources allow officers to process traumatic events in a safe environment, seek guidance from trained professionals, and learn coping strategies to manage stress effectively. Encouraging officers to utilize these services without stigma is a critical step in fostering a culture of mental wellbeing.

Support is not limited to formal counseling. Peer networks within the Force play a significant role in promoting resilience and recovery. Colleagues who understand the pressures of policing can provide immediate emotional support, share coping strategies, and recognize early warning signs of distress. This community-oriented approach strengthens morale, reduces isolation, and reinforces the message that mental health is as important as physical health in policing.

In addition to supporting individuals after major accidents, promoting ongoing mental wellbeing is equally essential. Training in stress management, mindfulness, and resilience-building helps officers prepare for challenging situations before they occur. Leadership that prioritizes mental health, models healthy behaviours, and encourages open dialogue further enhances the Force's overall capacity to handle emergencies without compromising the welfare of its personnel.

Ultimately, safeguarding the mental health of Malta Police officers benefits not only the individuals themselves but also the wider community. Officers who are mentally resilient are better equipped to make sound decisions, interact empathetically with the public, and maintain professional standards even under pressure. By prioritizing mental wellbeing, the Malta Police Force demonstrates a commitment to its personnel, ensuring they are supported, valued, and capable of serving the public effectively, especially in the aftermath of traumatic incidents.

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Shifting Patterns: Emerging Drug Trends Among European Youth in 2025

In 2025, the landscape of substance use among European youth is undergoing significant transformations. While traditional drug use continues its long-term decline, new challenges are emerging, particularly concerning the rise of vaping, the misuse of pharmaceutical drugs, and the increasing prevalence of new psychoactive substances (NPS). These trends are reshaping public health priorities and necessitating adaptive prevention strategies.

The 2024 European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) indicates a continued decrease in the use of traditional substances among adolescents. Lifetime alcohol consumption has fallen from 88% in 1995 to 74% in 2024, with current use dropping from 42% to 33% over the same period. Similarly, cigarette smoking has decreased, with 32% of students reporting ever having smoked, down from higher figures in previous decades. Cannabis use also shows a downward trend, with 12% reporting lifetime use, reflecting a broader pattern of reduced engagement with conventional illicit substances.

One of the most notable shifts is the significant increase in e-cigarette use. In 2024, 44% of students reported lifetime use of e-cigarettes, with national prevalence ranging from 22% in Portugal to 57% in Hungary. This rise is particularly concerning given the lack of long-term data on the health effects of vaping. The increased use of e-cigarettes among adolescents is attributed to factors such as appealing Flavours, perceived safety compared to smoking, and targeted marketing strategies.

The non-medical use of prescription and over-the-counter medications is another growing concern. Approximately 14% of students reported lifetime use of pharmaceutical drugs for non-medical purposes, with higher rates observed among girls (16%) compared to boys (11%). The most misused substances include tranquilizers and sedatives, painkillers, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) medications. This trend highlights the need for increased awareness and education regarding the risks associated with the misuse of pharmaceutical drugs.

The use of new psychoactive substances is on the rise, with 3.1% of students reporting lifetime use. NPS are synthetic drugs designed to mimic the effects of traditional illicit substances while evading legal regulations. These substances are often marketed as legal alternatives to drugs like cannabis or MDMA, posing significant health risks due to their unknown chemical compositions and unpredictable effects.

Gender disparities persist in substance use patterns. Girls are more likely to engage in certain behaviours, such as vaping and the misuse of pharmaceutical drugs, while boys continue to have higher rates of traditional drug use. Understanding these gender differences is crucial for developing targeted prevention and intervention programs that address the specific needs and behaviours of each group.

The evolving patterns of substance use among European youth necessitate a reassessment of public health strategies. Traditional approaches focused on alcohol and tobacco may no longer suffice. There is a pressing need for comprehensive education campaigns that address the risks associated with vaping, the misuse of

pharmaceutical drugs, and the use of NPS. Additionally, policy measures should focus on regulating the availability and marketing of these substances to protect adolescent health.

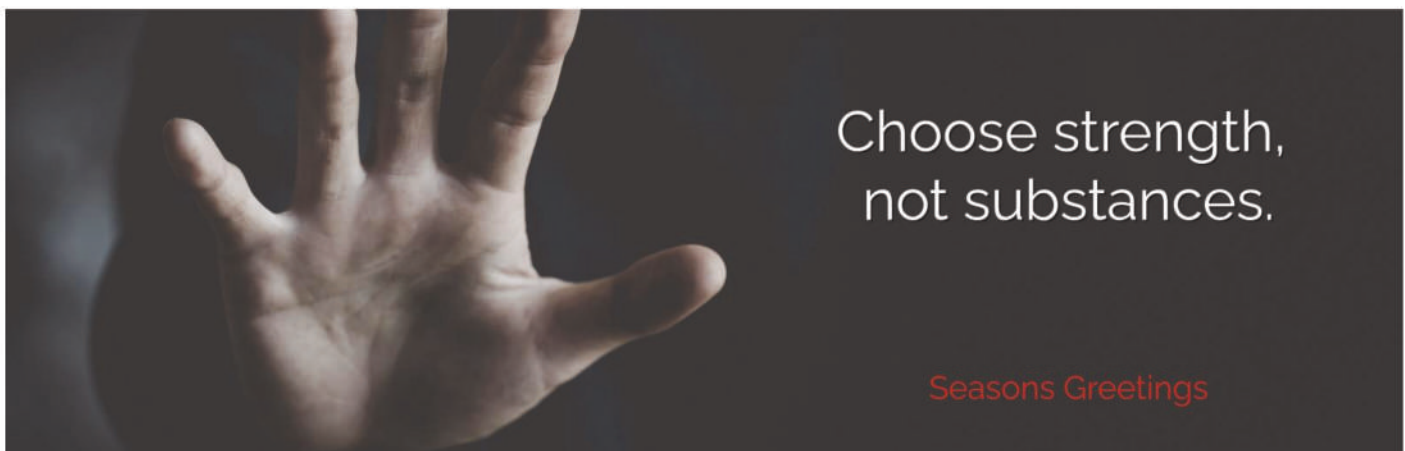
Police forces across Europe are adapting to the rapidly changing landscape of youth substance use, responding not only to traditional drugs but also to the rise of vaping, pharmaceutical misuse, and new psychoactive substances (NPS). Their role has expanded from simple enforcement to a combination of prevention, education, and intelligence-led operations.

One key impact is through enforcement and regulation. Police actively monitor and intervene in the distribution of NPS, which are often sold online or in small retail outlets and marketed as “legal highs.” They also work closely with customs and border agencies to prevent the importation of illicit substances. In many countries, police have developed rapid-response units that can quickly identify emerging substances, test their chemical composition, and provide data for public health authorities.

Another major area of focus is community engagement and prevention. Police forces increasingly partner with schools, youth centres, and local organizations to educate young people about the risks associated with both traditional drugs and newer substances such as e-cigarettes and prescription medications. Programs often include workshops, seminars, and peer mentoring, emphasizing the long-term health, legal, and social consequences of misuse. This preventive approach helps reduce early experimentation and supports healthier decision-making among adolescents.

Data collection and intelligence is also a critical component of the police response. Officers gather and analyse information about local substance use trends, which informs both operational strategies and policy recommendations. In smaller countries like Malta, where communities are tightly knit, police can leverage local knowledge to identify emerging hotspots of drug use or distribution, allowing targeted interventions.

Finally, police forces are increasingly working with public health and social services. By collaborating with medical professionals, counsellors, and addiction specialists, law enforcement ensures that young people who are caught using or possessing substances are guided toward support services rather than only facing punitive measures. This approach aims to reduce recidivism, promote rehabilitation, and maintain community trust.



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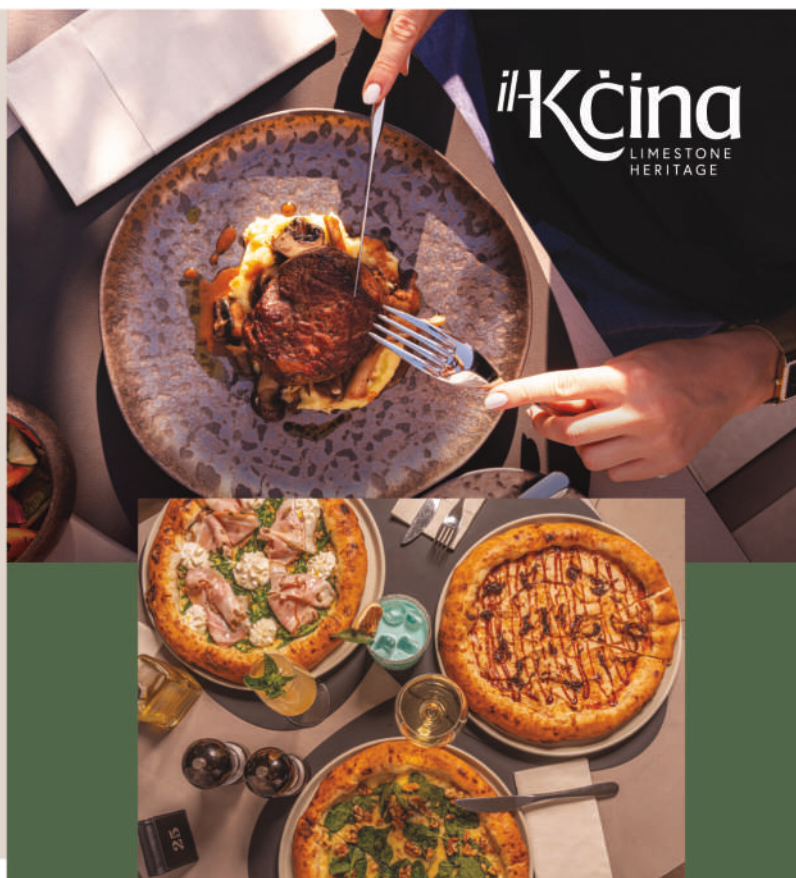
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Building Trust and Effectiveness: Best Practices for Consultation Process

Effective consultation is a cornerstone of modern policing, ensuring that policies and strategies are informed by those who are directly affected: police officers, stakeholders, and the wider community. When designed thoughtfully, consultation processes can enhance transparency, improve decision-making, and foster trust between law enforcement agencies and the public.

The foundation of a successful consultation process lies in **clear communication**. Police leadership must articulate the purpose, scope, and objectives of the consultation, ensuring that all participants understand how their input will influence decisions. Setting expectations early prevents misunderstandings and demonstrates respect for the contributions of officers and community members alike. Communication should be two-way, allowing participants not only to receive information but also to provide feedback in a meaningful and structured manner.

Another critical aspect is **inclusive participation**. Effective consultations reach beyond senior management or advisory boards to engage officers at all levels, as well as external stakeholders such as local councils, community groups, and relevant organizations. Involving a diverse range of voices ensures that policies reflect the realities of day-to-day policing and the concerns of the public. In smaller countries like Malta, this inclusivity can be particularly impactful, as personal connections and community knowledge provide nuanced insights that might otherwise be overlooked.

Transparency and accountability are also essential. Participants need to see how their contributions are considered and acted upon. Providing summaries of discussions, outlining the rationale for decisions, and demonstrating tangible outcomes builds trust in the process and encourages future engagement. When officers or community members feel that their input leads to meaningful change, the consultation process becomes a tool for empowerment rather than a formality.

Timing and accessibility further influence effectiveness. Consultations should allow sufficient time for thoughtful input, rather than being rushed or scheduled at inconvenient times. Utilizing multiple formats such as surveys, workshops, focus groups, or digital platforms which ensures accessibility for those with different schedules, roles, or locations. For police officers on shift work, flexible timing and multiple avenues for participation are critical to ensure broad representation.

Finally, **evaluation and continuous improvement** ensure that consultation processes remain effective over time. After each consultation, feedback should be gathered on the process itself: what worked, what could be improved, and how participants felt their input was received. Lessons learned should inform the design of future consultations, creating a cycle of ongoing refinement and greater effectiveness.

In conclusion, an effective consultation process is built on clear communication, inclusive participation, transparency, accessibility, and continuous improvement. For police forces, particularly in smaller communities like Malta, such processes not only improve policy outcomes but also strengthen trust and collaboration within the force and with the public. When consultation is done well, it empowers officers, engages the community, and ensures that policing strategies are both practical and responsive to the needs of society.



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ECHR Ruling: Italy's Failure to Protect Woman from Domestic Violence Violates Human Rights"

On September 23, 2025, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) delivered a significant judgment against Italy in the case of *Scuderoni v. Italy* (application no. 6045/24), highlighting the state's failure to protect a woman from domestic violence.

Case Background: The applicant, Valentina Scuderoni, endured nine months of domestic violence after separating from her partner. Despite her repeated requests for protection, Italian authorities did not conduct an immediate, proactive risk assessment. Her application for a protection order was denied without any evaluation of the potential danger posed by her former partner. Additionally, the civil court scheduled a hearing nine months after her urgent application.

ECHR's Findings: The Court concluded that Italy violated Article 3 (prohibition of ill-treatment) and Article 8 (right to respect for private life) of the European Convention on Human Rights. The authorities' failure to take timely and effective action left the applicant vulnerable to further harm, breaching her fundamental rights.

Implications and Context: This judgment is part of a broader pattern of findings against Italy regarding its handling of domestic violence cases. The ECHR has previously criticized Italy for not adequately addressing such issues, emphasizing the need for systemic reforms to protect victims effectively.

The *Scuderoni* case underscores the importance of prompt and thorough responses to domestic violence allegations. It serves as a reminder to all Council of Europe member states of their obligation to safeguard individuals from gender-based violence and to ensure that legal mechanisms are accessible and responsive to the needs of victims.

Protecting Women in Malta: Lessons from ECHR Judgments on Domestic Violence

Malta has faced scrutiny from the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) regarding its handling of domestic violence cases, highlighting systemic challenges in protecting victims and ensuring justice. These rulings emphasize the need for effective legal frameworks and responsive law enforcement to safeguard women and children from abuse.

In the case of *I.S. and Others v. Malta* (Application No. 20848/13), the ECHR found that Maltese authorities had failed to take adequate measures to protect a woman and her children from repeated domestic violence. The Court concluded that Malta violated Articles 3 (prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment) and 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the European Convention on Human Rights. Authorities did not ensure the applicant's safety or prevent the recurrence of violence, underscoring systemic gaps in domestic violence protection.

Another important case, *N.V. and C.C. v. Malta* (Application No. 22053/13), addressed child custody in the context of domestic violence. The ECHR emphasized that authorities must take proactive measures to protect children and victims, ensuring that contact with an abusive parent does not compromise the child's safety or well-being. These rulings collectively highlight Malta's obligation to implement timely and effective interventions in cases of domestic abuse.

Despite progress in women's rights and representation, domestic violence remains a significant concern in Malta. Reports indicate it is among the most prevalent crimes, second only to theft. While political reforms and gender quotas have been lauded, questions remain about the effectiveness of protective measures

and the responsiveness of law enforcement. In the landmark case of *X v. Attorney General and Commissioner of Police*, Judge Lorraine Schembri Orland ruled that Malta breached its obligations under Articles 3 and 8 due to systemic failures in police procedures for investigating and prosecuting domestic violence incidents.

These cases underscore the urgent need for ongoing reforms in Malta's approach to domestic violence. Legal frameworks must be strengthened, police procedures improved, and social support services enhanced to ensure that victims receive immediate protection and perpetrators are held accountable. The ECHR judgments serve as both a warning and a roadmap: safeguarding women and children requires continuous vigilance, effective enforcement, and a commitment to upholding fundamental human rights.

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Ex PC 882 Peter Paul Camilleri

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Member of the Malta Police Force
1955 - 1980

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Community Support Beyond Legal Boundaries: The Role of Police Officers in Malta

In Malta, the role of police officers extends beyond traditional law enforcement duties, encompassing a broader responsibility to assist the community, even in situations that may not fall strictly within their legal competencies. This approach aligns with the objectives outlined in the Police Act (Chapter 164 of the Laws of Malta), which emphasizes the importance of community engagement and support.

Article 4(f) of the Police Act explicitly states that it is the duty of the police to "assist, within reasonable limits, any person seeking the help of a police or other public officer even though the ultimate responsibility to provide such help may not lie with the Force". This provision underscores the expectation that police officers will help individuals in need, even when the issue at hand does not fall directly within the police's jurisdiction.

This broader interpretation of police duties reflects a commitment to public service and community well-being. By helping in various situations such as directing individuals to appropriate social services, offering guidance during emergencies, or supporting community initiatives, police officers play a pivotal role in fostering a sense of security and trust within the community.

Moreover, the Malta Police Force's mission statement reinforces this community-centric approach. It aims to provide a professional and trusted policing service to ensure safety and security in partnership with the community. This mission highlights the importance of collaboration between the police and the public to address societal challenges effectively.

The Malta Police Force's motto, "*Domine Dirige Nos*" Latin for "Lord, Guide Us" reflects a commitment to humility, guidance, and service in the pursuit of justice. This guiding principle underscores the Force's dedication to serving the community with integrity and compassion.

By acting as a bridge between the community and the appropriate authorities, police officers uphold both the letter and spirit of their legal mandate while fulfilling the ethos of their motto. In practice, this means that officers are not simply enforcers of the law but proactive guardians of community safety and well-being. Such actions not only contribute to the immediate well-being of individuals but also strengthen the relationship between the police and the community, fostering an environment of mutual respect and cooperation.

In conclusion, while police officers in Malta are primarily tasked with enforcing the law, their role encompasses a broader responsibility to assist the community. By extending their support beyond legal boundaries, they contribute to a safer, more cohesive society, demonstrating the multifaceted nature of modern policing.

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A Turning Point in Maltese Policing: The 1955 Toninu Aquilina Murder and Scotland Yard's Assistance

The murder of Toninu Aquilina in 1955 remains one of the most notorious criminal cases in Malta's history, not only for its brutality but also for the significant impact it had on the development of the Malta Police Force. Aquilina, a young bank cashier, was found murdered under shocking circumstances, creating widespread public outrage and raising serious concerns about the capacity of local law enforcement to handle complex investigations at the time.

Malta's police force in the mid-1950s lacked the modern forensic capabilities that are now standard in criminal investigations. The investigation quickly reached an impasse, as local officers struggled to piece together the evidence and identify suspects. Recognizing the severity of the case and the limitations of local resources, the Maltese government requested the assistance of Scotland Yard, which dispatched a specialized team of experts. Among them were Inspector Albert Victor Griffin, Sergeant Henry William Pugh, and Lewis Nicholls, the director of the Metropolitan Police Laboratory. Their arrival marked a watershed moment for Maltese law enforcement.

The Scotland Yard team introduced advanced investigative techniques that were virtually unknown in Malta at the time. They meticulously collected and analyzed physical evidence, including fibers found in a rented car, paint flakes linking a suspect's vehicle to the crime scene, and a piece of plywood that connected the murder weapon to the suspect. This scientific approach provided crucial leads that eventually identified George Terreni as the perpetrator. Terreni was convicted of the murder in 1956, although he was later released after serving eight years due to a series of amnesties.

Beyond securing a conviction, the case had lasting implications for policing in Malta. It highlighted the critical importance of forensic science and modern investigative procedures, prompting the Force to establish a dedicated forensic laboratory and introduce more rigorous evidence-gathering protocols. Training and professional development also received renewed emphasis, ensuring that officers could handle complex cases more effectively in the future.

The Aquilina case also underscored the value of international cooperation in law enforcement. By working alongside Scotland Yard, Maltese officers gained exposure to modern investigative methods, setting a precedent for collaboration in tackling organized crime and serious offenses. The lessons learned from this tragic episode helped shape a more professional, capable, and responsive Malta Police Force, strengthening its ability to serve and protect the community.

Today, the murder of Toninu Aquilina is remembered not only for its tragedy but also as a pivotal event that spurred modernization and reform within Malta's police service. It serves as a reminder that even in the face of great challenges, innovation, expertise, and collaboration can transform policing and ensure justice for victims.



Clearing the Way: The Importance of Yielding to Police and Ambulance Vehicles.

Every second counts in an emergency. For police officers responding to urgent incidents or paramedics rushing a patient to the hospital, the ability to navigate traffic quickly and safely can mean the difference between life and death. In Malta, as in many countries, emergency vehicles are equipped with flashing beacon lights and sirens to signal their need for priority on the roads. Respecting these signals is not only a legal obligation under Maltese traffic law but a moral responsibility that protects lives and allows first responders to perform their duties effectively.

When a police vehicle or ambulance approaches with its beacon lights flashing, it indicates an emergency requiring immediate attention. For police officers, this could mean responding to a serious crime, a traffic accident, or a situation where public safety is at risk. For ambulance crews, the urgency is often even more personal whilst transporting a patient in critical condition to receive life-saving treatment. Every moment lost in traffic can exacerbate danger, compromise investigations, or delay medical care, potentially resulting in preventable injuries or fatalities.

Obedying the signals of emergency vehicles also contributes to overall road safety. Drivers who yield correctly reduce the risk of collisions and allow emergency vehicles to maneuver efficiently through congested streets. In Malta, where roads can be narrow and heavily trafficked, the collective cooperation of motorists is essential to create clear passageways. Simple actions, such as moving to the side of the road, stopping at intersections, and refraining from overtaking, demonstrate respect for first responders and their critical missions.

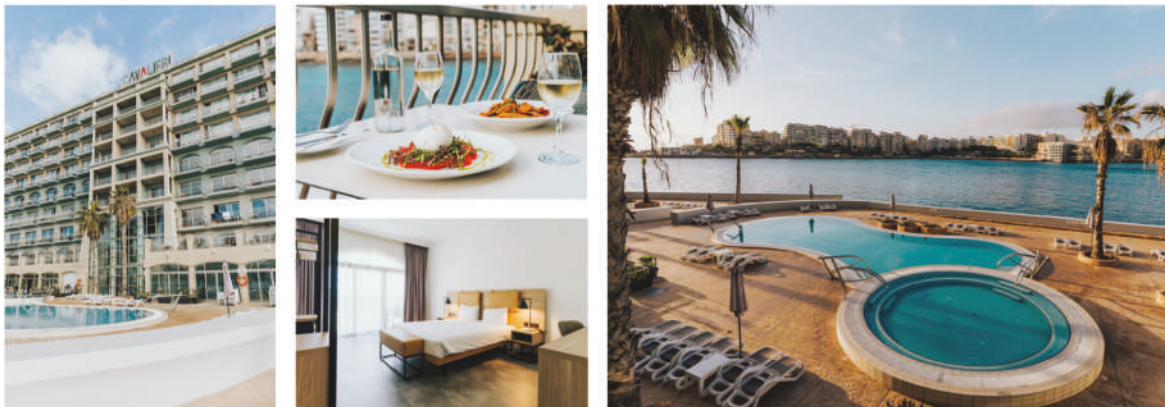
Beyond the immediate practical benefits, yielding to emergency vehicles fosters a culture of mutual respect and civic responsibility. It reinforces the partnership between the community and law enforcement or medical personnel, reminding citizens that everyone has a role in ensuring public safety. Education campaigns, public awareness programs, and enforcement of traffic regulations all contribute to instilling this sense of responsibility among drivers.

In conclusion, allowing police vehicles and ambulances to pass unhindered is a small but crucial act that has profound consequences. It enables first responders to act swiftly, protects lives, and maintains the efficiency of emergency services. In Malta, as elsewhere, adhering to this simple rule is a tangible way for every driver to contribute to the safety and well-being of their community.

The flashing lights are not just a warning, they are a call for cooperation and awareness that saves lives.



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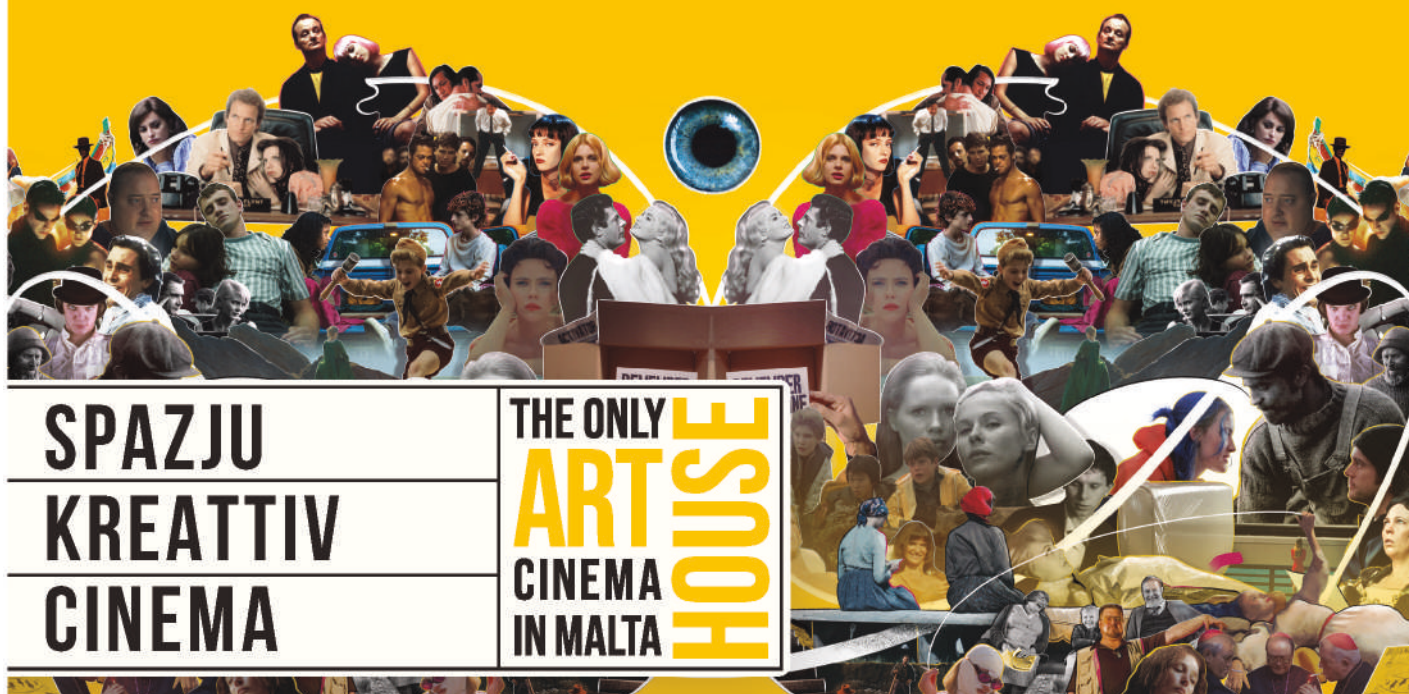
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Calendar of events

*** Theatre - Decolonisation: The Story of Us All**
(December 5 - December 6)

In Decolonisation: The Story of All of Us, the artist collective ARDA invites you into a space of radical questioning. This interdisciplinary performance challenges the audience to engage with identity, not as a fixed truth, but as a process shaped by history, geography, and power.

*** Monthly Tour - The Grand Tour of the Cavalier** (10th December)
A theatrical tour of the historic St James Cavalier that delves into the site's history while the local is-Sur Kreattiv uncovers fascinating stories of treachery, near tragedy and triumph.

*** Art Exhibition - BLOW-UP** (November 8 - January 4)
An exhibition of contemporary artworks alongside historical artefacts at Spazju Kreattiv; a film series; a fashion and music installation; an extensive catalogue publication and a series of satellite events including, but not limited to, lectures, talks, and curatorial tours.

*** Art Exhibition - Fjamma/Flame: every child a guardian of nature**
(November 14 - January 11)
Through five immersive pods, each representing an element of nature: wind, fire, water, earth, and space, children are guided on a mythical journey to ancient Malta with each pod engaging the senses through visual art, texture, sound, scent, and movement.

*** Art Exhibition - Misophonia** (November 27 - January 11)
An audiovisual project inspired by misophonia, a neurobehavioural condition marked by intense emotional reactions, such as irritation, disgust, or rage, toward specific everyday sounds, aiming to immerse the visitors in this commonly misunderstood sensory experience

*** Art Exhibition - Celebrating 25 Years of Spazju Kreattiv:**
Nurturing Legacy Through Art (September 18 - May 17)
To mark the 25th anniversary of Spazju Kreattiv, works from four prominent artists have been commissioned to be added to the permanent collection of Spazju Kreattiv, reaffirming its commitment to artistic innovation, critical dialogue, and the continuous evolution of its archive.

*** Theatre - Chucky's Solo Panto – Jack and The Beanstalk**
(19 December - 28th December)
Overnight, a giant beanstalk sprouts in the middle of a remote village where nothing exciting ever happens. Atop the beanstalk lives an evil giant who is out for blood. Join Jack and his fierce sister SLAYYY the giant, in a solo panto that will have you gagging for more.

*** Monthly Tour - The Grand Tour of the Cavalier**
(11 February)

A theatrical tour of the historic St James Cavalier that delves into the site's history while the local is-Sur Kreattiv uncovers fascinating stories of treachery, near tragedy and triumph.

*** Art Exhibition - Desire**
(January 15 - March 1st)
Desire is a multidisciplinary event that explores the complexities of desire and its relationship with the Other. It showcases Lawrence Buttigieg's long-term, practice-based research, which blends his architectural background with themes of identity, gender, and womanhood.

*** Art Exhibition - Carnival Exhibition**
(January 21 - February 22)
Celebrating the extraordinary creativity, craftsmanship, and spirit of Malta's Carnival, this showcase will feature dazzling displays and imaginative works by carnival enthusiasts, highlighting both the rich legacy of this beloved tradition and the fresh aspirations shaping its future.

*** Art Exhibition - Fil-Friġġ wara t-Tadam**
(January 22 - March 8)
Through playful photographs and small sculptural set-ups, everyday Maltese sayings become things we can see and touch. In this exhibition, language is treated as a living material: some phrases survive, others disappear, and each choice tells a story about history, identity, and the fast-moving media climate we share.

*** Theatre - Il-Qarçilla**
(February 6 - February 13)
Delivering its signature blend of comedy, sexual innuendo, and sharp references to current local affairs while keeping one of Malta's oldest traditions alive Il-Qarçilla presents a mock marriage contract brought to life through absurd yet vivid characters, bold humour, and clever wordplay.

*** Theatre - Press Mute**
(February 20 - March 1st)
Press Mute is a quick-moving, satirical production about truth, lies, the media, fast-paced technology, and the chaos in between. Performed by a troupe of Malta's finest actors and journalists, Press Mute questions what happens when the news becomes noise, and who we trust to tell us the truth.

Injury on Duty in Malta: Protections and Benefits for Police Officers

In Malta, an injury on duty (IOD) refers to any physical or psychological injury sustained by a police officer or any other public sector worker while performing official duties. For members of the Malta Police Force, this includes incidents such as road accidents while on patrol, injuries during arrests, exposure to hazardous situations, or even trauma resulting from critical incidents. The law recognizes that these injuries occur in the line of duty and provides specific protections and benefits to support the affected officer.

When a police officer sustains an IOD, the first priority is medical care. The officer is entitled to immediate treatment, often at state facilities, with costs fully covered. Following the initial care, a formal report must be filed to document the incident, including medical evaluation and assessment of the injury. This documentation ensures that the officer qualifies for subsequent benefits under Maltese law, particularly the Civil Service (Injury on Duty) Regulations.

The benefits for an injured officer are designed to provide financial security and support during recovery. These typically include:

1. **Full Salary Continuation:** Officers on IOD leave continue to receive their full salary, ensuring financial stability while they are unable to perform their duties.
2. **Medical and Rehabilitation Support:** All medical expenses, rehabilitation programs, and necessary treatments related to the injury are covered. This may include physiotherapy, counselling, or specialized care for long-term recovery.
3. **Pension and Long-Term Compensation:** In cases where an injury results in permanent disability, officers may qualify for enhanced pension benefits or a lump-sum compensation, depending on the severity and impact on their ability to serve.
4. **Job Security:** Officers on IOD leave are guaranteed the right to return to their position or an equivalent role once they have recovered sufficiently to perform their duties.

These protections reflect Malta's commitment to supporting public officers who risk their health and safety in the line of duty. By ensuring medical care, financial stability, and long-term security, the IOD framework helps officers focus on recovery without additional stress, allowing them to return to service when possible or transition to a suitable role if the injury prevents full operational duties.

In summary, injury on duty in Malta provides comprehensive protection for police officers, recognizing the risks inherent in policing and offering both immediate support and long-term security. It reinforces the principle that those who protect society should themselves be protected when harm occurs in the execution of their duties.

Death Benefits: In the unfortunate event of an officer's death resulting from a work-related accident, the scheme entitles the surviving beneficiaries to a compensation of four times the officer's annual salary, up to a maximum of €180,000. This lump-sum payment aims to provide financial support to the deceased officer's family during a challenging time.

Disability Benefits: For officers who suffer permanent disability due to a work-related injury, the scheme offers compensation based on the degree of disability assessed by a Medical Board. The compensation is

calculated as four times the officer's annual salary, with the exact amount determined according to the disability scale, up to a maximum of €180,000. This benefit ensures that officers receive financial support proportional to the severity of their disability.

Additional Support: Beyond financial compensation, officers who are injured on duty are entitled to full salary continuation during their recovery period. They also receive medical treatment related to the injury and are entitled to free medical treatment specifically related to the injury sustained. This comprehensive support system underscores the commitment to the welfare of officers who risk their lives in service to the community.

These benefits are part of Malta's broader commitment to supporting public officers who sustain injuries or lose their lives while performing their duties. The scheme reflects the recognition of the inherent risks associated with policing and aims to provide financial security and support to officers and their families in times of need.

The Malta Police Union plays a vital role in assisting its members throughout the entire injury benefit process. From helping officers and their families navigate the required paperwork, liaising with the relevant authorities, to providing guidance and advocacy during medical assessments or appeals, the Union ensures that every member receives the full protection and entitlements they are legally entitled to. This support is crucial in easing the administrative burden on officers who are already dealing with the physical and emotional impact of their injuries.



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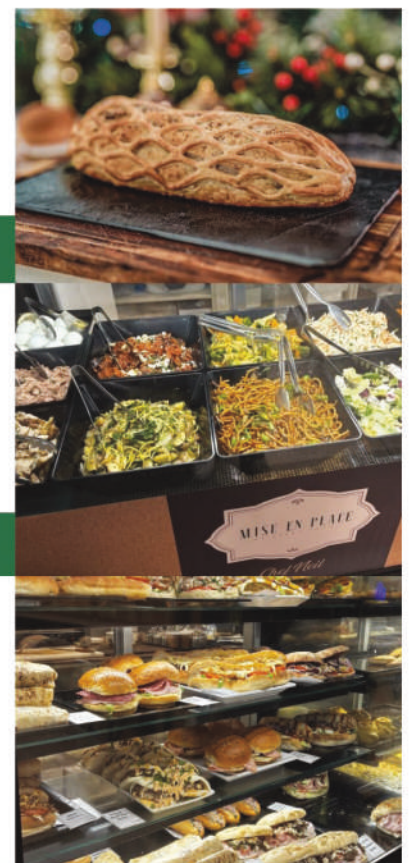
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Teleworking in Policing: Opportunities and Challenges for Modern Forces

Policing is a profession that traditionally relies on physical presence, public engagement, and rapid response. Patrols, emergency interventions, and crime scene investigations all require officers to be on-site, which makes the idea of teleworking challenging for frontline duties. However, certain roles within a police force, particularly administrative, analytical, and specialized support functions can be adapted for remote work without compromising operational effectiveness.

Administrative staff handling paperwork, finance, or human resources can often perform their duties from home, provided they have secure access to police systems. Similarly, intelligence analysts and cybercrime investigators can telework for research, reporting, and data analysis tasks. Even training programs and internal meetings can increasingly be conducted online, reducing the need for physical presence while maintaining professional standards.

Implementing teleworking in a police context requires careful consideration of security and operational readiness. Police work involves highly sensitive information, so secure networks, encrypted communication, and strict protocols are essential. Officers working remotely must remain able to respond quickly to emergencies, and clear guidelines must be established to ensure accountability and manage workloads effectively.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the feasibility of teleworking in policing, as many forces worldwide adopted remote arrangements for administrative and investigative roles. These experiences highlight that, with proper safeguards, teleworking can complement traditional policing operations, improve efficiency, and enhance work-life balance for certain staff members.

Teleworking has become an integral part of Malta's employment landscape, particularly within the public sector. The Telework National Standard Order (L.N. 312 of 2008) alongside subsequent policies, outlines the framework for remote work arrangements in Malta.

In the public sector, employees are permitted to work remotely up to 20% of their weekly working hours during normal office hours.. For extended remote working, employees must submit a justification for approval. It's important to note that remote working is voluntary and cannot be imposed by management.

The government has actively promoted remote working to enhance work-life balance. For instance, in October 2021, 13 government departments began implementing remote working policies. Additionally, the Gozo Telework Scheme offers financial incentives to employers who implement telework arrangements for Gozitan employees working in Malta.

Telework agreements must be documented in writing and include details such as work location, equipment usage, and data protection measures. Employers are responsible for providing necessary equipment and ensuring data security, while employees must adhere to these provisions.

Malta's approach to teleworking reflects a commitment to modernizing work practices and supporting employees' well-being. While remote work is more prevalent in administrative and support roles, the framework established allows for flexibility and adaptation across various sectors.



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