The main countries of arrival by sea of refugees and migrants in Europe, are Greece, Spain, Italy, Malta and Cyprus. Malta is located in the Central Mediterranean. In 2019, people who were rescued at sea and disembarked in Malta mostly departed from Libya. In 2019, the estimate numbers of persons who died or went missing at sea was 1,845 people.
Malta Sea Arrivals
January - December 2019

TOTAL POPULATION 2,729
TOTAL DECISIONS 1,568
TOTAL APPLICATIONS 3,220
TOTAL GRANTED 300

UNHCR protection staff regularly visit open centres and the Initial Reception Centres to provide information on the asylum system, Dublin regulation, rights and obligations of asylum-seekers in Malta and to refer persons of concern to appropriate services. UNHCR also conducts child protection activities, detention monitoring and, through its implementing partners, provides psychological support in all centres.

Asylum Applications and Decisions

In recent years the refugee population has been mainly composed of Libyan, Syrian and Somali refugees. In 2019 the rate of international protection (Refugee or Subsidiary Protection status) was 19% of total decisions by RefCom. There were a high number of ‘Closed’ cases, which refers to applications that result in an administrative closure, Dublin closure, or applications that are explicitly withdrawn, implicitly withdrawn or inadmissible.

First-Time Asylum Applications Decision Statistics
Jan 2019 - Oct 2019

Protection Rate 309 19%
Refugee Status 25 2%
Subsidiary Protection 275
Temporary Humanitarian Prot. 9 0%

EU Member States Pledges and Transfers After People Disembarked

Transfers to Other EU Member States After People Disembarked

Since 2018, a number of ad hoc transfers have taken place from Malta to other Member States, mostly France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Luxembourg and Ireland. Malta has also been part of these ad hoc arrangements.

Most Common Nationalities by First-Time Asylum Applications
Sudan 877 27%
Syria 389 12%
Libya 192 6%
Soma… 192 6%
Gam… 192 6%
Others 1,381 43%
TOTAL APPLICATIONS 3,220

Most Common Nationalities Granted International Protection
Syria 208 (69%)
Libya 51 (17%)
Eritrea 19 (6%)
Somalia 8 (3%)
Sudan 4 (1%)
Others 10 (3%)
TOTAL GRANTED 300

While every effort has been made to ensure that all statistical information is accurately presented, for official statistics, please refer to the original sources (these include Immigration Police, the Office of the Refugee Commission and the Ministry for Home Affairs). Some numbers may be rounded off.