

2024

 identità

Annual Report







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Message by the Minister for Home Affairs, Security and Employment

Identità stands at the heart of our national identity. It is not merely another Government Agency, but the guardian of who we are as individuals and as a nation. From the moment a child is born to when a citizen engages with public services or travels abroad, Identità ensures the seamless and secure management of personal identity. In an era defined by digital transformation and growing mobility, Identità plays a vital role in safeguarding both the integrity of our systems and the dignity of our people.

Identità, is the government agency responsible for identity management and the implementation of migration processes. It delivers a wide range of specialised services—from e-ID cards and e-passports to residence documents, visas, civil status registration, and public deeds.

Over the past year, the agency has made major strides in modernising and expanding its services. The phased renewal of Malta's Identity Cards for Maltese citizens is well underway, with nearly 90,000 new Identity Cards issued. This process is being executed with efficiency and continuity, ensuring that, unlike in previous cycles, citizens experience no disruption or expiry extensions.

Service accessibility has also improved, particularly in Gozo, where the Passport Office, the Identity Cards Unit and the e-Residence Unit have moved to new, central premises in Victoria. This relocation will provide Gozitans with faster, more efficient service, and I look forward to inaugurating the new offices soon.

The digital Persons Register marks another milestone, as it implements the Once Only Principle across the government. This initiative simplifies how citizens interact

with public services, allowing for secure, streamlined data sharing whilst minimising duplication and administrative burden.

The agency's ISO 27001 certification represents a significant achievement, affirming Identità's dedication to the highest standards of information security and data integrity. This accomplishment reinforces public trust and strengthens the digital backbone of our identity systems.

I also wish to commend the agency's workforce. The newly signed collective agreement not only recognises their dedication but also brings meaningful improvements in pay and working conditions. Furthermore, the collaboration with the Richmond Foundation exemplifies Identità's commitment to mental wellbeing, empowering staff to thrive in their roles.

These achievements reflect more than operational success; they signify Identità's steady evolution into a forward-thinking, citizen-focused agency. I am confident that the work undertaken this year lays the foundation for continued progress in the months ahead, as Identità continues to serve with integrity, innovation, and care.





Message by Madam Chair

The year 2024 has proven to be very challenging for Identità. Having been appointed as its Chair, in the middle of the year under review, it was without doubt a baptism of fire. There were the challenges to be expected and faced by any organisation, and those which turn up unexpectedly. However, I can state unequivocally that these challenges were addressed by the Board of Directors, supported by a team of highly professional personnel who left no stone unturned to protect the integrity of the Agency and its people.

From an operational perspective, 2024 was crucial for Identità. It was marked by a comprehensive review of its operations and services. The aim was to strengthen and build on all that is valid, and revise and review all that was keeping the Agency from performing better. These efforts were undertaken with the overarching goal of safeguarding and securing identities while maintaining the agency's credibility and trustworthiness.

Regular evaluation is vital for any organisation to anticipate challenges and implement strategic solutions that drive efficiency, enhance service quality, and ensure long-term success. In this spirit, Identità reinforced its commitment to integrity and excellence by proactively refining key processes.

Identità is an important organisation which deals with the most important and sensitive documentation of a citizen's life, from birth to death. It is an agency at the service of, and accountable to, the Government of Malta and its citizens. As such, recognising the importance of customer service, the agency has established a Customer Experience Unit.

Moreover, in order to enhance its services further, the Agency has established a Gozo office and has migrated its services to a more centralised and accessible one-stop shop, providing various identity-related services in a single location.

Another milestone reached is the successful achievement of the ISO 27001 certification, an internationally recognised standard for Information Security Management Systems (ISMS). This milestone represents a significant step in the agency's commitment to protecting data integrity and enhancing our cybersecurity protocols.

Moving forward, our priority remains building on the agency's achievements, refining operations, and addressing key areas for improvement. Identità will continue to uphold its mission by enhancing service delivery and embracing innovation. Its role in supporting the Maltese economy through the Expatriates and Central Visa Unit will be increasingly important. In line with the Labour Migration Policy, Identità will ensure that only essential and appropriately skilled workers are granted entry into Malta.

The year ahead brings new opportunities, and we are well-positioned to build on our strong foundation. I am honoured to have been appointed Chair of the Board of Identità during this transformative phase, as the Agency continues to evolve and strengthen its role in serving the public with integrity.

Our mission and endeavours to improve and excel are a continuous work-in-progress. The vision for the future is to ensure that Identità is viewed as a highly trusted custodian of the most sensitive information by applying state-of-the-art systems in the interest of the Maltese Government, the citizens and all those requiring its services.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the members of the Board for their invaluable input and constant support, the senior management for their competence, professionalism and integrity, as well as all the honest, hardworking staff members who form part of this agency of national importance. I look forward to continued growth, collaboration, and excellence in the Agency's next chapter.

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

As I reflect on my first year at the helm of Identità, I acknowledge that 2024 has been a defining year for the agency, filled with both challenges and opportunities that are shaping our path forward.

2024 was a defining year in our ongoing journey of transformation, a continuation of the governance reforms and strategic improvements initiated in previous years. We deepened our commitment to strengthening institutional frameworks, enhancing accountability, and reinforcing service integrity. Building on earlier progress, we took important steps to streamline operations, strengthen oversight, and ensure our services consistently meet the highest standards of efficiency, security, and professionalism.

One of our key priorities in 2024 was to review and refine our internal systems through a structured and transparent approach. Several independent audits were conducted, serving as valuable instruments to validate our progress and reinforce trust in our operations. These audits, conducted by renowned and independent audit firms, helped ensure that our processes are not only effective but also aligned with the highest standards of governance, compliance, and accountability. They provided critical insights that reinforced our commitment to continuous improvement and institutional integrity.

We focused on key areas, including the Visa process, residence permits, information security, compliance functions, and the Maltese Identity Card system. A major milestone was the comprehensive revamp of the Student Visa process, an initiative designed to streamline operations and reinforce Malta's position as a premier destination for study tourism.



In today's fast-evolving landscape, efficient customer experience is not just a goal but a continuous commitment, one that requires constant evaluation and improvement. With this in mind, we established a dedicated Customer Experience Unit, and in collaboration with Servizz.gov we initiated a phased transition of some of our call handling and email, ensuring a more efficient service.

In parallel, we established a dedicated Data Analytics function to generate actionable intelligence, identify emerging trends, and support evidence-based decision-making. This capability will not only enhance our day-to-day operations but also play a critical role in shaping long-term policies, strengthening compliance, proactively identifying potential abuse, and guiding strategic priorities across the agency.

The agency's immigration-related services also experienced transformation. Given that the Expatriates Unit's and the Central Visa Unit's services are closely connected, they were brought under one department. This move aims for more streamlined operations, improved management efficiency and a smoother service experience. Most importantly,

two bold decisions were taken to enhance diligence and accountable application processes. The introduction of mandatory health insurance for Third-Country Nationals applying Still Abroad and the Property Attestation Form was implemented to confirm that the applicant has the right to use a specific residence for application purposes. These two requirements have a very specific purpose: to curb any possible abuse while safeguarding the interests of all parties involved.

Investing in our people has been, and will remain, a top priority at the heart of our vision. Across 2024 and 2025, we made the most significant investment in training since the agency's establishment, planning a broad set of initiatives informed by internal assessments and operational priorities. This substantial investment underscores our commitment to strengthening security, enhancing compliance, and upholding the highest standards of service delivery.

Looking ahead to 2025, we will continue to prioritise training and career development as key pillars of our strategy. We intend to broaden the scope of training to cover more areas and reach more employees, ensuring our workforce gains both practical skills and opportunities to advance their academic background.

Technology will continue to play a central role in our processes. Identità is committed to staying up to date and leveraging innovation to simplify and improve its processes. As part of our digital transformation strategy, we are increasingly integrating automation and data-driven decision-making to enhance efficiency, accuracy, and service delivery. This commitment ensures that Identità remains agile, data-driven, and fit for purpose in a constantly evolving world.

To our clients and stakeholders, we promise to remain diligent, delivering secure identity documents and efficient services while safeguarding our national security. I am personally committed to ensuring that Identità continues to grow, invest in its people, and uphold the highest standards.

As we move forward, we will build on the insights gained from independent reviews and assessments, translating them into meaningful improvements across the agency. The journey ahead is challenging, but it is full of promise, and together, we will continue to move forward with integrity and a shared commitment to high standards of public service.

Vision

"Consolidating Identità's position as a key contributor to Maltese society and its economic progress, in being a dynamic and innovative organisation, delivering reliable identity management solutions within a robust framework of corporate governance and performance excellence."

Mission

"Our mission is to strengthen the Agency's service delivery and maximise its value to stakeholders in perfect alignment with our Vision. This will be accomplished by adopting highly secure, customer-centric, and efficient practices across all the Agency's functions. Our workforce will be empowered and upskilled to embody the highest standards of economic, social, and good governance practices, all of which will be underpinned by dependable systems and policies."



Board of Directors

The Board of Directors upholds the principles of good governance and oversees the agency's strategic direction.

The Board of Directors is appointed by the Minister for Home Affairs, Security and Employment.

Non-Executive Chairman

Ms Marlene Mizzi

Members

Architect Alistair Avallone

Mr Andrew Agius Muscat

Mr Clint Bajada

Mr George Arrigo

Secretary

Mr Neil Portelli



Management Committee

Steve Agius
Chief Executive Officer

Martin Bowerman
Chief Financial Officer

Neil Harrison
Chief Legal Officer

Stefan Rodoligo
Chief Information Officer

Tania Brown
Chief Policy and Strategy Officer

Gertrude Spiteri
Chief Human Resources Officer

Paula Cauchi Meachen
Chief Operations and Immigration Affairs Officer

Sylvana Farrugia
Head Marketing and PR



Key Figures

387
Identità employees

174,067
Emails answered

73,764
Certificates of birth, death, and marriage
were issued, 57.5% were purchased online

4,107
Local births registered

3,764
Local deaths registered

183,728
Number of appointment

53,284
Passports issued

147
Emergency travel
documents

83,994
eID cards issued

31,353
New virtual eID accounts activated

13,430,167
Citizen transactions on eID accounts

211,937
Search orders

80,334
Notes processed



New leadership appointments

During 2024, Identità underwent two significant changes in its leadership.

Appointment of Mr Steve Agius as the new Chief Executive Officer

In February, Mr. Steve Agius was appointed as the new Identità Chief Executive Officer, succeeding Col. Mark Mallia, who served in this role for two years.

Mr. Agius has extensive experience in public service management. He was Chief Operating Officer at Mater Dei Hospital, where he led the national COVID-19 vaccination programme, and served as Chief Information Officer at the Malta Communications Authority, the national telecommunications regulator, where he managed important projects.

Nomination of Ms Marlene Mizzi as Non-Executive Chairperson

Ms Marlene Mizzi was nominated as Identità's Non-Executive Chairperson in June, bringing with her extensive expertise in corporate governance and public service. Her previous roles include Chairperson of Sea Malta Co. Ltd (1997–2005), Board Member of Bank of Valletta (1998–2006), and Chairperson of Malita plc (2022–2024).

As a Member of the European Parliament (2013–2019), Ms Mizzi contributed to various legislative initiatives, including the Mizzi Report on the Digital Single Gateway, a legislative measure implemented across all EU Member States. She played an essential role in negotiating the reduction of EU roaming charges and served as the European Parliament's representative on the Brexit negotiations team. In 2018, she was recognised as MEP of the Year.

In 2020, Ms Mizzi was appointed as a non-resident Ambassador to the Kingdom of Sweden and the Kingdom of Norway. She holds an Honours degree in Economics and an M.Phil. in Corporate Governance from the Maastricht School of Management.



Strengthening Compliance and Enforcement

Throughout 2024, Identità's Reporting Section, within the Compliance Unit, significantly strengthened its operations, reaffirming its role as an essential department for upholding compliance with rules and regulations in the local immigration sector. During this period, this unit intensified its inspections, more than doubled the investigations, almost tripled its resolved cases and collaborated with various Maltese entities to support and facilitate enforcement actions.

A major focus of the Reporting Section was conducting thorough inspections across multiple industries, often collaborating with local key stakeholders. In total, 215 field inspections were carried out, including those in various workplaces, across multiple industries, particularly in the hospitality and construction sectors, as well as in private residences. Most of these inspections were conducted in collaboration with the Malta Police Force's Immigration Section and Jobsplus.

Close collaboration with local enforcement agencies was crucial in conducting road checks across various parts of the Maltese Islands. During these inspections, carried out in partnership with the Immigration Police, Transport Malta, Jobsplus, LESA and other entities, drivers

were screened, and their documents were thoroughly examined. In cases where violations were identified, individuals were taken into police custody for further investigation and legal procedures.

Additionally, this Unit investigated several reports related to potential breaches and misconduct. A total of 493 investigations were initiated, covering matters such as police reports, forged documents, overstays, and issues concerning addresses, Visas and study. This marked an increase of 296 investigations or 150% when compared to the previous year. 332 of these investigations were concluded, and a total of 169 persons were taken into police custody as a result of these investigations.

All reports were meticulously investigated, with findings documented, and where necessary, the findings were sent to the Malta Police Force for further investigation and legal proceedings. This proactive approach reinforces Identità's commitment to integrity and accountability.

By working closely with external stakeholders, the Compliance Unit contributed to a more coordinated and effective compliance scenario, ensuring that regulatory frameworks were upheld across all operational areas.





The importance of system reviews in strengthening governance and operations

Systems review is a fundamental aspect of good governance, ensuring that organisations operate efficiently, securely, and in compliance with regulatory standards. By systematically evaluating internal processes, agencies can identify vulnerabilities, improve service delivery, and uphold transparency and accountability.

During 2024, a series of system reviews were conducted across various units by both the Internal Controls Section as well as independent external parties.

These reviews were carried out in four areas:

National (D) Visa Application Process

The National Visa allows non-EU nationals to reside in Malta or in any other Schengen State for extended periods. Internal and external system reviews were conducted in relation to the (D) Visa application and issuance process, including the associated processes and controls, to identify any gaps in the process, implement improvements, and strengthen the agency's current policy framework.

Residence Permit Application Processes

Residence Permits grant Third-Country nationals the right to live in Malta for various reasons, including employment, study and family reunification. Internal reviews focused primarily on the single permit process and the family reunification process. The aim is to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of these processes, assess the robustness and effectiveness of the internal controls embedded within each process, evaluate the current standard operating procedures, identify any gaps, weaknesses and inefficiencies, and address any risks identified through the findings.

Maltese Identity Card Application Process

As a key document for Maltese citizens, Identity Card issuance must be a secure and efficient process. Internal and external reviews were conducted on the issuance of the national identity card, with a particular focus on three main risks: identity fraud and theft, incorrect data, and the issuance of duplicate cards.

Information Security

This is a crucial component of the agency's operations, as it handles sensitive personal data and applicant information. An analysis of how the residential address is captured within Identità's ICT framework was carried out by external reviewers, aiming to identify the creation points, ownership and usage of the residential address within the IT system. The analysis focused on three key risk areas: ICT governance covering core applications, data quality, and changes to applications/data.

Identità achieves ISO 27001 certification

In December, Identità achieved the ISO 27001 certification, an internationally recognised standard for Information Security Management Systems (ISMS). This achievement underscores the agency's dedication to safeguarding data integrity and maintaining robust cybersecurity protocols.

This achievement is a direct result of years of careful planning, rigorous implementation, and continuous improvement by the Agency's IT team. By adhering to ISO 27001 standards, the Agency has taken a proactive approach to identifying, managing, and reducing risks related to information security. This certification is not just about meeting compliance requirements; it demonstrates our holistic commitment to protecting the sensitive data of our citizens, residents, and employees while ensuring business continuity.

The certification process involved a comprehensive review and enhancement of the agency's existing policies, protocols, and training programmes. The IT Department played a key role in aligning Identità's practices with

the ISO framework, deploying advanced cybersecurity measures, and fostering a security-conscious culture across the agency. Inarguably the team's dedication and professionalism were instrumental in meeting the stringent criteria for certification.

By adhering to ISO 27001, we have ensured that we are doing everything possible to prevent unauthorised access, detect vulnerabilities, and respond to potential security incidents swiftly. This certification serves as a testament to the agency's unwavering dedication to maintaining the privacy and integrity of all the data we manage.

ISO 27001 is not a one-time accomplishment; it is a journey of continual improvement. Achieving this certification is just the beginning. Identità remains steadfast in its dedication to enhancing its cybersecurity practices, investing in the latest technologies, and fostering a culture of security awareness across the agency.



Signing of a new Collective Agreement

In 2024, Identità successfully concluded and signed a new collective agreement with the General Workers' Union. This agreement spans a four-year term from 2024 to 2028 and introduces several enhancements aimed at improving working conditions and supporting employee well-being and professional development.

Among other advantages and improvements, the Agency's employees started benefitting from salary increases and performance incentives. For the first time, the agreement also introduced a performance bonus across all salary grades, reinforcing the agency's commitment to rewarding excellence and recognising the dedication of its workforce.

In continuation of the previous collective agreement, this new agreement continues to prioritise employee wellbeing by introducing additional mental health services and fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment.

Additionally, it reaffirms the Agency's dedication to providing educational opportunities, including scholarships for MQF Levels 5, 6, and 7, in order to upskill its employees and encourage lifelong learning as well as personal and professional development. To further support this initiative, this agreement also introduced a 5-day annual study leave to prepare for examinations and assignments.

This agreement was signed by Identità's CEO, Mr Steve Agius, and Chief Human Resources Officer Ms. Gertrude Spiteri, by Mr. Kendrick Bondin and Mr. George Zahra, representing the General Workers' Union. Employee representatives Ms. Tania Abela and Ms. Stephania Mizzi also signed on behalf of the workforce. The event was witnessed by Minister for Home Affairs, Security and Employment, Byron Camilleri and MHSE Permanent Secretary Ms. Joyce Dimech.





Setting up a new Customer Experience unit

The establishment of the Customer Experience Unit underlines the agency's effort to improving the quality of services provided to the public.

This unit is focused on prioritising client needs to ensure efficient, accessible, and responsive service at all contact points, thereby enhancing the overall customer journey.

In addition to improving the entity's existing communication channels, the department is also exploring new methods to assist clients more effectively.

Towards the end of the second quarter of 2024, it has been determined that the entity will start using the services of Servizz.gov to enhance its customer support capabilities in light of the substantial increase in the volume of incoming calls and emails.

Negotiations and planning for this new project commenced in mid-September. Towards the end of November, Identità employees conducted a comprehensive week-long training for the new agents. Subsequently, in the first week of December, the entity officially started using Servizz.gov services, with the initial phase focusing on managing incoming calls related to the Single Permit.

In the first month of this project, the average number of calls successfully answered increased to 83%, amounting to 4337 calls. This increase contributed to a decrease in the number of emails received during the same period, with the average daily incoming emails declining by about 20% compared to the average of the preceding three months. The subsequent phase, planned for early 2025, will entail outsourcing email management for the same unit.

This project will be implemented in stages and will include outsourcing the same services for departments with the highest volumes of inquiries.

Launch of the Person Register

Identità, together with MITA and the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security and Employment, launched the Person Register during the Public Service Expo 2024.

The Person Register was established under Legal Notice LN 439 of 2021, titled The Person Register and Personal Data Sharing within the Public Sector Regulations. Its purpose is to create a central record of core personal details and enable authorised links between this record and other official registers containing equivalent personal data for the same individual. Upon the enactment of this Legal Notice, all public sector bodies managing official registers will be required to connect to the Person Register within a 48-month timeframe.

The Person Register enables the sharing of personal data within the public sector under necessary safeguards and provides for the necessary measures for facilitating its sharing between public sector bodies, whilst also adhering to the Once-Only Principle in respect of data collection, data sharing and data reuse. The Common Database (CDB) system, an information-sharing platform for the Government of Malta which holds information about persons, addresses and their inter-relationships of which Identità is responsible, will be gradually replaced by the Person Register.

On 29th January 2024, the Person Register became operational within Identità units. This allowed all CDB users within the Agency to start accessing data through the Person Register. Subsequently, as from April 2024, meetings were held with all CIOs engaged with all

Ministries, where an overview of this system was given and what is expected from their end to onboard with the Person Register.

The Person Register also incorporates a User-Management System (UAM) to onboard and manage users. Each System Administrator has been requested to nominate officials from their offices to be responsible for managing the Person Register. These roles will be essential for the transition to the Person Register, which every entity has the obligation to do as per the Legal Notice.

Training sessions started in 2024 and will continue in 2025, during which those involved are given an overview of the Person Register web app and the UAM web app. During these sessions, all UAM accounts are created and onboarded for use within the production environments. Once onboarded, each entity is given a 1-month transition period where both the CDB and Person Register will be running in parallel. After the 1-month orientation period, access to the CDB will be disabled for all users within the respective Ministry and its entities.

All Ministries and Government entities are being reminded of their obligation to link with the Person Register within 48 months from the date the Legal Notice has been established.

Our target is to have all Public Sector users onboarded on the Person Register by the end of 2025, while continuing to work with all involved on the solutions that must integrate through an API by January 2028 as established by the Legal Notice.





Identity cards Renewal exercise

In 2024, the Identity Cards Unit started a phased rollout of its Identity Card renewal exercise, addressing the expiration of thousands of cards issued during the mass rollout a decade earlier. This plan was made to ensure that Maltese and Gozitan citizens with identity cards expiring in 2024 and 2025 could renew them on time. Around 190,000 Identity Card holders were affected.

As soon as the agency was established in 2013, one of its most urgent priorities was to replace all invalid Identity Cards for Maltese and Gozitan citizens, as these were left invalid for many years.

The Identity Cards Unit implemented a series of strategic initiatives to prepare for the anticipated surge in renewal applications. This included a refurbishment of the premises and the relocation of some offices. Additional space and desks were created to accommodate more clients efficiently, a new waiting area was established to increase capacity, and the opening hours were extended, improving the overall client experience. The addition of new work areas required the investment in new biometric equipment and computers.

In terms of recruitment, the Human Resources Department was essential in making sure that there were enough employees to handle the increased workload. Several expressions of interest were issued to identify and engage skilled employees willing to support the service. This recruitment effort extended within the agency and across other government departments, including the engagement of former Public Service employees.

To support the renewal process, the Marketing and PR Department launched a comprehensive awareness campaign. This initiative aimed to inform identity card holders about the impending expiration of their cards and guide them on the renewal process, ensuring that all affected citizens were well-prepared to update their legal documents.

In collaboration with the Gozo Local Councils, the Gozo Identity Cards Unit provided the renewal services in the localities, facilitating and expediting this renewal exercise.

In 2024, a total of 83,994 new identity cards were issued, including renewals, new issuances, replacements for lost cards, and other cases requiring changes to the holder's details.

Relocation of Gozo services

As part of Identità's ongoing strategic initiatives, the majority of our services in Gozo have been successfully relocated to new premises in the heart of Victoria. This move represents a significant milestone in our effort to enhancing both employee work environments and client experiences.

The Identity Cards Unit, Passport Office and the e-Residence Unit were relocated in stages to the new premises located on Fortunato Mizzi Street.

The new location has been carefully selected to provide a centralised hub for essential services, ensuring accessibility and convenience for all our clients. By consolidating operations in one place, Identità has achieved a seamless integration of services that allows for more efficient and streamlined service delivery. Clients are now able to access our services from a single location, reducing time and effort.

For Identità employees, the new premises offer a modern and spacious working environment. This improvement aligns with our organisational goal of creating workplaces that support employee well-being and professional growth.

This relocation follows the same approach the agency has taken in recent years, moving most of its offices to more centralised and accessible locations.



Prioritising Mental health

In an unprecedented step since its establishment, Identità signed an agreement with Richmond Foundation - Malta, a renowned local organisation dedicated to promoting mental health awareness and providing essential support services. Through this initiative, the agency reaffirms its commitment to the priority health and well-being of its entire workforce by cultivating a professional environment where individuals feel secure and empowered to thrive.

Through this collaboration, the agency's employees will gain access to a range of valuable mental health resources, empowering them to address challenges, nurture resilience, and maintain overall well-being.

This collaboration with Richmond Foundation goes beyond simply meeting the expectations of our workforce—it represents a deliberate effort to exceed those expectations by embedding mental health as a central and accessible pillar of our organisational ethos. Together with Richmond Foundation, we are taking proactive steps to ensure that mental health support is not only available but integral to our workplace.

Passport office

The Passport Office facilitates the issuance and renewal of ePassports for Maltese citizens, ensuring their ability to travel internationally. It also contributes to national security by implementing stringent identity verification processes and adhering to international standards for passport issuance.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Passports issued	18,834	36,917	66,980	48,386	53,284
Urgent Passports Issued	568	1,241	2,488	2,355	2,984
Emergency Travel Documents Issued	133	267	308	171	147

Enhancing passport services in 2024

In 2024, the Passport Office remained committed to delivering efficient and high-quality services to Maltese citizens, both locally and through embassies abroad.

SMS Notification Initiative

In January 2024, proactively informed hundreds of Maltese passport holders whose documents were set to expire by September 2024 by sending them an SMS notification. This initiative aimed to prevent a surge in renewal and new passport requests, ensuring a smoother process for Maltese travellers.

SMS notifications were then sent to all eligible individuals, reminding them of their passports' impending expiration. Additionally, applicants were informed of a special renewal scheme allowing them to pay a reduced fee of €70 instead of €80, according to Legal Notice 86 of 2015.

To further streamline the process, the Passport Office urged applicants to book appointments online before visiting the office to submit their applications.

Commitment to Quality

Collaboration with the MEU and OPM on the Quality Award remained a priority. The Passport Office remained committed to implementing strategic actions and held monthly meetings with the Directorate for Service Quality to further strengthen internal structures. Service quality was regularly evaluated through mystery shopper exercises and surveys to measure customer satisfaction with the services provided. This ensured that the service delivered by the Passport Office remained of the highest standard.



Public Registry

The Public Registry keeps records of Acts of Civil Status, such as Birth, Adoption Registration, Marriage, Civil Union, Cohabitation, and Death. It also records Acts of Civil Status and annotations resulting from Court decrees, and provides copies of certificates.

Statistics

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Local Births Registered	4,206	4,164	3,978	4,204	4,107
Local Deaths Registered	3,570	3,699	3,783	3,915	3,764
Number of Foreign Notifications	3,642	3,703	3,275	4,390	5,358
Applications for the Publication of Marriage Banns	1,652	2,206	2,271	2,077	2,052
Registered Civil Marriages celebrated in same year	714	992	1,217	1,198	1,255
Registered Religious Marriages celebrated in same year	315	1,006	1,032	836	739
Number of Annotations and Adjustments	2,174	3,704	4,800	3,924	3,410
Total Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates issued	56,200	68,388	69,042	68,987	73,764
Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates issued online	29,319 (52%)	40,069 (58.5%)	40,960 (59,3%)	39,217 (56.8%)	42,425 (57.5%)

In 2024, the Public Registry processed 4,107 birth and 3,764 death registrations. The Identità satellite office located at Mater Dei Hospital remains the most convenient location for the public to report births and deaths, with almost 90% of births and 60% of death notifications being presented at this service hub.

During this period, the Public Registry also processed 5,358 notifications of foreign civil status Acts of Maltese citizens occurring abroad. These notifications were submitted at the Malta and Gozo Public Registry offices, as well as through the Maltese overseas Missions.

The Public Registry received and processed a total of 73,764 orders for birth, marriage, and death certificates during 2024. The Public Registry online portal remained the most popular way of ordering certificates. Over 57.0% of orders were placed through www.certifikati.identita.gov.mt portal.

The Marriage Registry Section received 2,052 applications for the publication of Marriage banns during this period. The section's personnel officiated 1,118 ceremonies.

The demand for multilingual standard forms issued under Regulation (EU) 2016/1191 of the European Parliament and of the Council has increased significantly following the digitisation of this process. In 2024, 1,724 translation aids were processed, an increase of 23.0% over 2023.





Commemorating six years of service at Mater Dei office

In April, Identità has commemorated the sixth anniversary of its Mater Dei Hospital office, marking a significant milestone in client-centred public service. Since opening its doors in 2018, the office has become a vital hub for birth and death notifications, processing nearly 35,000 birth and death notifications, representing over 70% of all such notifications in Malta.

Minister for Home Affairs, Security and Employment, Byron Camilleri; Minister for Health and Active Ageing, Jo Etienne Abela; and Identità CEO, Steve Agius, visited the premises and met with the employees managing the office. The strong year-on-year growth in service demand reflects the agency's success in placing clients at the heart of its strategic planning.

CEO Steve Agius highlighted the agency's commitment to delivering accessible and empathetic services drive, particularly in sensitive moments such as the registration of a death or medical emergencies involving newborns. Through ongoing collaboration with Mater Dei staff and specialised training initiatives, Identità ensures its services remain effective and compassionate.

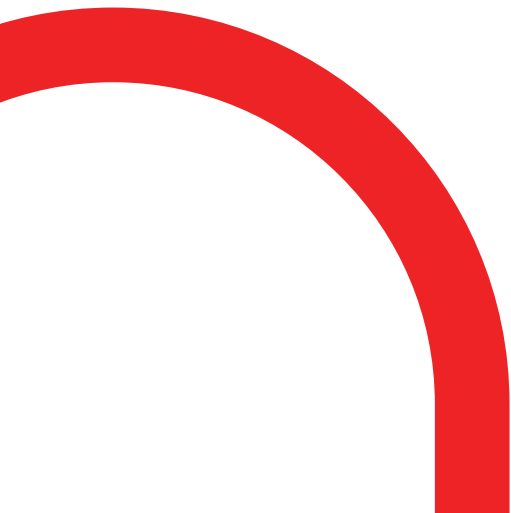
Enhancing the customer experience

The Malta Public Registry is committed to maximising all available resources and exploring various approaches to ensure its services remain efficient and effective.

To this end, a series of information exchange meetings were held with High Commissions and Embassies in Malta and members of the overseas Maltese diplomatic corps. These initiatives aim to expand both the Public Registry's knowledge base, and its capabilities to support both Maltese citizens residing overseas and citizens from various countries who reside locally and require the use of its services.

Moreover, the Public Registry worked closely with other entities that assist non-Maltese citizens living and working in Malta. These collaborations aim to streamline the notification and registration processes for births, marriages and deaths, ensuring greater efficiency and accessibility.

Malta Public Registry employees attended several courses and technical briefing sessions, including a Document Verification Training Course organised by the Academy for Disciplined Forces. Also, meetings were held with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Tourism to look at the scope, function and recognition of apostille and legalisation documents, and the International Protection Agency to gain a deeper understanding of its role and explore opportunities for closer collaboration with the Public Registry.



Promotion of the public registry services

Throughout 2024, the Malta Public Registry continued to promote its various services and improve accessibility through participation in various local television and radio programs. Public Registry officials explained the functions and services provided, as well as how they can be accessed.

Additionally, in collaboration with the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research, and Innovation's Servizz Għożża, the Public Registry provided an informational session for underage pregnant mothers and their parents or guardians, highlighting the services available to them.

Identity cards unit

The Identity Cards Unit is responsible for the issuance and management of Maltese Identity Cards and electronic eID accounts, serving as a vital component in the country's identification and authentication system. By providing citizens with secure and biometrically enhanced identity cards, the unit contributes to various sectors, including law enforcement, public services, and financial transactions, ensuring the integrity of personal identification processes within Malta. Additionally, the Identity Cards Unit plays a crucial role in enhancing security measures and safeguarding against identity fraud.

Statistics

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total eID cards issued	34,157	41,826	42,021	40,415	83,994
New Applications	5,506	5,317	5,340	4,830	4,578
Renewals	28,651	36,509	36,681	35,585	43,828
New eID [virtual] account activation	76,754	70,388	41,210	26,643	31,353
Citizen Transactions on eID accounts	7,452,596	11,650,153	11,841,175	12,998,900	13,430,167
Housebound visits	390	1,522	1,172	1,493	3,817

Growing demand for identity card services in 2024

In 2024, the Identity Cards Unit experienced a significant increase in demand for its services. The total number of identity cards issued more than doubled compared to previous years, highlighting the department's focus to providing efficient and timely service. A total of 83,994 Maltese Identity Cards were issued, including 4,756 new applications, 43,781 renewals, and the remainder issued due to lost documents or changes in personal details such as names, surnames, or addresses.

The surge in demand was also evident in the number of housebound visits, which reached 3,817. This essential service ensures that individuals with mobility challenges can still access identity card services without difficulty.

Additionally, eID account usage saw record-breaking activity, with over 13 million transactions recorded in 2024. This reflects the growing reliance on government services available online and the increasing need for secure digital identity verification.

Expo and notte bianca

It-Taqsimha tal-Karta tal-Identità ħadet sehem fil-Public Service EXPO 2024 bħala parti mill-Mass Rollout Project. Is-sehem tat-Taqsimha kien jinkludi l-ipproċessar b'suċċess ta' Karti tal-Identità u kontijiet tal-eID għall-klijenti. Dan il-proġett kien ta' suċċess kbir, grazzi għad-domanda kbira li kien hemm mill-pubbliku. B'kollox, ġew ipproċessati 533 Karta tal-Identità u 84 kont tal-eID.

It-Taqsimha tal-Karta tal-Identità ħadet sehem ukoll fin-Notte Bianca, fejn ipprovdiet għajnuna u tagħrif lil persuni li kellhom bżonn għajnuna bil-kontijiet tal-eID tagħhom.



Searches Unit

The Searches Unit of the Public Registry functions as the repository for a comprehensive database containing enrolment records, encompassing public contracts and wills. This specialised unit is responsible for processing search orders related to both individuals and entities. These search orders are crucial in the context of enrolling notes associated with the transfer of immovable property, whether through inter vivos transactions or causa mortis scenarios. Additionally, the unit oversees the registration of hypothec notes and privileges, serving as a safeguard for obligations such as loans and the payment of ground rents.

Furthermore, the Searches Unit plays a pivotal role in scrutinising deeds linked to Public Wills. This scrutiny is essential in determining whether a will has been officially enrolled with the Public Registry, ensuring transparency and accessibility to crucial testamentary documentation. Through its meticulous record-keeping and search facilitation, the unit contributes significantly to the efficiency and reliability of the Public Registry's functions related to property transactions and legal obligations.



	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Searches by Type					
Will Orders	11,740	14,087	14,055	14,280	15,033
Reference Update	617	529	420	512	312
Priority Orders	14,035	18,403	19,962	19,644	16,938
Normal Orders	88,786	104,763	102,077	101,136	108,886
Updates on Orders	53,610	67,241	70,207	66,479	70,788
Total Searches	168,788	205,023	206,721	202,051	211,937
Notes	65,223	87,568	84,733	77,983	80,334

The figures collected in the table above show that over the past five years, there has been a substantial increase in the total number of searches. Over the past year, there was a recorded increase of 4.8% in the number of searches processed compared to the previous year, along with a minimal increase of 0.03% in the number of notes issued in 2024 compared to 2023.



New system for enhancing digitalisation in the processing and issuance of searches

Testamentary Searches and Updates have continued to be processed from start to finish through our digital portal, with the qualified digital signature of the section's lawyers, enabling clients to download the searches online. An assessment of the new system's processes continued, comparing them with the older system to ensure the service remains as efficient as possible.

A holistic exercise was carried out by the managers of all back-office sections, identifying certain obstacles encountered while working on Updates and Testamentary Searches in the new system. These were addressed both by the system's external representative and the Agency's Information and Technology Department. Every process continues to be evaluated to ensure that the system functions as efficiently as possible and that clients receive the same high standard of service.

Additionally, statistics were maintained with regard to the time window required for a process to be carried out digitally compared to manually. It was noted that more attention was needed to adapt the new system to the different stages of search processing. It also emerged that greater focus was required on the vetting

of searches, as this is the only stage in the entire process that, in the old system, involved little to no digital aspect and was conducted entirely on paper. This requires intensive attention from the employees in this unit, as they must examine each note in question (with the oldest notes dating back to 1859).

Given all these considerations, along with the continuously increasing number of searches ordered and the very limited timeframe in which they must be processed, as stipulated by law, it must be ensured that the new system not only helps in speeding up the work but also reduces pressure on employees by allowing them to confidently sort search results on a screen rather than manually flipping through paper records.

This exercise also led to several valid suggestions aimed at making the process as seamless and efficient as possible. Among these, small modifications are being considered regarding how the connection between two specific documents is established, ensuring that this link is created precisely when the note is registered and remains visible throughout the search process.

Implementation of new projects

The Searches Unit has created a temporary new template for Note Registration. The objective of this project is to allow the registration process for notes to be carried out more professionally and with greater operational flexibility.

Another project initiated by the Searches Unit concerns the registration dates of notes recorded before 2016. From 2016 onwards, a new policy was introduced requiring the registration date of each note to be entered into the system. This has helped speed up the vetting and verification process when reviewing these notes, without compromising quality and efficiency.

However, notes recorded before 2016 (with the oldest dating back to 1859) do not have their registration dates entered into the system. As a result, the verification process for these notes, when a search is being processed, takes longer.

To address this, an exercise has been launched where basic details and registration dates of notes recorded in 2015 and earlier are being documented in an Excel sheet similar to the one filled in daily when indexing notes presented by notaries. These details will eventually be uploaded to the system, allowing the data to appear in the note index even while searches are being conducted.



Expatriates unit

The Expatriates Unit plays a critical role in the Maltese economy, as a key player in the process of legal migration. Tasked with the processing and issuance of residence documentation, the unit diligently follows the provisions outlined in national legislation and European Union regulations.

At the heart of its operations lies the essential function of scrutinising the official documentation submitted by applicants. This meticulous vetting process ensures that applicants provide adequate supporting evidence for their applications. Moreover, the unit actively collaborates with various local authorities involved in the legal migration process, creating a seamless and comprehensive one-stop platform for third-country nationals. This integrated approach not only streamlines the application process but also facilitates a cohesive system for individuals seeking both employment and other residence permits in Malta.

The integration of the expatriates and central visa units

In 2024, a significant structural change was implemented with the consolidation of the Expatriates Unit and the Central Visa Unit under the newly established Immigration Affairs section.

The Expatriates Unit, responsible for the issuance of permits and documents to foreigners to legally reside and work in Malta, combined forces with the Central Visa Unit, which is responsible for the issuance of visas for foreigners entering Malta. By bringing these two units together, the Immigration Affairs section is now better equipped to provide a unified service to both foreign nationals and local employers.

This integration creates a more unified approach to immigration, making processes smoother and supporting efforts to improve governance, transparency, and service delivery in Malta's immigration system.



Key developments in immigration processes

2024 was a challenging year for Identità's Expatriates Unit as significant changes were implemented to cater for several new requirements introduced by the Government across various industries, which directly impacted the immigration sector. These changes provided an excellent opportunity for Identità to enhance its collaboration with other Government entities and, as a result, strengthened Malta's unified approach towards immigration.

Three of the most prominent legislative changes, which were enforced by Identità during 2024, were the new DIER License for Temping, Recruiting and Outsourcing Agencies, the introduction of the Skills Pass for the tourism and hospitality industry employees, as well as the full comprehensive health insurance requirement following amendments to the Healthcare Fees Act. All three changes were introduced in the Summer months, with the license for Temping, Recruiting and Outsourcing Agencies being the first major development.

Identità collaborated closely with both the Department for Industrial and Employment Relations (DIER) and Jobsplus to ensure that only licensed agencies would be permitted to submit Single Work Permit applications with Identità, ensuring a streamlined and compliant process. The humanitarian aspect of this legislative change was a fine balancing act, carried out in liaison with the Principal Immigration Officer, where TCN employees, employed with noncompliant employers were assisted in order to maintain their legal status in Malta.

Subsequently, in July, the first phase of the obligatory Skills Pass requirement for new employees working in the tourism and hospitality industry was triggered. Identità was tasked with making sure that all new TCN employees working directly in this industry, as well as employees engaged by temping, outsourcing and recruiting companies and posted in hospitality businesses, were in possession of an authenticated Skills Pass certificate. The Expatriates Unit worked closely with the Institute for Tourism Services' Skills Pass Section to fine-tune the examination processes in line with immigration law requisites. This collaboration will ensue throughout 2025 with the second phase of implementation targeting renewals of TCN work permits in this industry.



In August, Identità then took a leading role in ensuring that TCNs residing in Malta, who would not be entitled to free healthcare, were adequately covered by private health insurance. To facilitate this process, Identità acted as an intermediary between the Health Authorities' needs and Insurance Association Malta to make sure that TCNs would easily find the required insurance product from all insurance companies- that is, non-revocable health insurance with a minimum coverage of €100,000 including coverage for hospitalisation in Malta, EU Member States and the UK, daycare and outpatient treatments.

Changes in the Expatriates Section were not only triggered by legislative changes but also by internal policies focused on maintaining transparency and good governance.

Measures such as the lease agreement attestation form and the declaration of accommodation were introduced, following extensive consultation with stakeholders, to reduce abuse in declared residences, providing a more secure and reliable process for all parties involved. Another change was the transition of transfer of business/ merger/ takeover requests to Identità's online portal which was crucial to ensure that TCN employees were aware of being transferred from one employer to another.

Programmes for highly skilled TCNs were also enhanced during 2024, mainly through the implementation of the latest EU blue card directive and through the introduction of an internal policy allowing KEI employees who earn over €50,000 to invite direct family members in Malta immediately.

The Expatriates Unit remains committed to improving Malta's immigration processes, protecting compliant foreign residents, and making the country a more attractive place for skilled professionals to live and work. The hard work and commitment shown in 2024 could be considered a prelude to further changes in this sector, with the implementation of the ambitious Malta Labour Migration Policy expected to take place soon.



Central Visa unit

The Central Visa Unit (CVU) is the government's central authority responsible for the implementation of national visa policies and the provisions outlined in the Schengen acquis. The responsibility of issuing a visa is shared with Malta's Diplomatic Missions abroad.

Extended service available in more countries

The year 2024, was characterised by ongoing work and progress in relation to the Extended Service, with an increase in the number of countries where a Visa Application Centre is available, allowing individuals to apply for a visa in their own country.

Despite significantly expanding the number of countries worldwide where visa applications can be submitted with ease, logistical reasons meant that a small number of countries are still pending operational implementation. Due to that, the Central Visa Unit has taken steps to facilitate the process by introducing a postal service in Brazil, Venezuela, Chile, Argentina, Colombia, and Japan until operations in these countries are fully established.

A review of the visa process was also conducted, identifying key areas where the current system could be improved. As part of this enhancement process, efforts are being made to implement procedures that will make the system more efficient and transparent. This goal will be achieved through measures ensuring clear and documented procedures, as well as technological advancements that assist and streamline the process.

An internal committee was established with the specific aim of reforming the student visa processing system. Extensive discussions and consultations were held with stakeholders to provide the department with a comprehensive understanding of the application process from the applicants' perspective and to implement improvements benefiting all parties involved. The goal is for Malta to become a leading destination for those who wish to study.

The Central Visa Unit has reviewed the list of documents required from applicants to provide clearer guidance on the necessary documents for a visa application. Additionally, amendments have been made to the Refusal Letter to ensure that applicants are informed more clearly about the reasons for their application's rejection.

Compliance Unit

The Compliance Unit assists with the agency's due diligence procedures, including the processing of residence permits to third-country nationals (mainly for employment and study reasons) and the issuance of visas. The Unit has the statutory authority to carry out checks to verify whether third-country nationals are abiding by the conditions set out in their authorisation to remain in Malta.

The Compliance Unit is divided into two sections: the Reporting Section and the Internal Controls Section.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total number of FOM Interviews Requested	566	653	705	761	516
Cases opened for investigation	112	221	163	197	446
Cases resolved	92	194	198	130	308
Total number of Field Inspections carried out	2	20	40	176	215

Reporting Section

As mentioned earlier in this annual report, this section played a crucial role in upholding the law and ensuring that applicants, employers, and other local stakeholders involved in the processes related to TCNs working and residing in Malta comply with all the relevant laws and regulations.

This section also played a significant role in cases of address-related illegalities. During the second quarter of 2024, an increase in false or forged lease agreements and Housing Authority approvals was observed. This led to 42 targeted investigations, 9 of which were successfully closed, involving 25 addresses. These cases were referred to the Malta Police Force for further action, including legal proceedings in courts.

The collaborative efforts between the Reporting Section, law enforcement, and other regulatory entities have been instrumental in identifying and addressing illicit activities. These efforts have led to arrests and reinforced the importance of interdepartmental cooperation in maintaining regulatory compliance and accountability.



Internal Controls Section

The Internal Controls Section within Identità Agency's Compliance Unit plays a crucial role in strengthening corporate governance. Its primary role is to ensure that good governance is observed and that the integrity of processes is upheld.

By ensuring adherence to rules, regulations and internal policies, the Section upholds accountability and transparency across the agency. Additionally, by fostering ethical behaviour and responsibility, the Section contributes to cultivating a culture of integrity within the Agency. Through regular internal audits and fact verifications, the Section enhances operational efficiency, ensures compliance, and identifies areas for continuous improvement.

In 2024, the Internal Controls Section undertook significant initiatives to uphold compliance and prioritise governance and accountability. A total of 30 verifications of reported internal issues were carried out, and 12 internal evaluations and system reviews were initiated and completed. As a result of these efforts, 69 internal recommendations were proposed to the CEO, each aimed at addressing deficiencies and enhancing internal processes and controls. Through these actions, the Section not only identified areas of concern but also provided actionable solutions to strengthen internal governance.





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