

Intermediate Quality Report

EU-SILC 2006

National Statistics Office (NSO)

Malta

1. Common cross-sectional European Union indicators

Common cross-sectional European Union indicators based on the cross-sectional component of EU-SILC

Primary Laeken indicators of social cohesion

At-risk-of poverty rate after social transfers

- 'At-risk-of poverty rates' (after social transfers) broken down by age and gender

%		Age					
		Total (0+)	0-15	16-24	25-49	50-64	65+
Sex	Total	14.1	19.0	9.7	11.4	12.9	20.8
	Male	13.8	20.3	8.7	10.9	11.5	21.8
	Female	14.4	17.6	10.7	11.9	14.2	20.0

- 'At-risk-of poverty rates' (after social transfers) broken down by most frequent activity status and gender

%		Most frequent activity status					
		Total	Employed	Not employed			
			Total employed	Total not employed	Unemployed	Retired	Other inactive
Sex	Total	13.0	4.6	20.5	39.8	21.7	18.4
	Male	12.2	5.9	24.1	43.1	22.5	18.6
	Female	13.8	2.0	18.7	29.7	19.5	18.3

- 'At-risk-of poverty rates' (after social transfers) broken down by household type

Household Type			%
Total households			14.1
All households with no dependent children	Total		12.1
	1 person households	Total	19.9
		M	19.4
		F	20.3
		age < 65 yrs	22.1
		age 65+	18.0
2 adults no dependent children	both age < 65 yrs at least one age 65+	12.1 26.1	
Other households with no dependent children		4.5	
All households with dependent children	Total		15.7
	Single parent	at least 1 dependent child	36.3
	2 adults	1 dependent child	15.0
		2 dependent children	14.7
		3+ dependent children	32.1
Other households with dependent children		8.1	

- ‘At-risk-of poverty rates’ (after social transfers) broken down by accommodation tenure status

Tenure status	%
Total	14.1
Owner or rent-free	13.1
Tenant	19.2

- ‘At-risk-of poverty threshold’ (illustrative values)

Household type	Currency	At-risk-of-poverty threshold (illustrative values)
1 person household	NAT	2182
2 adults 2 dependent children	NAT	4583

Inequality of income distribution S80/S20 income quintile share ratio

- Ratio of total income received by the 20% of the country’s population with the highest income (top quintile) to that received by the 20% of the country’s population with the lowest income (lowest quintile)

S80/S20 income quintile ratio	4.24
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Relative median at-risk-of-poverty gap

- Difference between the median income of persons below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, and the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, expressed as a percentage of the at-risk-of-poverty threshold.

%		Age			
		Total (0+)	0-15	16-64	65+
Sex	Total	21.4	18.9	19.4	31.6
	Male	21.5	-	18.8	31.6
	Female	21.2	-	22.0	31.6

Secondary Laeken Indicators of social cohesion

Dispersion around the risk-of-poverty threshold

- The share of persons with an income below 40%, 50% and 70% national median income

%		Dispersion around the at-risk-of-poverty threshold		
		40% of median	50% of median	70% of median
Sex	Total	4.3	8.5	23.1
	Male	4.2	8.4	22.2
	Female	4.3	8.6	24.1

At-risk-of-poverty rate anchored at a moment in time

This indicator shall be provided from 2007 as requested by Eurostat.

At-risk-of-poverty rate before transfers

- At-risk-of-poverty rate where income is the 'equivalised disposable income before social transfers except old-age and survivors' benefits'

%		Age			
		Total (0+)	0-15	16-64	65+
Sex	Total	22.1	30.5	19.4	24.9
	Male	21.4	31.5	17.9	25.8
	Female	22.9	29.3	20.9	24.2

- At-risk-of-poverty rate where income is the 'equivalised disposable income before social transfers including old-age and survivors' benefits'

%		Age			
		Total (0+)	0-15	16-64	65+
Sex	Total	34.0	32.5	25.7	80.3
	Male	31.6	33.9	23.2	79.0
	Female	36.5	31.1	28.3	81.3

Inequality of income distribution: Gini coefficient

- The relationship of cumulative shares of the population arranged according to the level of income, to the cumulative share of the total income received by them

Gini coefficient	28.06
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Other Indicators

Equivalised disposable income

The median equivalised disposable income was Lm 3642.01 (national currency).

The gender pay gap

The gender pay gap was not calculated from EU-SILC for Malta.

2. Accuracy

Sampling design

Type of sampling

Since this was the second year EU-SILC was carried out, it was necessary to keep three of the four panels from EU-SILC 2005 and add another panel containing new households. It was decided to drop the smallest panel from EU-SILC 2005, i.e. the one with the lowest response rate.

The sampling design adopted for the new panel involved simple random sampling of dwellings from the Census of Population & Housing 2005 database, which served as the sampling frame for this survey. Consequently, these dwellings have served as the best possible proxy to the household population that were targeted for this survey.

All the persons living in the selected dwellings were then interviewed for this survey in order to obtain information at personal level.

Sampling units

As stated above, the sampling frame for the Maltese EU-SILC was the database obtained from the Census of Population & Housing 2005. First, a sample of households was obtained from this register. All persons within each household were then interviewed.

Stratification and sub-stratification criteria

This section is not applicable, as stratified sampling was not used in the EU-SILC data collection for Malta.

Sample size and allocation criteria

As from 2004, all participating countries were obliged, by regulation, to meet specific minimum effective sample sizes of households and eligible persons (persons aged 16+). The established minimum sample size for Malta's cross-sectional component was 3,000 households corresponding to at least 7,000 persons aged 16 and over.

The gross sample size (as selected by simple random sampling) for Malta was 4,136 households. Of these, 269 households were ineligible households that could not be located, households that did not actually exist, non-residential addresses, permanently vacant dwellings and institutional households (e.g. elderly homes). Consequently, a total of 3,867 households were approached for the interview.

Sample selection schemes

The sampling design used for the EU-SILC survey involved just one stage, where simple random sampling was used to select a sample of households from the Census of Population & Housing 2005 database.

Sample distribution over time

The survey was carried out over a period of four months, and the sample was shared approximately equally between these months.

Renewal of sample: Rotational groups

Malta has adapted a 4-year rotational design as recommended by Eurostat. Such a design is a balanced combination between the two 'extreme' options of selecting independent samples from year to year and using a long-term panel extending over 4 years.

Rotational groups were used for the first time in this year's survey, being the second year EU-SILC was carried out. However, even though not directly effecting fieldwork in the first year of survey (which only contained a cross-sectional

component), groundwork on establishing the rotational design had to be carried out in the first year.

The simple rotational design used in Malta involved selecting four, equally sized simple random samples out of the total sample of dwellings. The four sub-samples were labelled as panels 1 to 4. In the second year of the survey, it was decided to drop the panel with the lowest response rate, to be replaced by a new sample of households. Households from the remaining three panels were retained for re-interviewing. This corresponds to the 'linear' rotation pattern recommended by Eurostat, which will enable both a cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis.

Weightings

Before calculating weights, it is necessary to have a clear picture of the household population. The calculation of the household population for 2005 was based on Census 2005 figures. Household counts for 2006 were obtained through population updates for 2006.

Design factor

Household design weights are calculated as the inverse of the selection probability of households.

The design weights for old households (i.e. households retained from SILC 2005) are equivalent to the cross-sectional weights for these households in 2005 (this is obtained using a post-stratification weighting by household size and district). However it has to be pointed out that a comparison of the design weights of the old households in 2006 with their corresponding cross-sectional weights in 2005 will reveal some discrepancies. This is because at the time of the 2005 weighting exercise, the available Census 2005 figures were preliminary figures. Since then, the finalized Census figures were made available and there were some variations between these and preliminary figures. Whilst the 2005 weights were not revised, the weights for 2006 were based on the final Census results.

The design weights for new households (i.e. households participating in SILC for the first time in 2006) were calculated by dividing the number of eligible households in 2006 (as calculated from 2006 population updates) by the number of eligible new households in SILC 2006.

Design weights were then normalised and inflated to reflect the total population of households in 2006.

Non-response adjustments

Non-response adjustments were carried out at household level by household size and district by comparing the distribution of responding households to that of households in the sampling frame.

Adjustments to external data

Household data was calibrated (using CALMAR software) by applying the logit method (minimum = 0.8, maximum = 1.6). We appreciate that these limits may be considered to be rather wide. However, convergence could not be obtained otherwise. Variables used in the calibration exercise were tenure status, sex, 10-year age groups, household type and district.

Final cross-sectional weights

The final household cross-sectional weight has been calculated by multiplying the design weight by the non-response adjustment and by the calibration factor.

Substitutions

No substitutions were made.

Sampling errors

Standard errors and effective sample size

- ‘At-risk-of poverty rates’ (after social transfers) broken down by age and gender

Age	Sex	Value	Absolute sampling error	Relative sampling error %	Sample size (persons)
Total (0+)	Total	14.1	0.67	4.73	10,226
	Male	13.8	0.94	6.81	5,059
	Female	14.4	0.95	6.56	5,167
0-15	Total	19.0	1.73	9.10	1,926
	Male	20.3	2.45	12.05	1,010
	Female	17.6	2.43	13.83	916
16-24	Total	9.7	1.56	16.17	1,338
	Male	8.7	2.06	23.70	700
	Female	10.7	2.37	22.14	638
25-49	Total	11.4	1.08	9.51	3,219
	Male	10.9	1.51	13.82	1,596
	Female	11.9	1.55	13.07	1,623
50-64	Total	12.9	1.38	10.77	2,187
	Male	11.5	1.88	16.34	1,076
	Female	14.2	2.02	14.28	1,111
65+	Total	20.8	1.99	9.58	1,556

	Male	21.8	3.07	14.10	677
	Female	20.0	2.61	13.05	879
16+	Total	13.0	0.71	5.50	8,300
	Male	12.2	1.00	8.14	4,049
	Female	13.7	1.02	7.44	4,251
16-64	Total	11.5	0.75	6.53	6,744
	Male	10.7	1.03	9.63	3,372
	Female	12.4	1.10	8.87	3,372
0-64	Total	13.1	0.70	5.36	8,670
	Male	12.7	0.97	7.66	4,382
	Female	13.5	1.01	7.49	4,288

- ‘At-risk-of poverty rates’ (after social transfers) broken down by most frequent activity status and gender

Most frequent activity status	Sex	Value	Absolute sampling error	Relative sampling error %	Sample size (persons)
Total	Total	13.0	0.72	5.50	8,278
	Male	12.2	1.00	8.15	4,039
	Female	13.8	1.02	7.44	4,239
Of which: 'Employed'	Total	4.6	0.67	14.58	3,634
	Male	5.9	0.91	15.54	2,493
	Female	2.0	0.79	40.51	1,141
Of which: 'Not employed'	Total	20.5	1.15	5.60	4,644
	Male	24.1	2.10	8.74	1,546
	Female	18.7	1.35	7.25	3,098
...Of which: Unemployed	Total	39.8	6.09	15.29	242
	Male	43.1	7.16	16.60	179
	Female	29.7	11.13	37.54	63
...Of which: Retired	Total	21.7	2.22	10.24	1,288
	Male	22.5	2.62	11.66	951
	Female	19.5	4.18	21.40	337
...Of which: Other inactive	Total	18.4	1.34	7.31	3,114
	Male	18.6	3.69	19.87	416
	Female	18.3	1.44	7.86	2,698

- ‘At-risk-of poverty rates’ (after social transfers) broken down by household type

Household Type	Value	Absolute sampling error	Relative sampling error %	Sample size (persons)
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Total			14.1	0.66	4.71	10,274
All households with no dependent children	Total		12.1	0.94	7.71	4,561
	1 person households	Total	19.9	3.33	16.69	540
		M	19.4	5.88	30.36	169
		F	20.3	4.04	19.92	371
		age < 65 yrs	22.1	5.46	24.71	216
		age 65+	18.0	4.13	22.92	324
2 adults no dependent children	both age < 65 yrs	12.1	2.24	18.50	794	
	at least one age 65+	26.1	2.66	10.21	1,018	
Other households with no dependent children			4.5	0.86	18.92	2,209
All households with dependent children	Total		15.7	0.93	5.92	5,713
	Single parent	at least 1 dep. child	36.3	6.56	18.08	201
	2 adults	1 dep. child	15.0	2.19	14.60	996
		2 dep. children	14.7	1.55	10.57	1,944
		3+ dep. children	32.1	3.10	9.64	850
	Other households with dependent children			8.1	1.27	15.74

- ‘At-risk-of poverty rates’ (after social transfers) broken down by tenure status

Tenure status	Value	Absolute sampling error	Relative sampling error %	Sample size (persons)
Total	14.1	0.66	4.71	10,268
Owner or rent-free	13.1	0.71	5.39	8,547
Tenant	19.2	1.84	9.57	1,721

- ‘At-risk-of poverty rates’ (after social transfers) broken down by household type and work intensity

Household type	Work intensity	Value	Absolute sampling error	Relative sampling error %	Sample size (persons)
All households with no dependent children	WI = 0	36.1	3.23	8.93	830
	0 < WI < 1	2.9	0.75	25.79	1,891
	WI = 1	1.0	0.66	64.54	872
All households with	WI = 0	72.7	4.22	5.80	417
	0 < WI < 0.5	25.2	4.23	16.78	395

dependent children	0.5 <= WI < 1	14.1	1.15	8.13	3,441
	WI = 1	2.1	0.72	34.91	1,460

Non-sampling errors

Sampling frame and coverage errors

The Census of Population & Housing 2005 database was used as the sampling frame for this survey. This database was preferred to the Water Services database, which was used in the previous year's survey.

The Water Services database is a collection of all dwellings having a water meter. Linked to each dwelling in the database are a number of variables on the persons living in the dwelling. A list of occupied dwellings can be extracted from this database according to consumption records i.e. if no consumption is recorded for a particular dwelling, it can be assumed that no individuals live there and consequently the dwelling can be omitted from the sampling frame.

The Census of Population & Housing was conducted in 2005. The census is carried out every 10 years and is a comprehensive count of all persons living in Malta and Gozo at a particular point in time; in this case, November 2005. For this reason, it was decided that the Census database is the most comprehensive database of dwellings that could serve as a good proxy for a sampling frame of all households in Malta.

Nevertheless, the sample selected from the Census database resulted in 269 ineligible addresses that correspond to 6.5% of the sample.

Measurement and processing errors

Measurement errors

The main sources of measurement errors that have been identified are the following:

- **Questionnaire**

A few errors in wording and misprints were identified in the questionnaire despite intensive proofreading. When these errors were identified, the interviewers were immediately informed about them. Nonetheless this does not exclude the possibility that this could have caused some misinterpretation. We are however confident that the consequences are very minimal. Note of these errors was taken so as to avoid them in subsequent years.

- **Interviewers**

A lot of effort was put into ensuring that the briefing sessions that were organized for the interviewers were as clear and informative as possible. Furthermore, interviewers were provided with notes summarizing the main issues of this survey and were encouraged to refer to the Office whenever the need for further clarification arose. In parallel the office made it a point to keep in contact with the interviewers to resolve any difficulties that may crop up. Nevertheless, there were still few instances of non-co-operative behaviour from interviewers. Auditing of households was carried out to identify and take action on such problems with immediate effect.

- **Respondents**

Respondents' cooperation was reasonably good and resulted in a response rate of 90.4%. Nevertheless, a number of difficulties were encountered here. The burden on respondents is an ever-increasing problem due to Malta's small size and the considerable number of surveys that require the public's co-operation. In this context, there were occasions where permission to conduct telephone interviews was given in an attempt to minimize the burden. Furthermore, the quality of response must be understood in the context of issues such as unwillingness of respondents to answer correctly (or even answer) certain questions on income and living conditions due to sensitivity of subject. There was also an element of proxy effect when individuals answered for other household members who were not at home at the time of interview.

Processing errors

- **Data collection and data entry**

The vast majority of fieldwork was carried out through CAPI (computer assisted personal interviewing) by means of laptops. The data entry program used during data collection contained automatic validations that ensured that certain responses were within reasonable ranges and made logical sense when compared to previous related responses. In some cases, interviewers were given the option to suppress a validation so as to cater for exceptional cases. The program also automated the routing from a question to another thus minimizing accidental omission of questions. Consequently this system reduced considerably the processing errors related to data entry whilst speeding up the whole process.

The only problems experienced in this context were related to the fact that not all interviewers were very familiar with handling a laptop. This was catered for by organising separate training sessions to illustrate how the laptops and program work.

Furthermore, fictitious 'test' households were created in each laptop and interviewers were encouraged to experiment inputting data so as to be familiar with the process before interviewing actual households.

However the CAPI system did not cover the whole fieldwork. Questionnaires were printed and PAPI (paper and pencil interviewing) was used in the following instances:

- when the number of interviewers at a given time outnumbered the number of laptops
- in case of technical problems in laptops interrupting surveys

The PAPI alternative was used in these cases so as to avoid creating delays in the fieldwork.

Non-response errors

Achieved sample size

A sample of 4,136 households was selected, by keeping three of the four panels from the previous year and creating a new panel by extracting a simple random sample from the Census database (excluding institutional households). The resulting distribution of eligible and ineligible households is as follows:

	DB120	DB130	No.	%
Eligible households			3,867	100.0
Address contacted and				
... household questionnaire completed	11	11	3,494	90.4
... household refused to cooperate	11	21	282	7.3
... household temporarily away	11	22	22	0.6
... household unable to respond (due to illness, incapacity...)	11	23	33	0.8
... household questionnaire not completed due to other reasons	11	24	36	0.9
Address unable to access	22	na	0	0
Ineligible households			269	100.0
Address cannot be located	21	na	165	61.3
Address does not exist or is a non-residential address	23	na	104	38.7

Table 1: Distribution of eligible and ineligible households

where DB120 is the record of contact at address; and
DB130 is the household questionnaire result

Consequently the number of households for which the interview was accepted for database is 3,494 corresponding to a household response rate of 90.4%. This corresponds to 10,274 persons, of whom 8,300 are aged 16 and over.

Unit non-response

The following rates are computed according to Eurostat definitions.

- **Household non-response rate**

The address contact rate (R_a) is given by:

$$R_a = \frac{\sum[DB120 = 11]}{\sum[DB120 = all] - \sum[DB120 = 23]} = \frac{3867}{4136 - 104} = 0.959$$

The proportion (R_h) of complete household interviews and accepted for the database is:

$$R_h = \frac{\sum[DB135 = 1]}{\sum[DB130 = all]} = \frac{3494}{3867} = 0.904$$

The household non-response rate (NR_h) is given by:

$$NR_h = (1 - (R_a * R_h)) * 100 = (1 - (0.959 * 0.904)) * 100 = 13.3\%$$

- **Individual non-response rate**

The proportion (R_p) of complete interviews within the households accepted for the database:

$$R_p = \frac{\sum[RB250 = 11 + 12 + 13]}{\sum[RB245 = 1 + 2 + 3]} = \frac{8300}{8300} = 1$$

The individual non-response rate (NR_p) is given by:

$$NR_p = (1 - (R_p)) * 100 = (1 - (1)) * 100 = 0\%$$

The reason behind a zero individual non-response rate is that whenever a household was interviewed and one (or more) of the household members did not respond, proxy answers for these individuals were requested from responding members.

- **Overall individual non-response rate**

The overall individual non-response rate (NR_p) is given by:

$$NR_p = (1 - (R_a * R_h * R_p)) * 100 = (1 - (0.959 * 0.904 * 1)) * 100 = 13.3\%$$

Distribution of households (original units) by ‘record of contact at address’ (DB120), by ‘household questionnaire result’ (DB130) and by ‘household interview acceptance’ (DB135), for the total

- Table 1. Distribution of original units by ‘record of contact at address’ (DB120)

	Number	Percentage
Total (DB120 = 11 to 23)	4,136	100.0
Address contacted (DB120 = 11)	3,867	93.5
Address non-contacted (DB120 = 21 to 23)	269	6.5
Total address non-contacted (DB120 = 21 to 23)	269	100.0
Address cannot be located (DB120 = 21)	165	61.3
Address unable to access (DB120 = 22)	0	0.0
Address does not exist or is non-residential address or is unoccupied or not principal residence (DB120 = 23)	104	38.7

- Table 2. Distribution of address contacted by ‘household questionnaire result’ (DB130) and by ‘household interview acceptance’ (DB135)

	Number	Percentage
Total	3,867	100.0
Household questionnaire completed (DB130 = 11)	3,494	90.4
Interview not completed (DB130 = 21 to 24)	373	9.6
Total interview not completed (DB130 = 21 to 23)	373	100.0
Refusal to co-operate (DB130 = 21)	282	75.6
Entire household temporarily away for duration of fieldwork (DB130 = 22)	22	5.9
Household unable to respond (illness, incapacity, etc) (DB130 = 23)	33	8.8
Other reasons	36	9.7
Household questionnaire completed (DB135 = 1 + 2)	3,494	100.0
Interview accepted for database (DB135 = 1)	3,494	100.0
Interview rejected (DB135 = 2)	0	0.0

Distribution of substituted units by ‘record of contact at address’ (DB120), by ‘household questionnaire result’ (DB130) and by ‘household interview acceptance’ (DB135), for the total

No substituted units were used in the Maltese EU-SILC.

Item non-response

The following tables summarize item non-response for income variables:

	Households	Households	Of which (before imputation)...
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		having a positive amount		having a negative amount		Full Information		Partial Information		Missing values	
		No.	%*	No.	%*	No.	%**	No.	%**	No.	%**
Total household income											
Total household gross income	HY010	3,490	99.9	4	0.1	2,793	79.9	694	19.9	7	0.2
Total disposable household income	HY020	3,488	99.8	6	0.2	3,126	89.5	361	10.3	7	0.2
Total disposable household income before social transfers except old age and survivors' benefits	HY022	3,485	99.7	9	0.3	3,131	89.6	320	9.2	43	1.2
Total disposable household income before social transfers including old age and survivors' benefits	HY023	3,473	99.4	21	0.6	3,118	89.2	229	6.6	147	4.2
Gross income components at household level											
Income from rental of property or land	HY040G	149	4.3	0	0.0	144	96.6	0	0.0	5	3.4
Interest, dividends, profit from capital investments in unincorporated business	HY090G	3,493	100.0	0	0.0	3,002	85.9	0	0.0	491	14.1
Family/Children related allowances	HY050G	980	28.0	0	0.0	980	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Social exclusion not elsewhere classified	HY060G	788	22.6	0	0.0	788	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Housing allowances	HY070G	166	4.8	0	0.0	157	94.6	0.0	0.0	9	5.4
Regular inter-household cash transfer received	HY080G	36	1.0	0	0.0	32	88.9	0	0.0	4	11.1
Interest repayments on mortgage	HY100G	430	12.3	0	0.0	424	98.6	0	0.0	6	1.4
Income received by people aged under 16	HY110G	22	0.6	0	0.0	21	95.5	0	0.0	1	4.5
Regular inter-household cash transfer paid	HY130G	57	1.6	0	0.0	52	91.2	0	0.0	5	8.8

Note:

* percentages are out of the total number of households for which the interview was accepted for the database i.e. 3,494

** percentages are out of the total number of households having received an amount (positive or negative) for that household income variable

		Persons 16+ having a positive amount		Persons 16+ having a negative amount		Of which (before imputation)...					
						Full Information		Partial Information		Missing values	
		No.	%*	No.	%*	No.	%**	No.	%**	No.	%**
Gross income components at personal level											
Gross employee cash or near cash income	PY010G	3,348	40.3	0	0.0	3,124	93.3	0	0.0	224	6.7
Gross non-cash employee income	PY020G	162	2.0	0	0.0	162	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Contributions to individual private pension plans	PY035G	335	4.0	0	0.0	325	97.0	0	0.0	10	3.0
Cash benefits or losses from self-employment	PY050G	492	5.9	11	0.1	440	87.5	0	0.0	63	12.5
Pension from individual private plans	PY080G	45	0.5	0	0.0	44	97.8	0	0.0	1	2.2
Unemployment benefits	PY090G	175	2.1	0	0.0	175	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Old-age benefits	PY100G	1,637	19.7	0	0.0	1,637	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Survivors' benefits	PY110G	74	0.9	0	0.0	74	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Sickness benefits	PY120G	573	6.9	0	0.0	573	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Disability benefits	PY130G	297	3.6	0	0.0	297	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Education-related allowances	PY140G	347	4.2	0	0.0	339	97.7	0	0.0	8	2.3

Note:

* percentages are out of the total number of respondents (aged 16+) for which the interview was accepted for the database i.e. 8,300

** percentages are out of the total number of respondents (aged 16+) having received an amount (positive or negative) for that household income variable

Mode of data collection

- Table 1. Distribution of household members aged 16 and over by ‘data status’ (RB250)

All persons in the R-file aged 16 and over have data status 11 (information completed only from interview) as when a household was contacted all persons residing in that household were interviewed.

- Table 2. Distribution of household members aged 16 and over by ‘type of interview’ (RB260)

	Total	RB260 = 1	RB260 = 2	RB260 = 3	RB260 = 4	RB260 = 5	Missing
Total	8,300	0	5,553	0	0	2,685	62
%	100.0	0.0	66.9	0.0	0.0	32.3	0.8

Interview duration

The mean interview duration per household amounted to 35 minutes. This was calculated as instructed i.e. the sum of duration of all household interviews plus the sum of duration of all personal interviews, divided by the number of household questionnaires completed and accepted for the database.

3. Comparability

The following sections highlight any minor departures in definitions of national concepts from standard EU-SILC concepts. However, as much as possible, and for the sake of comparability, we have ensured that most national concepts coincide with EU-SILC concepts.

Basic concepts, definitions

Reference population

No departure from the common definition i.e. the reference population is composed of all private households and their current members residing in Malta at the time of data collection. Persons living in institutions are excluded from the target population.

Private household definition

No departure from the common definition i.e. a private household is defined as a person living alone or a group of people who live together in the same private dwelling and share expenditures, including the joint provision of the essentials of living.

Household membership

A person is a household member if s/he is usually resident in that particular dwelling and shares in household expenses. Persons who are temporarily absent for reasons of holiday, travel, work, health, education or similar are included as long as the persons do not intend to stay away for more than 6 months.

Income reference period

The income reference period was calendar year 2005.

Tax on income and social insurance contributions reference period

The tax on income and social insurance contributions reference period was the same as the income reference period i.e. calendar year 2005.

Taxes on wealth reference period

The variable on regular taxes on wealth is not applicable for Malta.

Lag between income reference period and current variables

The data collection was carried out between 1st June and 24th October 2006. Thus the lag between income reference period and current variables spans between 5 and 10 months, depending on the date of interview for each household. We did not succeed in limiting the interval to 8 months due to practical problems in data collection.

Total duration of data collection of the sample

As mentioned above, data collection was carried out between 1st June and 24th October 2006. Consequently the total duration of data collection of the sample exceeded 4 months in the case of 2 households only.

Basic information on activities status during the income reference period

This information was collected through the inclusion of a question in the questionnaire that requested the respondents' activity status for every month of the income reference period i.e. calendar year 2005.

Components of income

Differences between the national definition and standard EU-SILC definitions

For the following income components, the same definitions as standard EU-SILC were used:

- Total household gross income
- Total disposable household income
- Total disposable household income before social transfers except old-age and survivors' benefits
- Total disposable household income before social transfers including old-age and survivors' benefits
- Income from rental of property or land
- Family/children related allowances
- Social exclusion not elsewhere classified
- Housing allowances
- Regular inter-household cash transfer received
- Interest, dividends, profit from capital investments in unincorporated business
- Interest paid on mortgage
- Income received by people aged under 16
- Regular inter-household cash transfer paid
- Tax on income and social insurance contributions
- Employee cash or near cash income
- Non-cash employee income
- Cash benefits or losses from self-employment (including royalties)
- Unemployment benefits
- Old-age benefits
- Survivors' benefits
- Sickness benefits
- Disability benefits
- Education-related allowances

The following income components have not been collected for reasons specified below:

Imputed rent

Since data on imputed rent will only be mandatory as from 2007, Malta has not collected information on this variable as yet.

Regular taxes on wealth

The variable on regular taxes on wealth is not applicable for Malta.

Employers' social insurance contributions

Since data on employers' social insurance contributions will only be recorded from 2007 (depending on a feasibility study), Malta has not collected information on this variable as yet.

Repayments/receipts for tax adjustments

Since Malta has collected a combination of gross and net values for income components, the tax adjustments are included under the variable on tax on income and social contributions.

Value of goods for own consumption

Since data on goods for own consumption will only be mandatory as from 2007, Malta has not collected information on this variable as yet.

The source or procedure used for the collection of income variables

The following is a distribution of the sample cases (persons aged 16 and over) according to the data collection methods:

Type of interview	Number	%
Face to face interview - PAPI	0	0.0
Face to face interview - CAPI	5,553	66.9
Proxy interview	2,685	32.3
Missing	62	0.8
Total	8,300	100.0

All information was collected from interviews. However, this year the NSO obtained the SABS database (System of Social Assistance and Benefits) from the Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity (MFSS), covering the same reference period as EU-SILC. This database contains details of all persons receiving some form of social benefit at micro-level. Benefits and social assistant were provided broken down by individual benefit as defined by the MFSS and these were then merged by the NSO according to Eurostat definitions.

An exercise was carried out to check the feasibility of using the SABS database as an alternative to the data collected through interviews. This was possible by using the ID number of each respondent to link the SABS database to data collected from EU-SILC. It was concluded that SABS data is more reliable due to the fact that a certain amount of bias exists in data collected from respondents; for example under-reporting due to the fact the respondents forget to include small amounts received through benefits. In future EU-SILC surveys the SABS database will be used as the source for data on benefits in favour of data collected through interviews.

Social benefits that will be obtained from the SABS database are:

- PY090G – unemployment benefits
- PY100G – old-age benefits
- PY110G – survivor’s benefits
- PY120G – sickness benefits
- PY130G – disability benefits
- HY050G – family / children related allowances
- HY060G – social exclusion not elsewhere classified

PY140G, education related-allowances, is the only variable not available in the SABS database, so this will continue to be collected from interviews.

The form in which income variables at component level have been obtained

Information on income was collected through a number of sub-questions for each income component as follows:

1. Number of payments during the 12 months
2. Gross income at each payment
3. Net income at each payment
4. Tax paid per payment received
5. National Insurance paid per payment received

Preceding these sub-divisions was a note specifying that the income reference period was 2005, and a description of the specific income component being treated in each question. A response was expected only for one of sub-divisions 2 (gross income at each payment) and 3 (net income at each payment). Preference for the collection of information on gross income (rather than net) was expressed during briefing sessions for interviewers and was also implied through the choice of ordering of the sub-questions mentioned above.

The method used for obtaining income target variables in the required form

As stated previously, it was stressed during briefing sessions that collection of gross rather than net income was preferred. However, in some cases only the net income was available from the household. In order to convert these values, a table was obtained from the Department of Inland Revenue showing gross income values corresponding to net income values. In this way the relevant gross value for income could be obtained.

4. Coherence

Comparison of income target variables and number of persons who receive income from each ‘income component’, with external sources

The variables collected from EU-SILC were compared to a number of other data for benchmarking purposes. This data was mainly collected by the NSO itself, and

included sources such as National Accounts, Labour Force Survey and Government Finance data.

Other comments

In this year's EU-SILC, there were three major methodological changes from the 2004 EU-SILC data collection. These were:

1. When weighting, it was possible to use population data obtained from the 2005 census, as opposed to the updated 1995 census which was used previously.
2. Calibration techniques were applied which made inference of the sample over the 2005 population possible.
3. The use of the SABS database as described above means that social benefits are no longer subject to under-coverage.

These three changes may be the cause of a number of noticeable differences in the indicators derived from EU-SILC 2005. The NSO is willing to hold bilateral discussions with Eurostat on this matter should any queries arise.