

**MEDIA INTER-ACT**  
**Situation Analysis of Media Practices**  
**and Integration**  
**of Third-Country Nationals**

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Report commissioned by SOS Malta  
Prepared and compiled by APS Consult Ltd

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## **1. Introduction**

### ***1.1. Description of the Media InterAct Project***

The Media InterAct Project is spearheaded by SOS Malta and has been undertaken to contribute in bringing down barriers which hinder communication and integration between Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) and the Maltese Community. Public Broadcasting Services Ltd and the Institute of Maltese Journalists are project partners in Media InterAct and the project is co-financed by the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals. European Commission - Glossary of Justice and Home Affairs defines a TCN as 'any person who is not a national of an EU Member State'.

The Project aims to drive a change in the perception of Maltese citizens vis-à-vis TCNs through the sharing of knowledge of each other's traditions and operational orders. This is expected to instill deeper mutual understanding amongst Maltese and other country nationals residing in Malta, and thus shall contribute towards reaching the objectives of the government's integration efforts.

The involvement of relevant stakeholders in the partner network aims to engage organisations and media representatives who are in a position to influence public opinion and attain wider awareness to the aims of the Project.

### ***1.2. Third-Country Nationals – Challenges to Integration***

The integration of TCNs in Malta is increasingly becoming a key issue effecting Maltese society today as a result of the significant growth in the number of TCNs living in Malta.

The Census of Population and Housing 2005 indicated a total of 5090 TCNs residing in Malta (equivalent to 1.26 % of the population in 2005). Eurostat statistics (Statistics in Focus: 34/2011; 7 July 2011) indicated that there were 11,300 citizens of non-EU countries living in Malta in 2010, forming 2.7% of the total population. This means that the TCN population in Malta more than doubled over a period of six years.

This rapid growth of TCNs living in Malta has brought with it additional challenges to the perception of TCNs by the Maltese people. The Standard Eurobarometer Public

Opinion survey (Wave 71 / Spring 2009) revealed that 49% of Maltese respondents ranked immigration as the first major issue that Malta is facing.

This attitude also mirrors results from key findings on resistance to a multi-cultural society whereby in Malta only 21.8% were supportive of multi-culturalism (Majorities' Attitudes towards Minorities: Key Findings from the Eurobarometer and the European Social Survey; March 2005). It is also pertinent to point out that resistance to immigrants was seen to be a common factor among people living in Mediterranean countries, along with general avoidance of social interaction with minority groups and repatriation policies for legal migrants (Majority populations' attitudes towards migrants and minorities: Report for the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia Ref. no. 2003/04/01). According to the Special Eurobarometer Report 317, in 2009 over three quarters of Maltese (precisely 77%) were of the opinion that ethnic discrimination is widespread. Approximately 66% believed that ethnic discrimination was more widespread than five years earlier. This Report also shows that 41% of Maltese (EU: 55%) feel that the media caters adequately for diversity in terms of ethnicity while 44% (EU: 52%) are of the opinion that the media reflects different religions or beliefs.

This feeling of discrimination is echoed by TCNs entering Malta. An EU-MIDIS research report published by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights Agency in 2009 revealed that two out of every three Muslims living in Malta felt discriminated against. 43% of African Muslims interviewed indicated they had experienced discrimination when looking for work.

### ***1.3. Integration of Third-Country Nationals at EU Level***

Current EU Policies leave the responsibility of integration initiatives to local level actors at ground level, which might show a lack of understanding, or will, on the part of EU authorities to successfully integrate TCNs into the societies they live in. It is important to promote initiatives that can be shared with other member states that could feed into a common European approach in the long term. While this project focuses on the domestic aspect of local media representation of TCNs in Malta, it is however relevant within the whole EU block as Malta is one of the EU 27 member states.

While immigration falls within the remits of the legal and institutional provisions of Title IV of the EC Treaty, the extent to which the Community has an officially recognised competence to legislate on the integration of TCNs has been subject to much

contestation between the European Commission and its member states. The struggle between nationalism and 'Europeanisation' has been a major factor in the emergence of a dual normative framing of integration at the EU level, consisting of EC immigration law on the one hand and the Framework for the Integration of TCNs in the EU (henceforward the EU Framework on Integration) on the other. The latter has developed since 2002 through the traditional Community method of cooperation. The EU Framework on Integration makes use of soft-policy (non-legally binding or enforceable) instruments and networks, with the Commission playing a coordinating role in the exchange of national practices and experiences on the integration of TCNs among member states' representatives.

The expected impact of the Project in the medium and long term will be an increased intercultural awareness and understanding among the Maltese general public about integration processes and experiences. The Project shall contribute towards reduced xenophobia and stereotypical perceptions and increase awareness of the differentiated needs of TCNs.

The dynamics that characterise the development of an EU immigration policy have favoured the emergence of a new understanding of the integration of TCNs. This new conceptualisation of integration and the functionality given to it is fundamentally transforming assumptions in this field, which have traditionally viewed integration policies for TCNs as something positive, given their role in promoting social inclusion, non-discrimination and access to rights. What we see now, however, is a certain official use of integration that is challenging these mainstream considerations and moving towards policies purporting goals and effects of a rather unexpected nature. In this context, integration has become a condition in the form of a test, programme or contract within immigration law in order for TCNs to become socially included.

#### ***1.4. Rationale of the Media InterAct Project***

Media InterAct aims to use the influence of the work of media representatives, such as journalists, to increase people's awareness of other cultures by providing the necessary knowledge and image to the Maltese general public. Simultaneously, the Maltese general public shall become aware of the TCNs' differing cultural influences affecting their lifestyle. Moreover, the timing of the project reflects the persistent calls and criticism from various stakeholders about the negative portrayal of TCNs in local media.

Clear integration policies shall create the right climate for TCNs to actively participate in Maltese society contributing towards portraying a constructive image to project in the media.

The Project supports dialogue and intercultural encounters with other people from different backgrounds and cultures. This is an opportunity for the Maltese general public and media representatives to dedicate time to learn about the specific cultural influences concerning TCNs. In this regard, the Project contributes towards preventing and combating prejudice, racism and all attitudes leading to exclusion by helping towards the elimination of pre-conceptions and myths about TCNs through the dissemination of knowledge and direct life experiences. In many sectors there is the widespread tendency to generalise and fail to make distinctions between myth and reality. As far as TCNs' integration efforts in Malta are concerned, people tend to generalise with discernment. The Project was thus intended to shed light on particular elements and circumstances that may constitute grounds for exclusion, prejudice and racism.

The Project aimed to develop sensitivity and awareness to achieve a sense of tolerance and understanding of diversity by bringing people from an array of diverse professional and cultural backgrounds whilst challenging intolerance. Most significant was the identification of the role of the media representative to facilitate awareness generation of TCN-related issues and the use of the influence of the media for societal development. The 'dissemination of information' approach and the sharing of best practices aim to increase tolerance and mutual understanding whilst respecting identity and diversity.

The involvement of media representatives was intended to generate an extended 'spillover' effect on other sectors of Maltese society thus projecting the reach and impact of the Project beyond the immediate targeted audience. Media representatives shall be in a better position to better portray TCNs in Malta through the media by encouraging the increased exposure of the general public to the positive attributes, cultural backgrounds and experiences of TCNs in order to facilitate integration and tackle the current polarisation element in Maltese society.

### ***1.5. Scope and Objectives of the Research Surveys***

The research surveys were conceptualised to elicit primary information from select subjects of the two populations under study. The main emphasis of the research was to establish perceptions on integration and to establish level of involvement of both TCNs and local media organisations in promoting awareness on various aspects relating to TCNs and in adopting TCN-friendly measures.

In this regard, the evaluation exercise sought to understand and extract the qualitative and intangible aspects relating to media exposure of TCNs at the local level.

### ***1.6. Outline of the Research Report***

This Report commences with the rationale a brief description of the Media InterAct Project and challenges of integration of TCNs within the EU block, including Malta. Reference is made to EU statistics on TCNs and immigration policy.

Section 2 describes the methodology. Section 3 presents the findings from the survey of local media organisations and local media representatives. Section 4 presents the findings from the survey of the TCNs interviewed. Section 5 gives concluding remarks about the research and wraps up the evaluation exercise.

## **2. Methodology**

In fulfilling the research surveys, APS Consult Ltd conducted a series of interviews with TCNs and launched an online questionnaire for local media organisations and media representatives. In the first instance, APS Consult attempted to establish contact with Third-Country Nationals, journalists and representatives of local media organisations through established official sources. This method did not yield the expected and desired results and APS Consult resorted to informal networks and personal contacts in collaboration with SOS Malta to identify Third-Country Nationals, journalists and media representatives to conduct the necessary surveys.

### **2.1. Survey: Third-Country Nationals**

APS Consult contacted embassies in Malta, regional embassies and consulates representing persons coming from countries outside the EU block and were requested to promote the survey among their respective communities (vide Annex V). Copy of the electronic survey and weblink to the electronic survey was attached. APS Consult identified minority communities in Malta, namely the Filipino Community and the Serbian Community and these were also informed about the survey and were requested to promote it amongst their respective communities. Other communities consisting of Third-Country Nationals living in Malta could not be identified.

It is pertinent to note that communication with these official bodies did not yield any result whatsoever. Consequently the Evaluators resorted to personal networks in order to establish contacts with Third-Country Nationals who accepted to participate in the survey. In turn, these persons also introduced APS Consult to other Third-Country Nationals within their circle of friends. The Evaluators also sought to establish more contacts with Third-Country Nationals through communication with owners and/or operators of a number of catering establishments and other retail outlets, with mixed results. Notwithstanding the presentation of the original letter of introduction by SOS Malta, it was noted that there was a strong element of mistrust both from owners themselves and from TCN workers. However, while a certain element of success was recorded, the absence of any assistance from official sources was a determinant factor in not being able to contact the 100 Third-Country Nationals that was initially intended. In the end, a total of 53 Third-Country Nationals participated in this survey.



## **2.2. Survey: Journalists and Media Representatives**

APS Consult contacted local media organisations as recognised by the Department of Information as at November 2011. In total, 42 organisations and/or individuals were contacted. These were composed of: 13 Print Media, 10 Radio Stations, 9 Television Stations and Electronic News Sites, and 10 Stringers. The Institute of Maltese Journalists, a partner to the Project, was also contacted and were requested to promote the survey among its members and affiliates (vide Annex VI).

The initial communication was followed up by reminders and other media-related organisations were also identified and duly contacted. It is again pertinent to note that the response rate from official sources was very poor. Consequently a meeting was held with the Chairman of Public Broadcasting Services Ltd, as one of the Project partners and was requested to distribute the questionnaire to journalists and local media organisations within PBS structures. While the Evaluation Team is confident that the necessary efforts were made at PBS to distribute this questionnaire among its representatives and journalists, regrettably this did not materialise into any increase in the response count of the survey.

The Evaluators, in collaboration with SOS Malta, resorted again to informal networks and directly contacted a number of journalists. Following a series of reminders, the response count of thirteen was obtained. It is to be noted that during the period of research, there were unfolding events of a political nature which might have detracted the attention of journalists and the local media in general away from this survey. Notwithstanding these particular events, the Evaluators are of the opinion that the low response count indicates that matters related to Third-Country Nationals are not particularly high on the agenda of most media representatives and local media organisations.

## **2.3. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

APS Consult made it amply clear a priori to all Third-Country Nationals, media representatives and local media organisations that were contacted that all data and information collected through the respective surveys shall be treated in the strictest confidence and that the anonymity of the respondents shall be safeguarded. The

letters of introduction to Third-Country Nationals and to local media representatives included in a clear and explicit manner APS Consult's pledge to anonymity and strict confidentiality of all feedback received. In the case of face-to-face interviews with Third-Country Nationals, this was also verbally stated prior to the commencement of the interview. At no stage was there any attempt to record the name or any other means of identification of any of the respondents both during the face-to-face interviews and also in the electronic, online surveys.

#### **2.4. Focus of Assessment**

The assessment itself focused on key issues that were deemed pertinent to elicit an objective result from the analysis of the results. Both surveys sought to establish the current situation with regards to the participation of TCNs in the local media and the extent of efforts done by both TCNs and local media representatives/organisations to generate awareness through participation in various media channels. In this regard, the surveys sought to establish whether the main stakeholders (TCNs and local media representatives/organisations) are achieving the maximum potential in generating awareness and facilitating the integration of TCNs within Maltese society.

### **3. Findings from survey to local media organisations**

#### **3.1. Overview**

The survey consisted of an online questionnaire that was distributed to all local media organisations. The official contact information of these organisations was obtained from the website of the government's Department of Information ([www.doi.gov.mt](http://www.doi.gov.mt)). Furthermore, the Institute of Maltese Journalists was also invited to participate in this survey and to request participation by its members.

##### **3.1.1. Nature of Respondents**

The respondents consisted of news editors, presenters/broadcasters and also the Chairman of a local journalist-related organisation. The majority of the respondents stated that they are employed with local media organisations (chart 2). These hailed from various media organisations; namely, radio, print media and online media. The age bracket of respondents ranged from 26 to 55 years (Chart 1). The number of female respondents was greater than males (Chart 3). Two respondents opted not to state their gender. A total of 13 respondents participated in this survey.

##### **3.1.2. Coverage of TCNs in local media**

61.5% of respondents stated that there is inadequate coverage of TCNs and TCN-related topics in the local media. Nearly 31% stated that there is fairly adequate coverage while slightly less than 8% were of the opinion that such coverage is very adequate.

Respondents were then asked to assess coverage of a set of characteristics relating to TCNs; namely culture and traditions, cuisine, religious beliefs, country-related information and other / miscellaneous characteristics. Replies show that there is overall inadequate coverage on the mentioned characteristics. The theme of culture and traditions was perceived to be the least topic covered by the media, with 92% replying as having inadequate or non-existent coverage. Religious belief was also perceived to be not well portrayed by the media, with 69% stating inadequate or non-existent coverage. The coverage of country-related information seemed to be the most

favourable theme covered by the local media, with 46% stating adequate and even extensive coverage (Chart 4).

Respondents also commented on certain characteristics of TCNs that at times are presented in a manner that does not fully showcase the authentic culture or fabric of their society. One such theme is culture, where one respondent stated that at times, culture is presented as "something exotic at best, and weird most often". On the theme of religion, one respondent stated that religion is at times presented to show extremism, and this is usually tied to Islam. On the other side, other religions almost get no mention at all in the local media. One respondent also mentioned that the country of origin is used as an adjective, often in a derogatory manner, as a stereotype for a particular culture. The respondent cited an example "He is a Paki...he believes in strange gods..." Other characteristics, such as dress culture, is also at times portrayed as an oddity that distinguishes the person wearing it from the norm, rather than a characteristic of a different culture or tradition.

Respondents also cited other characteristics that are inadequately covered by the local media, such as living conditions of TCNs, business activities, access to the labour market, exploitation of TCNs in the labour market and racism in general.

Notwithstanding the overall negative perception of how the various characteristics are portrayed by the local media, 53.8% of respondents were then of the opinion that the local media reflects the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of TCNs residing in Malta. However, 46.2% stated that the local media is not representative at all. None stated that there is faithful media representation of these elements (Chart 5).

### **3.1.3. How are TCNs portrayed in the local media?**

Respondents were asked to evaluate how TCNs are portrayed in the local media. 15.4% stated that TCNs are portrayed positively. 46.2% posted a neutral portrayal while 38.5% were of the opinion that TCNs are shown in a negative light (Chart 6).

### **3.1.4. Access to local media organisations**

It was seen that 77% of media representatives perceived it an easy to neutral option for TCNs to approach the local media. No respondent claimed that it is impossible to do so while 23.1% stated that TCNs do find some level of difficulty in approaching the local media (Chart 7). However, 53.8% of respondents then stated that TCNs find it difficult to participate in local media programmes. Only 15.4% expressed their opinion that it is easy for TCNs to participate in such programmes. However, none stated that this is an impossible option (Chart 8).

### **3.1.5. Participation of media representatives in TCN-related issues**

When respondents were asked whether they had ever been invited by local media organisations to participate in a tv/radio programme or write an article about or alongside a Third-Country National residing in Malta, 38.5% responded that they had occasional opportunities. The majority (61.6%) however replied either rarely or none at all (Chart 9). Further elaboration revealed these particular comments from respondents:

- "Participation is crucial to advance the cause of integration";
- "I had to ask about the programme myself. Unless a particular ethnic group has people backing it, there is no way they will ever get media exposure";
- "The only invitation I have had in the past years was through a local NGO, although it was on a different topic. I wish that more organisations / TCNs embark on a collective project targeting this specific mission".

The second comment merits further investigation as it reveals particular traits. In the first instance, a programme involving TCNs seems to make headway and be published in the local media through personal initiative rather than coming from a corporate level. Secondly, the author of this comment seems to imply that unless TCNs have local people backing and moving their cause forward, they will be more prone to be 'left out' of media programmes.

The third comment reveals that media persons also look outside their sphere for initiatives concerning TCNs to come from other organisations, apart from the media

itself. The author also puts some onus on TCNs themselves to participate in programmes to address exposure of TCNs in the local media.

Respondents were also asked about their participation on their own initiative in media channels on matters relating to TCNs. 7.7% stated that this is a frequent instance while 38.5% said that they do so occasionally. 53.9% however stated that this is either a rare occasion or none at all.

Furthermore, the relative majority of respondents (46.2%) said that it was a rare event that they were approached by TCNs to request participation in the local media while 23.1% stated that this is an occasional occurrence for them. None said that this is a frequent occasion. One respondent continued to elaborate that he/she has a personal, excellent relationship with a TCN from Libya however there are no other TCNs with whom he/she has a working relationship with. Another respondent said that he/she accepted offers from TCNs in order to assist them in getting more coverage. A third respondent said that he accepted a request from a TCN to include him/her within a media programme, but the TCN did not turn up again after a few weeks. Another respondent elaborated that he/she was approached in relation to events connected with the recent happenings in Libya, where a number of Libyans had established contact with the local press at various instances.

### **3.1.6. Current policies on TCN matters within local media organisations**

Respondents were asked to evaluate and comment on the extent of the effect of current policies on TCNs' participation in the local media.

Respondents were asked to evaluate and comment on the extent of the policies that may affect TCNs' participation in the local media. The questions focused on:

1. The extent of current policies on TCNs' participation in the local media;
2. How easy or difficult is it for local media organisations to adopt new policies in relation to diversity, migrant issues and minority groups;
3. To what extent government policies and frameworks on broadcasting matters facilitate involvement and participation of Third-Country Nationals in the local media
4. How easy or difficult is it for local media organisations to influence government policies / frameworks on broadcasting matters relating to diversity, migrant

issues and minority groups residing in Malta

46.2% stated that current policies do facilitate TCNs' participation in the local media. Only 7.7% stated that this is not true at all while 23.1% stated that prevailing policies do not facilitate such participation. Some respondents elaborated further on their replies. One respondent stated that their organisation operates an editorial policy that encourages positive coverage of asylum and migration matters. Another said that there are no specific policies that either hinder or encourage participation. A third respondent said that it cannot be stated that local media organisations deliberately exclude TCNs, but rather that extent of coverage of TCNs depends on what is on the news agenda and also is dependent on what media owners/individual producers decide to feature in their media/programmes.

On a rather terse note, one respondent stated that in a 25-minute news bulletin, there are more items of more news value to cover while another respondent stated that some (media organisations and/or media representatives) have an agenda in favour of "illegal" (more correctly referred to as irregular) immigration. The latter comment points to the extent of stereotyping or to misconception on the true nature of TCNs who reside legally in Malta.

It was also established that it is relatively easy for local media organisations to implement new policies relating to TCN matters, with a 38.5% response. However 30.8% opted not to answer this question. Further comments revealed that such media policies need to be pushed / enforced by the Broadcasting Authority in order to attain better results in this aspect. Another respondent put the onus on the media organisations themselves and stated that local media organisations are not interested in extending their core reporting duties, although the respondent continued to elaborate that this can be done fairly easily. Another commented that implementation of new policies is dependent on the type of media, where independent media and producers have an easier process, while in the case of media governed by political beliefs this would depend on the respective news agendas.

Respondents also commented that government policies can facilitate involvement and participation of TCNs in the local media but these policies need to be endorsed by the leading media companies. It was again commented that there are no government policies that hinder such involvement. Another commentator said that official state press conferences may constitute government framework in this regard.

Another respondent commented that as far as the state television broadcaster is concerned, there is an editorial board that ensures TCN-related issues are covered in certain programmes. It was again established in this question that there are misconceptions about TCNs, as one commented on aspects of citizenship, refugee and migration status of these foreign nationals.

The question relating to the extent of influence of local media organisations on government policies with regards to broadcasting matters concerning TCN issues elicited diverse feedback. One respondent stated that he/she disagreed with this question being asked in the first place and continued to state that issues related to broadcasting should be left with the Broadcasting Authority to deal with as this is the only statutory body established in Section 118 of the Constitution of Malta that deals with policy. Essentially this statement may be construed to mean that local media organisations should not be influencers of such policies. Another respondent said that the extent of influence depends on whom one knows, such that lobbying can be done. A third respondent stated that if more issues are raised by the media this can lead to more awareness and subsequent possible action by government. However, another respondent stated that there should not even be the need for influence. This could be interpreted in two ways; either that government should actively implement TCN-friendly policies or else that local media organisations themselves should be in a position to adopt such policies voluntarily and on their own steam. One respondent had an overall muted feeling on these matters and said that migrants are not voters; thereby implying that any attempts at influencing such policy would be relatively futile.

### **3.1.7. Local media organisations and awareness about TCNs**

It was seen that 69.2% agreed that the local media can play an active role in raising awareness about TCNs residing in Malta.. Similarly, 76.9% agreed that the local media can play an active role in facilitating the integration of TCNs in Maltese society.

Overall, there were a number of positive comments and suggestions about the role of the media in this scenario, quoted verbatim:

- "I strongly believe that media can play a better role in this field";
- "We are the direct link to our readers/audience, reaching thousands of people daily (with our website) - and other thousands on Sunday with our print edition";



- "We can focus more on success stories, the cultural differences, different gastronomy, the beauty of diversity in general";
- "What I see is a missing link between the third-country nationals and the newsrooms per se";
- "Inviting guests not as foreigners, but as people, to be on panels and programmes";
- "As agenda setters, this is certainly an option. There are plenty of human interest stories to be found, apart from reflecting the real life situations of these people in our country";

One respondent stated that the media is reflecting the general passive attitude in the country. According to this respondent, TCNs are only mentioned when something goes wrong, and not many seem to care when there is a positive story to report. This is rather like a Catch-22 situation. Another respondent stated that the media can play a big role, but he/she continued to state that this must be done in a fair manner. The same respondent stated that it is imperative to state that there are people with very sad stories; likewise it is also imperative to state the criminal element behind irregular immigration where more than two thirds of the asylum seekers in Malta are just economic migrants, stealing rights from other refugees, stealing welfare and jobs, where these factors do not get much coverage in the media. Another respondent mentioned that there should be correct and ethical coverage of asylum policy, detention conditions, living conditions of TCNs and ongoing coverage of discrimination towards TCNs.

It is again important to bring to note the misconceptions about Third-Country Nationals and other type of migrants, which has been revealed in this questionnaire.

### **3.1.8. Local media organisations and integration of TCNs**

On the media's role in facilitating TCNs' integration into Maltese society, respondents said that this goes hand in hand with raising the necessary awareness. One respondent questioned the extent of how receptive Maltese society is to such stories. He/she stated that there is a lot of indifference towards TCNs and that they are generally 'tolerated'

as long as they keep a low profile, while TCNs are usually in the news for the wrong reasons. When this happens, the respondent stated, racist attitudes are prevalent.

Another respondent placed the responsibility of integration on to the TCNs themselves. It was stated that those who wish to integrate into Maltese society must adapt themselves to the community, and not the other way round. In this comment, misconceptions about TCNs were seen to be prevalent again, as the respondent focused on what he terms 'third-world country' nationals who come to Malta as economic migrants.

On media participation on TCN-related matters, all the respondents stated that they did participate on their own initiative on local radio / tv programmes / print / online media about related matters, although 33% stated that it was on rare occasions. However, this question elicited a common misconception about the status of TCNs. In fact two respondents said that they participated in various radio and TV programmes dealing with asylum policy and irregular immigration to Malta, and with Church-related work concerning refugees.

### **3.1.9. Mainstreaming of TCNs**

Recommendations and suggestions for the mainstreaming of TCNs in the local media elicited responses relating to the following of good practices in other countries and the implementation of new policies. One respondent stated that people should be treated as individuals and not singled out as coming from one particular country or another. This was corroborated by another comment to stop referring to people by nationality, thus avoiding unnecessary stereotyping and possible discrimination. Another respondent linked the need to make necessary adjustments to facilitate this mainstreaming with the need to include TCNs as worthwhile contributors to the cause while also drawing experience from happenings in other EU multicultural societies. A comment was also posted as to instilling an enabling recruitment process that facilitates the participation of TCNs in the work force.

46.2% stated that there would be a positive effect on Malta, its residents and visitors if TCNs are mainstreamed in the local media. 30.8% registered a neutral response while 7.7% stated that it would bring a negative effect.

One respondent commented that while this would be positive for TCNs, his/her concern was that there would be a negative reaction from a large section of society. The reason given was that society would feel that issues relating to TCNs would be forced onto Maltese society, and thus, such a move would need to be handled carefully with tact and sensitivity. Another commented that it would have mixed reactions by increasing racism in some sectors while decreasing it in other areas. Another comment dealt with the issue of the proper portrayal of the cultures of TCNs. One respondent stated that as a society, we should facilitate more integration while TCNs should break down the language barriers and learn Maltese. The same respondent also stated that TCNs should be encouraged to learn Maltese as this would go a long way in mainstreaming new nationalities in Maltese society.

### **3.1.10. Miscellaneous comments by media representatives**

Respondents registered a number of suggestions to ameliorate the situation:

- The setting up of a think tank media group on the subject matter to establish a set of recommendations to be presented to the Broadcasting Authority;
- Roping in of the Institute of Maltese Journalists to disseminate information and proposed new legislation;
- Better rendition of TCN-related TV programmes in terms of better broadcasting quality;
- Assure more media exposure to foreigners residing in Malta, especially non-EU nationals;
- Making more effort to bring TCNs into the local media at all levels, as this would increase audiences and will also assure that TCNs are given a voice.

### **3.1.11. Concluding Remarks**

The most notable observation by the Evaluation Team concerns the low response rate, despite various efforts to encourage media representatives/organisations to publicise and complete this survey. Notwithstanding this negative aspect, the survey yielded valuable insight into the situation of TCNs and the local media. The overall opinion is that there is not enough coverage of TCN-related themes. It was also established that there is a need to have more research-based reportage. Media representatives felt that TCNs have fairly easy access to the local media, although there is room for improvement. Respondents however stated that they were not particularly

participative in media and publications concerning TCNs and TCN-related themes. Respondents also stated that current policies generally facilitate the participation of TCNs in local the media, although this can be improved.

It has been noted that at times there was an element of misconceptions about the nature of TCNs and other type of migrants. However this aspect was not deemed to have negatively influenced the outcome of the survey in any way.

The suggestions put forward by respondents were deemed to be positive, introspective and out-reaching. Respondents pointed to a number of roles that local media organisations may adopt to ameliorate the situation of media exposure of TCNs. This augurs well for future initiatives in mainstreaming activities and more media exposure for TCNs in Malta.

## **4. Findings from survey to Third-Country Nationals**

### **4.1. Overview**

The survey consisted of face-to-face interviews with Third-Country Nationals. Embassies, consulates and representatives of various communities of TCNs in Malta were informed about this survey and were requested to publicise the survey within their community. Through this communication, TCNs were invited to contact the interviewers to conduct a survey by telephone. No feedback whatsoever was received in this regard and thus a survey by telephone could not be conducted. Furthermore, this aspect had a direct impact on the extent of the population available for the survey. The pool of respondents was gathered through personal contacts and word of mouth referrals. The number of questions was kept brief to assure participation.

#### **4.1.1. Nature of Respondents**

53 respondents accepted to participate in the survey. The majority of respondents (75%) were up to 45 years of age, with 38% in the 26-35 age-bracket (Chart 17). It is pertinent to note that there are a number of 2<sup>nd</sup> generation families in Malta within the well-established foreign communities. These persons are considered Maltese citizens and thus did not fall into the definition of TCNs. Furthermore, asylum seekers, refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection do not fall within the scope of the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals within which the Media InterAct Project is being implemented and thus did not fall within the scope of this survey.

The respondents came from different strata, with the largest three groups being skilled workers (38%), students (21%) and workers with professional status (19%) (Chart 18). 79% of respondents were male and 21% were female (Chart 19). 43% stated that they were single, 48% were married (Chart 20). The pool of respondents constituted 12 different nationalities, where the largest cohort consisted of Libyan nationals (Chart 21).

#### **4.1.2. Portrayal of TCNs in the local media**

Respondents were asked to describe how the local media depicts them in its various channels. 49% of respondents stated that the local media only portrays them in the

news. 21% stated that TCNs get the attention of the media through reportage of bad news when TCNs are involved in an accident or crime-related activity. Another 15% stated that reportage on TCNs is actually dependant on the nature of events. 17% stated that there is limited or actually no coverage on TCNs by the local media. 6% stated that the local media does not report on TCNs in an equal or fair manner.

When asked about the accuracy of reporting, 36% replied that reportage consists of news items only. Another 32% stated that reportage is not always factual. Only 15% were of the opinion that reportage portrays a factual interpretation of events.

13% said that they are unable to provide an informed opinion and cited two main issues; the language barrier, especially as predominantly, news or other programmes are in the Maltese language only; and that the local media focuses more on local events and news from other EU countries. Respondents also mentioned that instances of reportage concerning TCNs is sparse, generic and consists of broadcasting of 2nd hand reports by foreign news agencies.

TCNs were asked about their participation in local media programmes, print or other forms of media channels. In general, participation by TCNs in the local media has been seen to be very poor. Only 18% stated that they were requested by a local media organisation for participation, and in all cases participation has been in the form of short interview or voxpop. A meagre 5% participated in an active manner in the local media. The respondents stated that their input was mainly on cross-cultural themes and on successful inter-cultural marriages.

#### **4.1.3. Qualitative Comments by TCNs**

Respondents were invited to comment about issues relating to TCNs in Malta and to provide suggestions on measures that can facilitate the mainstreaming of TCNs in the local media.

In general, TCNs put the responsibility of this mainstreaming of TCNs on the local media. Respondents commented on the need for the local media to investigate the methodology of how the media in other countries covers events concerning TCNs and foreigners in general. In this regard, it was suggested that local media should look to and adopt good practices from other countries.

Respondents commented on the extent of exposure regarding TCNs. There should be more reportage involving TCNs in the news, and even exposure to foreign news in local media channels. Furthermore, respondents commented on the need for more news and reportage on the daily normal life conducted by TCNs in Malta, rather than just the reporting of events, mainly consisting of country-specific national festivities or other particular events related to TCNs. Respondents suggested that the local media should adopt a policy of transmitting news in different languages in order to provide TCNs with further accessibility to news items.

On reportage itself, TCNs commented that where accidents or law/justice-related matters involve a TCN or other foreigner, the media should refrain from highlighting a person's nationality. This was seen to be more important when TCNs are allegedly involved in crime-related events. On the aspect of reportage, TCNs feel that the local media should conduct more thorough research in order to assure more factual reporting and to establish the real situation involving TCNs.

A number of respondents commented that more information should be provided by the local media to new foreigners in Malta. Furthermore, there should also be more programmes portraying various themes on different countries. These could involve documentaries on culture, history, religions and the lifestyles of different communities. It was also suggested that there should be more programmes broadcast in the English language and also in other languages.

In general, respondents stated that Malta in general should be more tolerant of people from other countries and be more ready to accept people from other countries. With regard to the local media, TCNs commented on the need of having the local media establish communication with their communities and to discuss issues that have an impact on these persons and foreigners in general.

Very few respondents placed some responsibility on the TCNs themselves with regards to participation in the local media. Nonetheless, comments were made on the need for TCNs to pro-actively approach the local media and involve themselves by requesting participation in programmes. One respondent stated that some TCNs could participate in the production of publications to other locally-residing foreigners.

In general, the majority of comments focused on three main aspects; local media features with limited content related to TCNs, the language barrier, given that Maltese and English are the only languages used in broadcast and print media, and that reportage is predominant in cases of sensational news or 'cronaca' related to allegations of objectionable behaviour or other bad news (Chart 22). In fact, 36% of respondents also indicated that reportage mainly covers news items only while another 32% stated that reportage is not always factual. Only 13% stated that reportage is based on facts (Charts 23 and 24).

It was also established that TCNs would like to see the local media providing more media content related to matters concerning them (57%). Surprisingly, only 6% gave priority to the recommendation that media content should be available in other foreign languages. This may suggest that on the whole, the language barrier is not a major issue in Malta among TCNs (Chart 25).

#### **4.1.4. Concluding Remarks**

As a preliminary comment, it is important to state that the Evaluation Team sought the collaboration and endorsement of official sources, embassies, agencies and communities of foreign nationals to tap into the pool of TCNs residing in Malta. Regrettably, there was no feedback from official contacts. Notwithstanding this, a total of 53 respondents with 12 different nationalities were identified and accepted to participate in this survey.

TCNs feel that the main source of exposure to the media is through the broadcasting/publishing of news, which at times reflect unhappy events. More worrying is that in general, TCNs felt that reportage is not always based on facts, although supporting reasons provided were relatively vague and generic.

Participation of TCNs in the local media was determined to be on the low side, where the extent of invitation to participate was seen to be low. In this regard, only 5% stated that they participated in an active manner in the local media.

Suggestions by TCNs to improve the situation of TCN representation in the local media revolved around the need for more reportage on different themes and with a more research-based approach. It is also significant to note that respondents felt that the



local media should take the initiative to involve them in the different media channels. This finding leaves scope for further investigation on what is holding TCNs back from having a more active and participative role in the local media.

## 5. Conclusions

Media InterAct may be considered to be a pilot project looking at intercultural dialogue and integration into Maltese society. This should serve as an example of good practice. The overall goal of best practices is to develop and implement a method to identify and communicate excellent programmatic approaches which can be replicated elsewhere including at the European level.

The Media InterAct Project could serve as a catalyst for more integration initiatives to be undertaken within the media sector in Malta. It was noted that there was a general lack of effort or willingness from local media organisations to participate in this survey. However, it should also be noted that unfolding political events in Malta throughout the period of evaluation may have detracted local media in general from this survey. The survey to local media organisations elicited encouraging perceptions overall, however it is amply clear that more effort needs to be done at local media level to cater for issues and information relating to TCNs. The survey also showed that misconceptions about TCNs and irregular immigration are concerns that need to be addressed in order to assure more objective reportage on TCNs. It was also noted that institutions representing TCNs did not actively participate and involve themselves in the survey to TCNs. While data protection matters and other issues could be a determining factor, this lack of involvement was seen to have a bearing on the extent of TCN population that could be effectively reached. The questionnaire to TCNs elicited comments on the need for local media organisations to be more actively involved in the broadcast of news items and other programmes of cultural nature. Only few respondents commented on the need for TCNs themselves to be more pro-active in local media channels.

The project adds value at a European level by presenting data, research, lessons learnt from this pilot project. Although primarily focused on the Maltese scenario, these will provide a valuable case-study that can feed into European debate and inform policymakers and stakeholders on integration and diversity issues. The research shall be an excellent launching pad for policy change and sound recommendations.

The project shall be instrumental to develop and put forward recommendations based on the findings and experiences as consequence of the organised activities and events. Currently the available data concerning TCNs in Malta is purely quantitative

and does not analyze the causes and effects of the decisions and lifestyles adopted by the TCN whilst staying in Malta. The aim of the research is provide insight on relationship of local media and TCNs to define a clearer picture of the current situation. In this regard, the research aims to go beyond the presentation of a collection of hard statistical data in order to gather knowledge and seek options for improvement in TCN-local media relationship.

The findings from the two surveys indicate that there is room for improvement. More importantly the results show that local media organisations acknowledge that more initiatives are required and there seems to be goodwill from local media to support them. With regard to TCNs, it is first and foremost important that TCNs make themselves more visible in society. This became apparent to the Evaluation Team throughout its efforts to find participants to the survey. Furthermore, it was also established that TCNs do tend to take a rather passive attitude and are more prone to place onus of their involvement on local media itself.