

LREC 2010

<http://www.lrec-conf.org/lrec2010>

## Local Information on Malta

- Venue -

Hélène Mazo

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## About Malta

Malta, Gozo and Comino, the inhabited islands of the Maltese archipelago, lie at almost the exact geographical heart of the Mediterranean Sea. With Sicily some 95 kms to the North, Tripoli 350 kms to the South and Tunis 320 kms to the West, Malta is virtually at the crossroads between continents. The islands' strategic position has, in fact, made them subject to a succession of rulers, who in turn left their influence on the country and language as we know them today. Malta's pre-history dates back to 5000 B.C., whilst its documented past is traceable over a period of 2000 years. In 1964 Malta obtained its political independence from Britain and in 1974 it became a Republic. Elections to the House of Representatives are held every five years. Malta is a member of the United Nations and its various organisations and ever since 1964 has taken an active role in United Nations affairs. In 1967 Malta launched the idea of seabed resources being the common heritage of mankind. Malta became a full member of the EU on 1 May, 2004.

The national language is Maltese which is a complex derivative of Semitic and Romance languages using a primarily Latin alphabet but also including a number of additional letters which originate in the Arab language. English is also an official language. The climate is typically Mediterranean, having mild winters and hot summers. Malta has a population of 400,000 and is visited annually by over a million tourists. Air Malta and other international airlines link Malta with the major European and North African cities. There are daily connections to London (Heathrow and Gatwick Airports) and Rome as well as frequent direct flights to Milan, Brussels, Paris, Frankfurt, Zurich, Athens, Tunis, Cairo, Tel Aviv and Dubai. The capital city is Valletta commissioned by Grandmaster La Vallette after the Great Siege of 1565.

## The Weather

The climate is typically Mediterranean, with hot, dry summers, warm and sporadically wet autumns, and short, cool winters with adequate rainfall. The average temperature in May is 20C during the day and around 15C at night. Weather forecasts can be found on these two websites:

<http://www.maltairport.com/weather/page.asp?p=17148&l=1>

<http://www.maltaweather.com>

## Practical Issues

Malta has adopted the euro, and is also part of the Schengen agreement. The official languages of Malta are Maltese and English, so getting by with English is not a problem. Italian is also widely spoken. Malta's public transport system offers a cheap and efficient way of touring the Island. The main bus terminus is at Valletta from where buses operate to all parts of Malta, although there are also direct, point to point, services. The longest bus journey takes about fifty minutes; the average ride is between 20 and 30 minutes. Updated bus time tables can be found at the Public Transport Authority website - <http://www.atp.com.mt>. The website <http://www.tal-linja.com> will also help you figure out the necessary bus connections when you need to take more than one bus.

A more scenic, if less practical, way to reach Valletta is through a ferry between Sliema and Valletta. -

[http://www.captainmorgan.com.mt/ferry\\_service.htm](http://www.captainmorgan.com.mt/ferry_service.htm)

**Shopping:** Shops are usually open from 09:00 to 13:00 and 16:00 to 19:00. However, many are closed on Saturday afternoon. Malta is renowned for its Lace, Mdina Glass and reasonably priced gold and silver items. Local honey and wine have been famous since antiquity.

**Markets:**

Il-Monti, Merchants' Street, Valletta, Mondays to Saturdays, 07:30 to 12:00;

Il-Monti, St. James Ditch, Valletta, Sundays, 07:30 to 12:00.

Marsaxlokk, Sunday mornings.

**Useful Telephone Numbers**

Emergency (Police, Ambulance, Fire) 112

Overseas Operator 1152

Directory Enquiries 1182

Flight Enquiries +356 5004 3333 (Malta International Airport)

Gozo Ferries +356 21 556114