Directorate General
Political, European Affairs and Maltese Abroad

European Affairs Directorate

In 2013, the Ministry concentrated on strengthening relations strategically, planning several important visits abroad in our country’s interests. The Prime Minister undertook official visits to France, the Holy See and Italy whilst the Prime Ministers of Italy and Greece visited Malta. Plans were also set in motion for three state visits by the President of Malta in the following order: January 2014 – Austria and the Slovak Republic; March 2014 – Germany. The Foreign Minister undertook an official visit to Spain at the invitation of the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Italy

The Prime Minister's visit to Rome on 15 June 2013 was critical as it laid guidelines for dealing with outstanding issues and served to clarify issues concerning oil exploration, resulting in two technical meetings taking place in Rome (August 2013) and Malta (October 2013).

The reunification of families who were separated during the joint search and rescue operation in the vicinity of Lampedusa of 11 October 2013 took place quickly thanks to close cooperation. Through Malta and Italy’s collaboration, along with Greece, the topic of illegal immigration was deliberated at the European Council of October 2013, and at the European summit in December 2013.

Malta and Italy decided to open negotiations to conclude an agreement on close cooperation in the environmental field, whilst health has also been consolidated, with bilateral negotiations taking place to conclude a cooperation agreement for Maltese patients who will have the opportunity to receive specialised care in Italy that is unavailable in Malta. Steady progress was also registered in the field of harmful frequencies, whilst Malta will be participating in the Expo in Milan in 2015.

Greece

H.E. Antonis Samaras, the Greek Prime Minister, visited Malta in October 2013. In August 2013, the Prime Minister wrote to the Prime Ministers of Greece and Italy, urging that immigration and solidarity figure prominently on the agenda of their EU Presidency in 2014, and pointing out the necessity for a joint programme for repatriation of migrants and cooperation with Libya. Prime Minister Samaras' September 2013 reply expressed full agreement with Dr Muscat's suggestions.

Cyprus

Cooperation with Cyprus is very good, with several meetings taking place between the Foreign Ministers and close contact on matters that affect both countries.

Spain

Foreign Minister Dr George W. Vella visited Madrid in June 2013 on an official visit for talks on issues of bilateral cooperation as well as developments in the Mediterranean after the North African revolutions. Whilst in Madrid the two Ministers signed an Agreement of the Maintenance of Stocks of Crude Oil and petroleum products stored in Spain.
Croatia

Prime Minister Dr Joseph Muscat participated in the celebrations of Croatia’s accession to the EU in July 2013, at the invitation of the Croatian Prime Minister. On Croatia’s accession, Malta imposed transitional arrangements provided by EU treaties for Croatian workers that can be extended up to seven years.

France

The Prime Minister paid an official visit to France in April 2013, accompanied by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. Besides very positive meetings with President Hollande, there were meetings with the highest representatives of the Senate and the Parliament. The excellent relation was also reflected by the visit by French Senators in September 2013.

Several initiatives have been taken to strengthen commercial relations and tourism, amongst them Joseph Calleja’s concert in the Cathedral of Saint Louis des Invalides, which raised Malta’s profile greatly, together with the dedication of a year to Malta by the Council of the City of Saint Tropez from May 2013 onwards.

UK

Talks are currently underway between the armed forces of both countries to widen cooperation opportunities and training for the AFM.

Germany

Political relations are very strong whilst in November 2013 Germany signed an agreement with the Academy for Diplomatic Studies in the Mediterranean (MEDAC) confirming that it will continue to give financial support till the end of 2016. Six Maltese students benefitted from scholarships in Germany last June.

The Netherlands

Malta and Curacao (a Dutch constituency island) opened negotiations for the conclusion of an Agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion of Income Tax. Technical delegations met in Malta between 15 and 17 October 2013 for discussions and the agreement was initialled. The Curacao delegation was led by their Minister of Finance.

Poland

On 1 August 2013, the Speaker of the House of Representatives Dr Angelo Farrugia paid an official visit to Warsaw to participate in the 10th General meeting of the International Parliamentary Coalition for North Korean Refugees and Human Rights. This visit saw the setting up of an inter-parliamentary friendship group that will lead to the official visit to Malta by the Marshal of the Sejm, probably in early 2014.

Non-EU

Switzerland
An important development in 2013 was the Swiss decision to extend its financial support to MEDAC for another four years. MEDAC was founded over twenty years ago as a result of an agreement between the governments of Malta and Switzerland. Furthermore, the Diplo foundation is to be further strengthened. In further important developments, from October 2013 onwards, Malta was included in the list of countries whose residents are eligible for a scholarship from the Swiss government for postgraduate studies and research. Finally, the provisions of the new Agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion of Income Tax came into effect in January 2013.

Turkey

Entry into force of the Agreement concerning Exemption from Double Taxation from June 2013, as well as the operation from May 2013 of Turkish Airlines flights between Istanbul to Malta are very positive developments expected to have great impact in consolidating and expanding trade and tourism.

The EEA and the Financial Mechanism

Relations between Malta and the EEA (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) are excellent. The Financial Mechanism of the EEA is allowing the setting up of a number of projects to improve our economy, and enhancing our political relations in the process. In April 2013 the funding programme was announced, with the key areas for the allocation of these funds being strengthening the prevention of and response to oil spills; emphasis on renewal of production of Renewable Energy; and improving correctional services with an emphasis on youths serving prison sentences.

Other EU Member States

Bulgaria and Romania

The President of Bulgaria attended a conference in Malta in May 2013, and met with the President, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs for discussions, whilst in September 2013 the Speaker of the House of Representatives Hon Angelo Farrugia, accompanied by a Parliamentary delegation, met with the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of Romania in Bucharest.

The Baltic States

An important development in the relationship with Lithuania was the meeting between the Deputy Prime Minister and the Lithuanian Foreign Minister in September 2013, during which it was agreed that after the Lithuanian Presidency Malta will send a delegation to Vilnius to discuss Lithuanian preparations for their EU presidency in 2017.

Montenegro and Kosovo

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Montenegro paid an official visit to Malta in June 2013. A Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs was signed by the two Ministers to provide a framework to facilitate bilateral ties; it also provides opportunities for training for diplomats. On 12 December 2013, the Foreign Minister of Kosovo visited Malta for official talks with the Hon Dr George Vella, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and a further Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs was also signed.

The Vatican and the Order of Malta
The Government also opened negotiations for the review of the Marriage Agreement especially with regards to the Ecclesiastical Tribunal. For this reason the Prime Minister accompanied by the Minister for Foreign Affairs met with the Pope and his Secretary of State in June 2013 to explain the Government’s intentions.

**EU Enlargement**

Enlargement remains a priority for the EU as it is considered the most effective foreign policy tool, being a way to maintain a relationship with those countries that wish to embrace the principles of liberty, democracy and respect for human rights, freedom and the rule of law. From an economic perspective, the process of EU enlargement increases prosperity and competitiveness to better meet the challenges arising from globalization and an ever changing world. It is also seen as a means of motivation to reform in political and economic fields.

Malta regards the enlargement process as a positive element for the future of the Union and supports candidate as well as potential candidate countries. Malta believes it is in the interest of the Union and the countries seeking membership to accelerate this process – this will lead to more security and stability in Europe, particularly in the Balkan region.

Currently there are five candidates for full membership: Turkey, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Iceland, Montenegro and Serbia.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Type of Agreement</th>
<th>Between</th>
<th>With</th>
<th>Date of signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Not yet in force |
| Luxembourg   | Protocol to Amend the Convention between Malta and Luxembourg for the Avoidance of Double Taxation | Malta                          | Luxembourg                       | Signed 30 November 2011  
Ratified by Malta 31 May 2012  
Ratified by Luxembourg 14 June 2013  
Enter into force 11 July 2013 |
| Turkey       | Avoidance of Double Taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income | Malta                          | Turkey                           | Entry into force 13 June 2013 |
| Montenegro   | Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malta and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Montenegro | Malta                          | Montenegro                       | Signed 5 June 2013  
Enter into force 5 June 2013 |
| Spain        | Agreement on the Maintenance of stocks of crude oil and petroleum products stored in the territory of Spain between the Government of the Republic of Malta and the Government of the Kingdom of Spain | Malta                          | Kingdom of Spain                 | Signed 18 June 2013  
Operational Entry into force 18 June 2013 |
<p>| The Netherlands | Memorandum of Understanding for deployment of the Maltese Contingent | Malta Ministry for Home Affairs | The Netherlands (Ministry of Defence) | Signed 24 July 2013 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Partner 1</th>
<th>Partner 2</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liechtenstein</td>
<td>Convention between the Government of the Republic of Malta and the Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and on capital</td>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>Liechtenstein</td>
<td>27 September 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Directorate of External Relations & Mediterranean Affairs**

**Regional organisations**

Active participation in regional fora and initiatives is of direct relevance to the Mediterranean region.

**Union for the Mediterranean (UfM):** Malta’s role in regional cooperation and dialogue in the Mediterranean from the institutional and practical perspective was underlined during the visit to Malta by His Excellency Mr Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary-General of the UfM on 27 August 2013. During this visit, Mr Sijilmassi had intensive discussions with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Malta continues its direct contribution to the Secretariat of the UfM in Barcelona in 2013 by the secondment of Ambassador George Saliba.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has also been involved in the preparation of meetings and conferences at Ministerial or experts’ level organised within the framework of the UfM. There have been three Ministerial meetings during 2013: Strengthening the Role of Women in Society (Paris, 11 September 2013); Transport (Brussels, 14 November 2013); and Energy (Brussels, 11 December 2013).

**The Western Mediterranean Dialogue (5+5):** Under the co-Presidency of Portugal and Mauritania, the 5+5 Dialogue has increased its activity and widened its scope for sectoral and political cooperation among the ten Partners. On 16 April 2013, the Hon. Minister for Foreign Affairs participated in the Tenth 5+5 Foreign Ministers meeting held in Nouakchott, Mauritania. The next Foreign Ministers meeting will be held in Lisbon on 22 May. A preparatory meeting for the ten countries’ Senior Officials was held in Lisbon on 2 December 2013.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) was closely followed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs even though no noteworthy events or conferences have been organised by the PAM in Malta during 2013.

Malta has continued to strive for a structured political dialogue between the EU and the League of Arab States (LAS), as envisaged in the Malta Communiqué of February 2008. In the meantime Malta remains committed to developing and increasing the functions of the EC-LAS Liaison Office in Malta which was inaugurated in October 2009. Furthermore, in June 2013, Malta also hosted 2 workshops by the EC-LAS Liaison Office on Challenges facing the EU and Arab World as well as on Civil Society.

In 2013, the Directorate intensified its efforts and continued to strengthen Malta’s relations with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The Minister for Foreign Affairs attended and intervened during the EU-Gulf Cooperation Council Ministerial Meeting held on 30 June 2013 in Manama, Bahrain. In the margins of the meeting, Malta also took the opportunity to discuss issues of a bilateral nature with a number of countries including Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia as well as a private session with the Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The Directorate continued to coordinate with Defense Directorate at the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security, and with the Military Representative at the Permanent Representation of Malta to the European Union in Brussels on issues concerning CSDP.

**Relations with Maghreb countries**
During 2013 Malta and Libya continued engaging in high level bilateral visits. On 23 June 2013, Directorate External Relations and Mediterranean Affairs was actively involved in the preparations for the visit to Libya by the Hon. Prime Minister Dr Joseph Muscat accompanied by the Hon. Dr George W. Vella, Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Emmanuel Mallia, Minister for Home Affairs and National Security, the Hon. Konrad Mizzi, Minister for Energy and the Conservation of Water and the Hon. Karmenu Vella, Minister for Tourism.

Another important development which saw the direct involvement of the Directorate was the visit to Malta by H.E. Ali Zeidan, Prime Minister of Libya accompanied by the Hon. Abdulgadir Mohamed, Minister of Transportation, the Hon. Abdubari A. Arousi, Minister of Oil & Gas, and the Hon. Mustafa Abofanas, Minister of the Economy on 2 September 2013. During the visit it was signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Energy between Malta and Libya.

On 13 October 2013, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was directly involved in another important high-level visit to Libya by the Prime Minister of Malta, Dr Joseph Muscat and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr George Vella following the safe release of Libya’s former Prime Minister Ali Zeidan.

The convening of the 27th Session of the Maltese-Libyan Joint Commission was held at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Malta in November 2013.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs continues exerting substantial efforts to strengthen relations between the Republic of Malta and the Republic of Tunisia. The Directorate assisted in facilitating a scholarship for a Master of Diplomacy at the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC) for the third consecutive year.

H.E. Mohamed Ben Salem, the former Minister for Agriculture, Hydraulic resources and Fisheries visited Malta between the 27 and 30 June. During the visit two instruments were signed on cooperation in the field of aquaculture, with the Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change, as well as in the field of water Desalination with the Ministry of Energy and the Conservation of Water.

The Directorate was instrumental in facilitating the organisation of technical exchanges to Morocco in October 2013. This resulted in the finalisation of two outstanding bilateral agreements between Malta and Morocco which are now ready for signing. The Directorate also extended its assistance to officials from Malta Enterprise in two trade delegations which have travelled to Algeria in December 2012 and May 2013.

**Relations with Mashrek countries**

The Syrian crisis continued to feature prominently in the work of the Directorate in 2013. The conflict necessitated continuous monitoring of developments and active engagement in political, economic and humanitarian efforts directed towards assisting the Syrian people and supporting a negotiated diplomatic solution to end the violence. In this regard, Malta donated €15,000 towards the ‘Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons’ established by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The Directorate followed closely developments in the Middle East Peace Process and coordinated Malta’s position in EU and bilateral meetings in support of diplomatic efforts to revive the peace process and bring both parties to the negotiating table.
On the bilateral track, the Directorate pursued efforts aimed at strengthening Malta’s relations with **Israel** through cooperation in various sectors, particularly in agriculture, conservation, restoration and culture.

Of particular relevance, was the first ever official visit to Israel by a Maltese Prime Minister on 15-17 October 2013, accompanied by the Hon. George W. Vella, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the Hon. Karmenu Vella, Minister for Tourism. A Plan of Cooperation in the field of Health and Medical Services for the years 2013-18, and a Memorandum of Understanding between the Malta Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Manufacturing Association of Israel were signed during this visit. The Prime Minister was accompanied by a trade delegation consisting of senior officials from Malta Enterprise and the Malta Chamber of Commerce and 10 businessmen. The visit included a business forum entitled ‘Malta, a gateway to new business opportunities’.

The Hon. Konrad Mizzi, Minister for Energy and the Conservation of Water, visited Israel from 22 to 25 October and discussed the possibility of formalising cooperation in the water sector through a Memorandum of Understanding between the two Ministries.

In a further step towards consolidating the very good relations between Malta and Israel, towards the end of 2013 was finalised the ratification process of the Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income between Malta and Israel. This development is expected to result in immediate benefits to both Maltese and Israeli investors.

Relations between Malta and **Palestine** continued to be strengthened through the support extended by Malta to the Palestinian cause in International Fora. From a bilateral perspective, relations were marked with the first meeting of the Maltese/Palestinian Joint Committee held in Malta in June 2013 headed by H.E. Dr Riad Malki, Foreign Minister of Palestine, and the visit of the Hon. Joseph Muscat, Prime Minister, to Palestine on 17 October 2013, accompanied by the Hon. George W. Vella, Minister for Foreign Affairs. During the visit, the Hon. Prime Minister pledged a total of €101,800 in assistance to Palestine during 2014.

Malta followed closely the progress of the reform and of the constitutional discussions in Egypt’s transition process to democracy. Whilst condemning the use of force, the Government of Malta extended its support to Egypt in its efforts of restoring economic and political stability. On a bilateral level, the Directorate and the Egyptian Ministry for Youth collaborated to enhance cooperation in the youth sector within the framework of an Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Youth.

**Relations with the Gulf countries**

The First Joint Commission between Malta and the Kingdom of **Saudi Arabia** was held in Malta between the 8 and 12 April 2013 with discussions focusing on a number of largely economic and social issues of mutual interest.

Relations between Malta and **Qatar** are also increasingly improving and in November 2013 Qatar established an Embassy in Malta. For its part Malta has expressing its desire to open an embassy in Qatar.

Active discussions also continued in 2013 between Malta and the **United Arab Emirates** on a Memorandum of Understanding for the mutual recognition of driving licenses which would effectively allow Maltese nationals residing in the UAE to drive without the requirement to obtain a local (UAE) driving license. Malta has also supported the UAE’s application to be placed on the Schengen positive list for a visa free travel within the Schengen area. This
acceptance has lead to a reciprocal gesture from the UAE which allows for Maltese nationals visa free travel to the UAE.

Malta and Kuwait undertook to conclude discussions on an updated Air Services Agreement which was signed on 24 September 2013 during the bilateral meeting in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

On 26 September 2013, a Memorandum of Understanding on Political Consultations between Malta and Bahrain was signed during a bilateral meeting in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Relations with Russia, CIS countries and the Eastern Neighbourhood

An Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation was signed with the Russian Federation. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs proposed the establishment of a Joint Commission on Political Consultations between Malta and Russia. A Russian Parliamentary Delegation visited Malta in October 2013. The Maltese Foreign Minister met his Russian counterpart in September 2013 during the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. At the meeting, the two Ministers discussed the potential of trade exchanges between Malta and Russia. A proposal was made for stronger collaboration to be established between the respective trade offices, i.e. the Chamber of Commerce, Trade and Industry of Russia and Malta Enterprise. The Ministers also discussed the possibility of negotiating a cooperation agreement between Malta Enterprise and the Russian Chamber of Commerce. This Directorate is currently working on this proposal that would be useful to identify commercial areas of mutual interest. This Directorate is also in liaison with Russian authorities for the early implementation of the Double Taxation Agreement. Negotiations are also under way on an Adoptions Agreement with Russia. The Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Meshkov visited Malta on 20 December 2013.

The Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Parliamentary Secretary for Competitiveness and Economic Growth visited Ukraine on 4 September 2013 to sign the Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation. On 11 October 2013, H.E. the President issued a letter of invitation to the President of Ukraine, Victor Yanukovych, inviting him to visit Malta; however, the visit was then cancelled due to an overturn in the domestic situation in Ukraine after the Government’s decision to postpone the signature of the Association Agreement with the European Union. Violent protests erupted in Kiev following the President’s decision to postpone the signature of the Agreement.

A business forum was organised in collaboration with the Ambassador of Kazakhstan and Malta Enterprise. In view of the interest expressed by various private entities that have a vested interest in Kazakhstan, the negotiation of a Double Taxation Agreement was finalised and it is now ready for signature.

An invitation was sent to the Foreign Minister of Moldova to visit Malta this year to discuss the potential of a closer relationship between our two countries. During a meeting between the Minister for Foreign Affairs and his Moldovan counterpart during the OSCE Ministerial Meeting in Kiev, Ukraine the Moldovan Foreign Minister was invited to visit Malta in April or May 2014.

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs led a delegation to Tbilisi for the inauguration of the new Georgian President on 17th November 2013. The high level Maltese representation at the ceremony demonstrated Malta’s support towards Georgia’s democratic progress and towards its ambitions within the Eastern Partnership.
An official communication was issued to Azerbaijan in which it was informed that diplomatic passport holders from Azerbaijan are exempted from the visa requirement to enter Malta. The purpose of this decision is to facilitate political and diplomatic exchanges between the two countries and to continue the negotiations that would lead to the signature of a Double Taxation Agreement, an MoU between the University of Malta and the University of Baku and a re-invocation of an Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group.

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) enhances the relationship of the European Union with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus (the latter depending on the development of its relations with the EU). The Eastern Partnership is a joint initiative of the EU, its Member States and the Eastern European partner countries.

Following Ukraine's decision to postpone the Association Agreement with the European Union at the Vilnius Summit in December 2013, Malta believes that the efforts of the European Union should be targeted towards those Eastern Partners that show a genuine commitment for greater political and economic approximation with the European Union. The Association Agreements also include the signature of a Free Trade Agreement, which will give reciprocal access of these countries to the single market.

Relations with Asian countries

The Indian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Mrs Preneet Kaur paid an official visit to Malta in April 2013 during which the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement was signed.

The first bilateral political consultations took place at Director level on 31st October in New Delhi. Issues of common interest between the two countries were discussed.

On another track, following efforts by the Directorate, the Protocol amending the Malta-Singapore Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement, which was signed back in 2006, came into force.

In 2013 the Directorate continued to play its role in the strengthening of the long standing special relationship that Malta enjoys with the People’s Republic of China. The Hon. Evarist Bartolo, Minister for Education and Employment led a delegation to China from 26 May to 31 May, 2013.

The Directorate also assisted in the preparations for the Prime Minister’s visit to China, during which among other activities, he participated in the Global Economic Forum which took place in Dalian between 11th to 13th September. During his visit to China the Prime Minister also had a meeting with the Prime Minister of the People’s Republic of China, Li Keqiang. After the meeting, the Hon Dr Konrad Mizzi, Minister for Energy and Mr Lu Qizhou, Chief Executive of the China Power Investment Corporation signed a Memorandum of Understanding by way of which China declared its interest in investing in Malta’s energy sector. The Memorandum also envisages that Malta be used as a centre from where China can service its Mediterranean power plants.

The Directorate assisted in the preparations for the visit to Malta of the Hon. Murray McCully Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sport and Recreation, of New Zealand which took place in late April, 2013. Subsequently the Directorate was also involved in preparations involved in preparations for the visit to Malta by the delegation led by Hon. Minister Paula Bennett, Minister of Social Development of New Zealand which took place in early July. During the visit Minister Bennett met with the Hon. Marie Louise Coleiro-Preca, Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity. A high point of the encounter was the signing of the Malta-New Zealand Social Security Agreement.
Relations with African countries

Delegation from Ethiopia, Angola and a Ministerial visit from Ghana visited Malta. Following interest expressed by the Government of Sudan for the enhancement of bilateral relations with Malta, the Sudanese side proposed the organisation of a visit to Malta of a Sudanese technical delegation for discussions on various issues of mutual interest related to education, migration, culture and tourism, small businesses and the economy.

The Directorate liaised with the High Commissions of Ghana and Nigeria, both in Tripoli, with a view to coordinate the organisation of visits by Ghanaian and Nigerian Consular Officers with a view to expedite the repatriation of a number of nationals whose application for asylum submitted in Malta had been finalised.

Malta signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Migration Matters with Burkina Faso on 27 February. Similar Memoranda of Understanding were agreed to, at a technical level, with Nigeria and the Gambia.

The Directorate coordinated the pledging of a €25,000 contribution in humanitarian aid to Mali. Malta also made a pledge of €150,000 (to be disbursed over a period of three years) at the conference entitled “A New Deal for Somalia” towards the economic reconstruction of Somalia and the strengthening of security in the country. The Directorate stressed with the Somali authorities the importance of establishing diplomatic relations between Malta and the Federal Republic of Somalia. The Prime Minister of Malta met the Somali Deputy Prime Minister on the margins of UNGA 68. A draft Protocol on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations was transmitted to the pertinent Somali authorities on 15 October.

The Directorate followed with interest and substantial concern, through a number of fora, notably the Foreign Affairs Council, the deteriorating situation in the Central African Republic since the outbreak of an internal inter-religious conflict on 14 December 2013.

Proposed texts for the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding on Conducting Political Consultations between the Ministries for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Angola and the Republic of Malta, as well as a Cultural Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Angola and the Government of the Republic of Malta were transmitted on 1 April 2013. Contacts were underway between the Directorate and the pertinent cultural authorities in Malta with a view to conclude the Cultural Cooperation Agreement; whilst the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was assessing the draft text of the said Memorandum of Understanding, with a view to have the instruments signed and concluded during the course of 2014.

Malta also proposed a Convention on the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income respectively with Angola, Botswana, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Malawi, Namibia, Uganda and Zambia. The Directorate continued to participate COAFR Working Group meetings in capitals formation and participated in telephone conferences organised specifically following the elections which took place in Kenya and in Zimbabwe. In preparation for the Joint EU-Africa Summit, which is scheduled to take place on 2 and 3 April 2014, the Directorate participated in two conferences: a Preparatory Meeting of the Africa-EU Brainstorming on the Joint Africa- EU Strategy and the Summit on 18 September; and a Joint EU-Africa Conference on 29 October.

Relations with the Americas

The United States of America continued to assist Malta in the resettlement of refugees, with the latest resettlement taking place on 6 November, when 16 immigrants left Malta to be
resettled in the United States. The assistance that has been forthcoming from the United States on an issue that is particularly sensitive to Malta highlights the deep friendship and cooperation that exists between both countries.

Negotiations were undertaken with the relevant Maltese and American authorities to discuss the logistics of opening an Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law which was established under the framework of the Global Counterterrorism Forum. The Institute or its headquarters in Malta would raise further our profile in international politics most particularly in the Mediterranean region.

On 27 September 2013, the Minister for Foreign Affairs met the Canadian Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York. The two sides discussed several issues, amongst them, the Maltese community in Canada, cooperation on global issues through multilateral fora such as the United Nations and the Commonwealth as well as the Free Trade Agreement that is currently being negotiated between the European Union and Canada.

This Directorate also assists the Maltese Diaspora in Canada through the Council of the Maltese Living Abroad that was established in September 2012. This Directorate facilitated the visit of the Prime Minister to meet the Maltese Community in Toronto in September 2013 during the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Throughout the year, Malta initiated negotiations with the Federative Republic of Brazil with the intention of opening its first diplomatic representation in the region with a Consulate General in São Paulo. Coordinated efforts between the Directorate and the Brazilian Embassy in Rome reassured the authorization by the Brazilian authorities on 5 December. The opening of the Consulate General is expected to amplify Malta's relations with the region.

A number of bilateral agreements were also concluded. On 7 May, the Republic of Malta and the Republic of El Salvador signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Conducting Bilateral Consultations between the respective Foreign Ministries. Malta, Mexico and Switzerland renewed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding on 28 May by which Mexico will continue, for an additional three-year period, to avail itself of online courses and services provided by the DiploFoundation for the training of Mexican public officers. Malta and Barbados signed on 25 September a Protocol amending Article 25 of the Convention on the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income (signed in 5 December 2001). This amendment guarantees the exchange of information on tax issues between the judicial authorities of both countries. On 25 November, the Minister for Finance of Malta and the Minister of Financial Services, Commerce and Environment of the British Protectorate of the Cayman Islands signed a Tax Information Exchange Agreement.

On the EU front, Directorate officials continued to participate in monthly Working Group meetings of the Council related to matters concerning Latin America and the Caribbean. In July, Malta informed the European Union that it had no objection that the trade pillar of the Association Agreement signed between the European Union and Central American countries on 29 June 2012, will come into immediate effect with respect to Panama, Honduras and Nicaragua.

During the course of the year, the Directorate co-ordinated the negotiation and conclusion of a number of bilateral agreements with countries falling under its responsibility:
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>26 September 2013</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding on Bilateral Consultations between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malta and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>27 February 2013</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding on Migration Matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>30 May 2013</td>
<td>Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Malta and the Special Administrative Region of Macao of the People’s Republic of China for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>4 September 2013</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry for Transport of the Government of Malta and the Chinese Communications Construction Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>11 September 2013</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry for Energy and the Chinese Power Investment Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>7 May 2013</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding on Conducting Bilateral Consultations between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malta and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of El Salvador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>10 November 2013</td>
<td>Agreement for the Government of the Republic of Malta and the Government of the Republic of India on Waiver of Visa Requirements for holders of Diplomatic Passports was signed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>12 April 2013</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding on Amending the Air Services Agreement between the Government of Malta and the Government of the State of Kuwait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>24 September 2013</td>
<td>Air Services Agreement between The Government of the Republic of Malta and the Government of the State of Kuwait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>28 May 2013</td>
<td>Renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Malta, the Swiss Federation and the United States of Mexico for a three-year provision of online courses and services of the DiploFoundation (established in Malta through a Swiss initiative) to public officers of the Mexican Government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>11 July 2013</td>
<td>Malta-New Zealand Social Security Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>16 December 2013</td>
<td>Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Directorate for the Maltese Living Abroad**

The Directorate for the Maltese Living Abroad (DMLA) is the central focal point for information, advice and co-ordination to Maltese living abroad and any association representing Maltese abroad or non-governmental organisation. During 2013 Director DMLA identified and organised periodic meetings with stakeholders from various public and private sectors. In addition, several internal operating structures were established that include regular meetings with CMLA Secretary, daily information forwarded to CMLA Councillors relating to employment, scholarships and cultural events in Malta, and, bi-annual meetings with sub-committee of local Diaspora NGOs. DMLA coordinated the organisation of listings of the 17,000 files situated in the MFA Floriana File Depository. In 2013 CMLA has joined the Europeans throughout the World (ETTW) organisation based in Brussels and Director DMLA attended two Bureau Meetings in April and November and is vice-president. Several initiatives were generated through the ETTW contacts. In 2013 DMLA formulated, launched and managed the Notification D-Form with the aim to register on a voluntary basis the Maltese living abroad for more than a month. Accurate statistics on the Diaspora related was gathered on 173 countries and Diaspora chapters of country briefs were compiled.

DMLA assisted in the organisation of the second convening in Malta of the CMLA during the first week of October and DMLA is following through the agreed initiatives, namely preparations for the establishment of a CMLA website, arrangements for biometric mobile units to be used in Diaspora countries and the first Maltese teacher to be seconded to Australia.

An organising committee to prepare for the 4th Convention for the Maltese Living Abroad to be organised in April 2015 was established, met three times so far and decided on a number of issues related to the logistics and organisation of this event. A Diaspora-wide logo and memento competition was launched, a nationwide primary and secondary school art competition and Diaspora drama pieces have been written and to be performed during this four-day event.
International Development, Economic Affairs and European Institutions Directorate

The International Development, Economic Affairs and European Institutions Directorate took its current format following a restructuring exercise at the Ministry. While sanctions matters moved to the Global Issues Directorate, this Directorate added the task of coordinating the Ministry’s role in the Presidency of the EU Council for 2017. Added attention is also being devoted to commercial and cultural diplomacy as part of the Ministry’s strategic objectives.

Overseas Development and Humanitarian Assistance

Malta participated within and allocated funds to agencies of the United Nations, and many other international multilateral institutions engaged in international development cooperation, particularly within the EU, the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth and the Organization for European Security and Cooperation (OSCE). The Government carried out its work not only through multilateral cooperation, but also via bilateral cooperation with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) engaged in the fields of development and the private sector. Against this background, Malta in 2012 successfully managed to maintain stable its ODA contributions to the amount of 0.23% of its GNI. This meant that Malta was one of the few countries among those which joined the EU in 2004 that did not decrease the amount of aid given, and was able to reach the agreed targets. The statistics concerning 2013 are in the compilation process.

Participation in EU bodies shaping the policies, programmes and instruments of EU development assistance and humanitarian aid was an ongoing commitment such as in the EU Council Working Groups for Development Cooperation (CODEV); the Working Party on Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP); the Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAF), the Humanitarian Aid Committee (HAC), the European Development Fund Working Party (EDF), the Instrument for Stability Working Party (IfS), the Member State Experts meetings on Development, meetings for the Directors General responsible for Development, informal meetings of Development Ministers and the meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC). Malta also pursued the negotiations of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).

The European Development Fund (EDF)

The 11th EDF programming period covering 2014-2020 reached an advance stage of negotiations concerning the financial regulations and its implementation. Malta already signed the 11th EDF internal Agreement on 24 June 2013 for the amount of €11,595,331 covering the next seven programming years.

Each Member State contributes a set amount of money to the EDF as agreed at the beginning of each funding period. Since the beginning of January 2013, Malta delivered a contribution of €885,000 to the EDF which were paid in three tranches.

MFA’s co-funding projects with NGOs

In line with Malta’s development policy, the Development Unit co-ordinated the co-financing of 31 projects regarding sustainable development in developing countries around the world. The total amount given was of €322,403. The co-financing projects for 2013 were as follows:
• The construction of a youth formation centre in the Philippines which will be used as a training centre with accommodation facilities for students. The setting up of an educational centre in the Philippines offering music tuition and other practical courses.

• The construction of a water supply pump to provide clean drinking water for the users of the St Francis of Assisi Day Centre in Nairobi, Kenya.

• The installation of catering facilities in one of CAM's parishes in Peru to provide vulnerable children and their families with nutritious food.

• The purchasing of an ambulance for the San Juan Bautista hospital in Guatemala.

• The construction of a dormitory in Ghana to offer a home to abandoned children.

• The continuation of the construction of a school for girls in Pakistan.

• The purchasing of internal and external furnishing for the dormitories of the St Martin de Porres Rehabilitation Centre in Kenya.

• Educational and economic empowerment of 20 orphans and vulnerable children in the area of Kisumu, West of Kenya.

• The continuation of the construction of a sports complex in Honduras for youths with the aim of keeping them away from substance abuse.

• The construction of a centre for youth formation in the province of Castillia in Peru.

• Extension of a secondary school for girls in Kenya which will also serve as a dormitory. This will provide accessible education and accommodation to girls living in remote areas.

• The installation of water supply systems which will give access to clean water to 3,000 people in Aman, South East Ethiopia.

• The purchasing of medical equipment for a rural hospital that caters for the local impoverished communities in Ghana.

• The construction and operation of a health post for 14,000 people in Northern Malawi offering services for children under five years, preliminary maternity services and treatment for various diseases.

• Empowerment of women in the rural areas of South Sudan through the strengthening the socio-economic development processes.

• The construction of a greenhouse at the Maria Magdalena Special School in Kenya.

• The rehabilitation of youths who have experienced inter-ethnic and inter-religious fighting in Nigeria to help them reintegrate in society.

• The furnishing of a school social centre in Mozambique which is used to distribute food for the poor and give assistance to pregnant women.
• The provision of much needed assistance to disabled people in rural Guatemala, who will have access to emergency health care and will contribute to ease medical costs and improve the quality of their health care.

• The empowerment of young women and young single mothers to develop professional skills to become self-reliant and independent in order to prevent these women from being forced into the sex trade.

• The construction of a sport facility centre and a technical training centre for carpentry and welding in Guatemala.

• The furnishing of classes and a science laboratory in the Philippines which will provide learning opportunities for local children.

• The upgrade of the podium area of the Santa Rosa school in Peru which is used for the daily assembly and extracurricular activities.

• Agricultural entrepreneurship project around the parishes of the Jimma Bonga Vicariate and an income generating activity around Shishinda Parish with the production of honey, coffee and spices in Ethiopia.

• The refurbishing of a day care centre in order to provide good quality day care services to young children of the slum areas of Nairobi, thus allowing their mothers to seek employment.

• Building of a playground for the poor children of the slums of Kenya.

• Funds for the purchasing of an electric generator and laboratory equipment for St. Xavier's University Collage in Mahore, India.

• Fund to support the Ijaji HIV/AIDS Health Centre in Ethiopia to provide health services to persons living with HIV/AIDS, psychological, social and educational support and reduce stigma and discrimination.

• A fish farming initiative in Uganda inclusive of an equipped laboratory unit for training and research, which will contribute towards a better quality of life for subsistence farmers through aquaculture technologies.

• The upgrading of a hostel for girls in Mbangassina area, Cameroon.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Malta is fully committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and works towards the elimination of poverty and hunger in developing countries by providing financial assistance to local NGOs. This policy seeks to gain more support and to help raise awareness on development.

On 25 September 2013, the United Nations High Level Special Event on MDGs was held in New York to review the progress made towards the achievement of the MDGs and to chart the way forward. The Heads of State and Government and Heads of Delegation renewed their commitment to the MDGs and their determination to intensify their efforts for the achievement of the MDGs by 2015.
The Directorate through the Development Unit, has continued to follow discussions and policy formulation on the MDGs particularly as the target date of 2015 approaches.

**Humanitarian Aid**

Malta’s Development Policy recognises the importance of humanitarian assistance and provides assistance in the event of natural disasters, armed conflict and other events on a scale that the affected area or country cannot cope with.

The Ministry allocated the sum of €25,000 through UNICEF in aid of children in Mali affected by the crisis in the Sahel region. As a consequence of the first Kuwait donor conference held in January 2013, Malta pledged and transferred the sum of €25,000 through UNHCR as humanitarian relief to Syrian displaced refugees in Jordan. Successively, Malta contributed an additional €25,000 to displaced Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Somalia was the focus of the donor conference ‘New Deal for Somalia’ organised by the EU High Representative Baroness Ashton on 16 September 2013, where Malta pledged the sum of €150,000 over a three year period.

Following the catastrophic typhoon Haiyan in November 2013 in the Philippines, Malta contributed the sum of €40,000 through UN OCHA to relief the population from the terrible devastations caused by the typhoon.

**European Development Days**

The ‘European Development Days’ is a yearly event organised by the European Commission and is considered a key event. Malta participated in the 2013 edition which was held between 26 and 27 November 2013 in Brussels. The main theme for this edition was “a decent life for all by 2030 – building a consensus for a new development agenda”.

**ODA Statistics of Malta**

Malta calculates its Official Development Assistance (ODA) in accordance with the directives and guidelines on statistical reporting of the OECD/DAC (statistical reporting). It is worth pointing out that according to the directives of the OECD, the cost of the public sector to support refugees\(^1\) in the first twelve months stay in the country is eligible to be included as ODA (this includes the cost of food, shelter and training). Malta follows the rules of the OECD, despite the fact that it is not a member of this organisation.

**Cultural Diplomacy**

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs continued with its cultural commitment by assiting in the promotion of art and culture abroad. This was done through direct initiatives by Maltese Embassies/High Commissions and General Consuls in coordination with the Directorate. Among the organised initiatives where art exhibitions, literary recitals, projections of short

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\(^1\) DAC Statistical Reporting Directives define a refugee as ‘a person who is outside his home country because of a well-founded fear of persecution on account of his race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinion. Assistance to persons who for similar reasons are internally displaced within their own countries, or who have fled from their homes because of civil war or severe unrest, may also be counted under this item.’
Maltese film productions, and the participation of Maltese musicians in foreign festivals. The aim behind this movement was to foster Maltese creative and artistic awareness abroad.

Valletta European Capital of Culture 2018

Valletta and the City of Leeuwarden will be European Capitals of Culture in 2018. In September 2013 the inter-ministerial commission, which is tasked with preparations for this event and which includes a representative from MFA, met again under a newly appointed Chairman. A number of technical meetings took place with some of them open to the general public to make sure that Valletta 2018 reflects the vibrant imagination and creativity of the people. In the coming years the Ministry is committed to promote this important event through its network of Embassies abroad as well as make sure that new contacts are established that would enable more culture-related investment towards Malta.

Strengthening of Malta’s Cultural Diplomacy

The Ministry resumed work to strengthen its internal cultural arm as highlighted in the National Cultural Policy document launched in July 2011. The process consisted inter alia in setting up of a Cultural Diplomacy Unit which is to be headed by an Assistant Director. The unit is now responsible for the development of a cultural diplomacy policy aimed at promoting Maltese culture and identity abroad. The unit also administers a cultural diplomacy fund of €75,000 annually. The main purpose of the fund is to assist Maltese Embassies abroad with the implementation of selected cultural diplomacy projects. Between September 2012 and September 2013, 27 projects in different cities around the world were selected for implementation.

Other Issues

During 2013, the Cultural Diplomacy Unit worked to assist several Maltese Embassies in their cultural initiatives. In fact this year saw an increase in the number of events carried out by our Missions in the form of art exhibitions, literary seminars, and other initiatives that brought third countries closer to Maltese culture and identity. The Ministry also marked the end of the Irish EU presidency with a polyphonic concert, organised in collaboration with the Irish Embassy in Malta on 5 July 2013.

In the meantime the Unit kept close contact with local and foreign cultural entities and assisted in providing culture-related information when requested. Amongst the negotiations that are underway is the revision of the XIV Italo-Maltese Executive Programme on Cultural Cooperation between Malta and Italy for their term 2014-2016. In the meantime following the signing of a Cultural Agreement between Malta and Kosovo in November 2012, both sides are now in the process of ratifying the said agreement.

EU Presidency

The Directorate was designated as the Ministry’s focal point on the EU Presidency. While initial discussions have been held with the Ministry for Europe and Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto on the envisaged roles, the Directorate continued to follow developments on the year’s Irish and Lithuanian EU Presidencies. The Directorate will continue to remain engaged on this issue and to coordinate with relevant stakeholders.

The Irish Presidency (1 January – 30 June 2013)

This is the seventh Presidency of the European Council that has been led by Ireland. The Irish Presidency also coincided with the 40th Anniversary of Ireland’s accession to the
European Union. The focus of the Presidency was mainly on economic stability, growth and jobs.

**The Lithuanian Presidency (1 July-31 December 2013)**

This was Lithuania’s first Presidency of the Council of the European Union after becoming a Member of the EU 2004. Lithuania promised to be an honest broker, whilst cooperating closely with its other Trio partners. In collaboration also with the European Parliament, the Commission, the President of the European Council and the High Representative, the Presidency focused on the three goals of a credible, growing and open Europe.

**Commercial Promotion**

The Ministry continued to promote trade and investment-related requests through Maltese Embassies abroad to the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry and Malta Enterprise.

In June 2013, the Ministry published a report on its role, as well as that of the country’s Diplomatic Representations abroad, in the implementation of national commercial diplomacy. The report includes a number of recommendations including the establishment of a ‘Joint Stakeholders Working Council’ with the objective of coordinating the work carried out by those entities active in promoting the country abroad. The report also recommends that Maltese diplomats be given the necessary training, with the assistance of organisations such as Malta Enterprise and FinanceMalta, in order to be able to promote Malta in the international commercial field. Such training was undertaken in July and will be ongoing as necessary.

The first meeting of the ‘Joint Stakeholders Working Council’ was held at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Valletta on the 18th of September 2013. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Dr George Vella, participated in the meeting which was chaired by the Ministry’s Permanent Secretary, Mr Joseph Cole. Representatives attended from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for Finance, the Ministry for Tourism, the Ministry for the Economy, Investment and Small Business, FinanceMalta, Malta Enterprise and the Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry. The second meeting of the Council was held on the 25th of October and a third one on the 29th of November.

**Foreign Visits by Maltese Trade Delegations**

In March, the Malta High Commission in London participated in several events, including two seminars, which promoted the country’s financial services sector. During the same month, the Commission also coordinated a trade delegation to the UK which focused on the food and beverages sector. The nine Maltese companies forming part of this delegation held meetings with around 45 UK business entities operating in the same sector. Meetings were also held with a number of Maltese companies based in the UK which are exploring potential business cooperation with their Maltese counterparts.

Malta Enterprise and the Embassy of Malta in Spain participated in the trade and investment fair, *Imex Impulso Exterior*, organised by MONEDA UNICA and held on the 24th and 25th April.

On the 24th of April, the Embassy of Malta in Germany participated in a panel discussion organised by Malta Enterprise on the occasion of the *Quo Vadis* conference in Berlin, one of the most important events for the German game development industry.
On the 17th of May 2013, the Maltese Embassy in Rome participated in a business seminar organised in Latina by the Maltese-Italian Chamber of Commerce. The seminar was attended by around 70 entrepreneurs from the Lazio region.

The Malta High Commission in London assisted Malta Enterprise in organising a number of meetings with UK companies engaged in the production of digital content in the arts and entertainment industry. The meetings, most of which had a positive outcome, were held on the 20 and 21 of June. On the 25th of June, the Maltese Embassy in Moscow assisted a private company in organising a Tax Seminar during which those present were briefed on Malta’s financial sector.

In October 2013, a high level official delegation visited Israel and Palestine accompanied by a number of Maltese trade representatives which held meetings with different business organisations and entrepreneurs. The Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry signed a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ with the ‘Manufacturing Association of Israel’ and a ‘Cooperation Agreement’ with the Palestinian Federation of Industries.

Other Activities

The Ministry followed the free trade negotiations which the European Union opened with Japan and the United States during 2013. The establishment of free trade areas with these two economic powers is expected to have a positive impact on the EU’s economy.

On the 9th of April 2013, Malta signed an Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income with India during a visit by the Indian Minister of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Preneet Kaur. The two sides agreed to form a business council to continue strengthening bilateral economic relations. Another Double Taxation Agreement was signed with the Russian Federation on the 24th of April at the Ministry of Finance in Moscow.

During the annual meeting for Honorary Consuls held in July 2013, the Minister for Foreign Affairs emphasised the importance of the work carried out by the Honorary Consuls, including in those countries where Malta has not established any diplomatic representations. The Minister encouraged the Consuls to utilise their networks to promote Malta.

In September, the Prime Minister, the Hon. Joseph Muscat, addressed the World Economic Forum held in Dalian, China. During his visit, the Prime Minister also met his Chinese counterpart, Li Kenqiang and other leaders. China and Malta signed a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ on strategic investment in the energy sector.

A Maltese delegation, which included an official from Malta’s Permanent Representation in Geneva, participated in the 9th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) held in Bali, Indonesia in December 2013.

The Directorate participates regularly in meetings of the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) as well as other commercial/economic-related meetings held by other Government entities. It also followed elections to various bodies, including that of the Director-General of the WTO. The Commercial Diplomacy Unit also remained engaged with various embassies, both resident and accredited from abroad, to seek further trade links between Malta and the countries concerned. It also acts as a channel of communication between Malta’s Missions abroad and relevant stakeholders in Malta.

European Institutions
Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

Code of Conduct organised in Malta

The OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) in partnership with the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies in Malta (MEDAC) organized a Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) conference on the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security (CoC) on 11-13 September 2013. This seminar dealt with the democratic control of armed forces. MFA was instrumental in assisting in this process in order to ensure that this was a success while also showing Malta’s commitment to this organisation.

The Conference was the sixth regional seminar on the Code of Conduct mandated by the OSCE’s Forum for Security Co-operation and was the first ever conference on the Code of Conduct designed specifically for the Mediterranean region involving the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

FSC Chairmanship by Malta

Malta joined the FSC troika on 1 Sep 2013 and will assume the chairmanship for 4 months from 24 January till 9 April 2014. Head Office has been in constant contact with Malta Embassy Vienna to work on the tasks ahead mainly by coordinating the important discussions that will be held during our chairmanship and steering priorities in the right direction. The FSC is an opportunity for Malta to steer discussions towards the importance of the Mediterranean region.

Libya’s application to become a Mediterranean Partner for Cooperation

Malta supported the inclusion of Libya as a Mediterranean Partner for Cooperation underlining the fact that this is an important process in achieving a safer Libya. Such a membership would give the country the right signals that it is on the right path and encourage further progress.

Kiev Ministerial December 2013

In December, Malta actively participated in the OSCE Ministerial Meeting held in Kiev on 5-6 December. During the same meeting, Foreign Minister Hon. George W. Vella held discussions with his Ukrainian counterpart Leonid Kozhara wherein they discussed the current political situation in Ukraine and ongoing situation with the European Union, Russia and China.

Council of Europe

The Directorate continued to actively participate in the discussions at the Council of Europe, in collaboration with relevant line Ministries and the Permanent Representation in Strasbourg. Chief among the major events in 2013 was the visit by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr Thorbjorn Jagland. Minister Vella referred to Malta’s excellent relations with the Council of Europe, where Malta’s delegations have always taken a very active role and to the efforts of the Secretary-General to reform the Council in order to make it more relevant. The Minister also stressed the importance of encouraging relations between the Council of Europe and the EU, especially in light of the EU’s possible accession to the European Convention on Human Rights.

Other activities
Participation in various meetings of the Council of Europe were coordinated with the relevant line Ministries. The same ministries were also involved in drawing up reports or defending Malta’s positions on issues before the Courts of the Council. The Directorate also followed up on matters concerning pending ratifications of Council of Europe Conventions, alignment with statements at the Committee of Ministers, contributions to the budget of the Council, and candidatures to elections of the Council’s various bodies.

**Participation in Brussels based meetings**

During this year, the Directorate maintained its role in participating in Brussels-held capitals meetings wherein it continued to follow ongoing discussions on the OSCE and the Council of Europe.
During 2013, the Global Issues Directorate continued to develop relations with various International Organisations that fall under this Directorate's remit. Following a restructuring exercise at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in August 2013, the Sanctions Unit was also brought under the remit of this Directorate.

Migration

This Directorate built on efforts and initiatives pursued during the last years in the area of illegal migration. From 1998 to December 2013, Malta received more than 19,000 illegal immigrants. During 2013 this Directorate worked in tandem with the Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security to strengthen the implementation of agreed objectives in the European Union and to strengthen dialogue between Europe and Africa. At the European Council of 25 October 2013, Malta pushed for immigration discussions to be given prominence which led to the creation of the Task Force for the Mediterranean with a view to reporting back feasible recommendations to the European Council meeting of December 2013.

The effective implementation of Article 13 of the Cotonou Agreement concerning readmission is also a priority for Malta. Following Malta's insistence, this concept is being given much more prominence in the EU's political dialogue with Africa. During 2013, 398 persons in receipt of protection were resettled in the United States, 10 to Ireland, 6 to Poland and 8 to other countries. Malta continues to emphasise that securing Libya's sea and land borders is key to reducing migration pressures. In November 2013, the Ministry and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) signed the COMAM II agreement on ‘Cooperation between Malta and African countries to enhance migration dialogue and development’.

International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

On 5 November 2013, Ambassador William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration visited Malta. Malta used this opportunity to maintain pressure on the critical situation it is facing from irregular migration, arguing that the subject of irregular migration should have more prominence at the Foreign Affairs Council meetings and other fora. This visit was followed with a visit by Bernd Hemingway, Regional Director for the European Economic Area, the EU and NATO for the IOM on 27 November 2013, who confirmed that the IOM would be focusing attention on Malta's situation.

The Directorate also continued with negotiations leading to the signature of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) on Migration Matters with countries of origin of irregular migrants under the framework of the MAREMCA II project. An MoU was signed with Burkina Faso in February 2013 and similar MoUs are expected to be signed with Nigeria and Gambia which are vital for repatriation efforts.

Commonwealth

During 2013, the Global Issues Directorate focused on the necessary preparations leading up to CHOGM 2013 in November. The Maltese delegation was headed by the Hon. Prime Minister accompanied by the Hon Minister for Foreign Affairs and Malta's High Commissioner to UK. During CHOGM, a number of issues were discussed such as the post-2015 agenda, the international economic climate and the free movement of Commonwealth citizens between one member state and another.

2 MAREMCA - Malta's Long-term Return Management Capacities
During the week leading up to CHOGM, a number of meetings were held, to which Minister Vella attended such as the Pre-CHOGM Foreign Ministers Meeting. Also at the CHOGM, Malta’s High Commissioner to United Kingdom attended the Commonwealth Ministerial Meeting of Small States. Malta offered to establish a Centre of Excellence for Small States, aiming to offer specific infrastructural programmes in the areas of democracy and development. Furthermore, following a unanimous decision, Malta is to host CHOGM in 2015. Malta showed interest in hosting the event after the expected host, Mauritius, withdrew.

During 2013, six training programmes were held under the Commonwealth Secretariat on the Malta - Commonwealth Third Country Training Programmes (MCTCP) that was established in 1995.

**Election Observation**

During 2013 Maltese Election Observers participated in nine out of ten Electoral Observation Missions organised by the EU in following countries: Jordan, Kenya, Paraguay, Madagascar, Mali, Guinea, Kosovo, Nepal and Honduras.

**Maritime**

This Directorate has been participating in the inter-ministerial National Integrated Maritime Strategy Committee set up in September 2013 which has the aim to draft the national maritime strategy for the marine and maritime sector. The committee under the leadership of Parliamentary Secretary Hon. Zammit Lewis intends to involve different stakeholders in the maritime sector through consultation mechanisms in order to obtain the direct contributions. Maritime Desk Officer attended regular COMAR (Maritime Working Party) meetings.

**Environment**

This Directorate was instrumental in negotiating a sustainable solution for Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC). Malta participated at the 18th Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols (COP18) which took place in Turkey on 3-6 December 2013. An Inter Ministerial Committee (MFA, MFIN, MSDEC and MTI) was set up in 2013 to discuss the future of REMPEC to discuss a viable solution for the future operations of REMPEC and a negotiating strategy for the success thereof. During COP 18 Malta expressed great satisfaction that it would continue to host REMPEC, which plays a significant role in combating marine pollution, a common objective shared by all Parties. Malta also pledged a voluntary contribution for the coming biennium to support REMPEC’s activities.

**Human Rights**

This Directorate continued to be instrumental in safeguarding Malta’s position on Sexual and Reproductive Rights (SRHR), both in the EU, as well as, at the UN level via internal consultations with the Line Ministries and negotiations with EU and UN Member States. This year, Malta registered an important National Statement to safeguard its position vis-à-vis the Council Conclusions on ‘The Overarching Post 2015 Agenda’. This Directorate was also responsible for the preparation to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which is a unique process whereby the human rights records of all UN Member States are reviewed. In this respect, this Directorate coordinated and compiled a National Report whereby Malta provided an account of the implementation of the recommendations that have been accepted during the first process of the UPR, as well as, an update on the status of Human Rights in Malta. The report was submitted on 19 July 2013 and was then considered on 30 October in Geneva, where UN Member States were invited once again to put forward recommendations to Malta. In December
2013, this Directorate circulated the 134 recommendations made to Malta during its Universal Periodical Review with Line Ministries and entities, in order to examine the said recommendations and prepare a written reply to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights before the adoption of the outcome of the review in the Plenary of the Human Rights Council in March 2014.

Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

The Global Issues Directorate continued to promote Malta’s policy to oppose the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery whilst supporting disarmament efforts. Malta supports measures for the establishment of a Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone and for the process leading up to the planned Conference for the establishment of this zone, including support to the work of the Finnish Facilitator.

Malta made a contribution to a new trust fund set up by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) aimed at the destruction of chemical weapons currently in Syria, displaying Malta’s firm commitment to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Malta signed the Arms Trade Treaty in New York on 3 June 2013 and is expected to ratify the Treaty in the coming weeks, moving closer to the Treaty’s entry into force which requires fifty ratifications.

Terrorism

The Directorate continued its participation within various EU working groups and International Conferences aimed at combating international terrorist threats. Malta participates within these groups in coordination with other local departments. The Directorate was also involved in talks between the Government and the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF). The latter expressed its desire to set up an Institute for Justice and Rule of Law in Malta which should initially focus on Arab Spring countries. Malta welcomed this initiative and a meeting of GCTF partners took place in Malta on 12 November 2013. Negotiations are under way with the objective that the Institute should achieve operability in 2014.

Candidatures

The Directorate coordinated the lobbying efforts for Malta’s re-election to the Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The election took place during the 28th Session of the IMO Assembly on 29 November 2013 in London. Malta was elected with 132 votes placing 4th amongst the 24 countries contesting for Category C of the IMO Council.

The Directorate is also engaging in lobbying efforts for the candidature of Malta to the United Nations Security Council for the term 2023-2024.

Sanctions

Sanctions or restrictive measures in force in 2013 mainly concerned those imposed by the United Nations Security Council and by the European Union on the Islamic Republic of Iran, on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, on the Gaddafi regime in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and those on Burma/Myanmar which for the latter were mainly lifted. In relation to Tunisia, Egypt and Syria, sanctions were mainly those imposed by the European Union against corrupt regimes. Other regimes pertaining to Eastern European countries also continued to feature. The Sanctions Monitoring Board, as chaired by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, has monitored the implementation of these restrictive measures and has dutifully reported thereon whenever this was required under UN and EU laws.
Meeting Participation

Officials from the Directorate regularly attended a number of CFSP Working Groups meetings held in Brussels and participated in various international meetings. The Directorate was also involved in the preparations of briefs and speaking points for numerous meetings, notably the Foreign Affairs Council meetings, the United Nations General Assembly Ministerial week in September in New York, the Universal Periodic Review in October in Geneva, the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers and the Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings in November in Sri Lanka.
Visits

During this period, the Directorate was responsible for assisting in the preparatory organisational work and in the implementation of visits to Malta by foreign dignitaries, notably: H.E. Margarita Popova, Vice-President of the Republic of Bulgaria; H.E. Mr Van Rompuy, President of the European Council; H.E. Mr Antonis Samaras, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic; H.E. Ms Valentina Matvienko, Chairman of the Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation; and Hon Enrico Letta, Prime Minister of Italy.

An Official visit by the EU Commissioner responsible for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, H.E. Mr Laszlo Andor was also made.

Other Ministers who visited Malta were: The HonEng. Mohamed Elfitouri Sawalem, Libyan Minister of Labour and Training; The HonPreneet Kaur, Minister of State for External Affairs of India; The Hon. Murray McCully, Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand; H.E. Dr Igor Luksic, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Montenegro; H.E. Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council of Europe; HE Dr Riad Malki, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Palestine; H.E. Mohamed Ben Salem, Tunisian Minister for Agriculture, Hydraulics Resources and Fisheries; HonPaula Bennett, Minister for Social Development of New Zealand; HonMs Hanna Serwaa Tetteh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ghana; H.E. William Lacy Swing, Director General of IOM; H.E. Mr Mohamed Abdelaziz, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Libya; H.E. Sid Ahmed Ferroukhi, Minister for Fisheries Resources of Algeria; and H.E. Mr Enver Hoxhaj, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo.

Visits by high level officials included that of: H.E. Mr Ricardo Neiva Tavares, Special Envoy of the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil; H.E. Dr Yousef T Al Saadoun, Undersecretary for the Economic and Cultural Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Saudi Arabia; H.E. Hans-Joachim Otto, Parliamentary State Secretary of the Federal Republic of Germany; Ms Kathleen Doherty, Deputy Assistant Secretary from the Bureau of European and Euroasian Affairs of USA; Australian Members of Parliament from the State of Victoria; H.E. Mr Peter Javorcik, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic; Mr Du Qinglin, Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference; H.E. Mr Alexei Meshkov, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation; and H.E. Mr Mustafa Abdul Jalil, Former Chairman of the National Transitional Council.

In addition to the above, the Directorate set up a number of programmes for routine visits by non-resident Ambassadors (24). The directorate also co-ordinated the visit to Malta by 20 non resident Ambassadors and Chargés d’Affaires in connection with the programme of the exchange of New Year’s Greetings.

There were no outgoing or incoming State Visits during 2013.

Farewell Calls

During this period the term of duty ended for the Ambassadors of the following countries: Kingdom of Sweden; Republic of Turkey; Italy; Republic of Latvia; Kingdom of the Netherlands; Federal Republic of Germany; Republic of Namibia; Arab Republic of Egypt; Palestine; Republic of the Sudan.
Accreditations

This Directorate sought and obtained the agreements and/or credentials of Maltese Ambassadors to: the Andorra; Australia; Austria; Azerbaijan; Belgium; Brazil; Canada; China; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Estonia; France; Germany; Holy See; Hungary; India; Italy; Kazakhstan; Kuwait; Latvia; Lebanon; Libya; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Mexico; Mongolia; Oman; Poland; Russia; San Marino; Saudi Arabia; Slovakia; Spain; Switzerland; Tunisia; Turkey; UAE; UK, USA; Yemen.

Credentials

During 2013, Agréments approving the newly nominated foreign Ambassadors-Designate/High Commissioners-Designate were issued to the following countries: Australia, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sudan, Italia, Kazakhstan, Egypt, Luxemburg, Belgium, Holy See, Zambia, Croatia, South Africa, Germany, Rumania, Guatemala, the Netherlands, Brazil, Canada, Georgia, Turkey, Republic of Korea, Ukraine, Mongolia, United Arab Emirates, Iran, Sweden, Albania, the Gambia, Armenia, Qatar, Uganda, Laos, Venezuela, Peru.

Consequently, Ambassadors and High Commissioners of the following countries presented their credentials to the President of Malta up to December 2013:

- Australia (17/1/13), Ecuador (17/1/13), India (17/1/13), Indonesia (7/2/13), Philippines (7/2/13), Bosnia and Herzegovina (7/2/13), Sudan (7/2/13), Italia (28/2/13), Kazakhstan (28/2/13), Egypt (11/4/13), Luxemburg (11/4/13), Belgium (11/4/13), Holy See (2/5/13), Zambia (2/5/13), Croatia (2/5/13), South Africa (13/6/13), Germany (11/7/13), Rumania (11/7/13), Guatemala (11/7/13), the Netherlands (26/9/13), Brazil (26/9/13), Canada (7/11/13), Georgia (7/11/13), Turkey (5/12/13), Republic of Korea (5/12/13), Ukraine (5/12/13).

Accreditation of Honorary Consuls

During 2013, the Ministry continued with its effort to further strengthen its network of Honorary Consuls around the world. The main reasons remain twofold - the economic, i.e. to attract foreign investment to Malta, promote the country as a tourist destination and as a hub for learning the English language and also enhance Malta’s reputation in the financial, maritime and aviation sectors, and secondly, to ensure that the necessary assistance is extended to Maltese nationals should they encounter problems during their travel abroad.

In the past twelve months we have finalised and appointed Honorary Consuls in the following cities:

- Edmonton (Canada), Jakarta (Indonesia), Cagliari (Italy), Antalya (Turkey), Port Louis (Mauritius), Phoenix (USA), Manzini (Swaziland), Kortenberg (Belgium), Bogota (Colombia), Basel (Switzerland)

In the meantime nine other candidates are in the process of being appointed as Honorary Consuls.

Furthermore agréments were also issued to appoint four new Honorary Consuls in Malta, while exequatur was issued to Honorary Consuls representing Korea, Montenegro and Colombia.

In July 2013 the Ministry organized the biennial Consuls’ meeting. This successful meeting was well attended with 101 Honorary Consuls present. The Honorary Consuls were given
presentations from various entities and participated in working groups on various subjects such as investment promotion, commerce, tourism, financial services, ship and aircraft registration, Valletta 2018, and education.

**Diplomatic Clearances**

**Naval Vessels**

During the period under review this Directorate processed 72 requests for visiting naval vessels from the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, France, United States of America, The Netherlands, Sweden, Algeria, Russia, China, Denmark, Libya, Morocco, Oman and Kenya.

**Overflights**

This Directorate processed 630 requests for diplomatic clearances for state/military aircrafts to overfly and/or land in Malta during the same period. The requests for diplomatic clearance were received from the following countries:

Italy, United States of America, France, Switzerland, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Germany, Russian Federation, Greece, Spain, United Arab Emirates, Oman, United Kingdom, Canada, Brazil, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Sudan, Poland, Morocco, Sweden, Belgium, Ukraine, India, Israel, Jordan, Nigeria, Kuwait, Qatar, Argentina, Chile, Ethiopia, Egypt, Venezuela, Hungary, Czech Republic, Mauritania, Bahrain, Denmark, Ghana, Lebanon, Montenegro, Botswana, Monaco, Bangladesh, Thailand, Luxembourg, Namibia, Niger and Romania.

**Military**

During the same period the Directorate issued 25 clearances for the wearing of uniforms during military-related occasions by military personnel of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Italy and Poland.

Clearances were also issued for 28 visits to Malta by military personnel from the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

This Directorate also issued accreditation for 5 Defence/Naval Attachés from France, Germany, Turkey, Canada and the Netherlands.

**Conferment of Foreign Decorations**

The Directorate processed 8 requests from the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Slovak Republic, Italy and Greece for the conferement of decorations on Maltese citizens.

**Protocol Service to the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to Malta**

**Diplomatic ID Cards**

This Directorate issued a total of 432 Identity Cards to diplomatic (202), administrative (73), and service staff (30) of resident missions as well as for the Consular Corps in Malta (5), the Consular Corps of Malta abroad (23) and the staff at international organizations (99).

**Duty Free**
The Directorate processed around 400 requests from various resident missions for duty free entitlements on the purchase of cigarettes, spirits, alcohol and other specific purchases.

**VAT Refunds**

The Directorate continued to administer the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic relations of 1961 with respect to the diplomatic corps accredited to Malta by ensuring that the diplomatic privileges and immunities are being respected and implemented. In this context this Directorate processed 754 claims for VAT refund and referred them to the VAT Department for reimbursement.

**Other Services**

Between January and December, 2013, we received and processed 937 requests for use of the VIP and Ministerial Lounge at the airport.

This Directorate also extends assistance to Embassies and International Organisations in Malta as regards queries and requests concerning different Ministeries and Government Departments, such as Driving licenses for Diplomats, Car Licenses, Importation of cars, VAT Exemption, Issuing of Car Plates (CD, DMS and TF); other Licenses such as Radio Transmission Licenses or other queries to different Ministries.

**Consular Services**

**Visas**

During the year, 437 visa applications of Maltese nationals were processed through Malta’s missions in Rome (mainly) and Tripoli (Jan 2012 to Dec 2012).

On a regular basis, we received about 20 calls a day for information on visas, the majority of whom enquired about the list of requirements needed to obtain visas. This information was sent to them electronically, on the same day people made their demand. Many requests are answered or forwarded to the relevant departments respectively as they are received through the generic e mail (information and Protocol).

**Authentications**

The total income for the period between January 2013 to December 2013 was € 332,813. Throughout this year 7855 customers called at this Directorate to legalise a total of 24,271 documents.

**Scholarships**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs offered scholarships at Masters level in Legal, Economic, Political, Diplomatic or European studies. Six applications were received and two were chosen. These students are currently studying at the College of Europe in Brugges. The following countries offered scholarships to Maltese students: Italy, Tunisia, Japan, Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, India, Indonesia and China. The following Organisations MEDAC and IMLI also offered scholarships to Maltese students. Singapore offered short term training courses to Government Civil Servants in various fields. Around 30 students have applied and 25 were chosen as follows. Singapore (7), Germany (6) Czech Republic (1), Japan (1), China (1), Italy (4), Tunisia (4) u IMLI (1).

**Illegal Migration**
In the last twelve months (2012) the Protocol and Consular Services Directorate kept in continuous contact with the Maltese Embassies abroad, foreign Embassies accredited to Malta, and the Police Force in order to issue valid Emergency Travel Documents (ETDs) to third country nationals (TCNs) in order that they could be repatriated and logistic arrangements could be made for these irregular migrants to be sent back to their country. Several requests for ETDs where made for 362 travel documents to be issued. During this period 4 travel documents were issued and were repatriated back to their country. Requests were sent to 27 diplomatic representations accredited to Malta: Algeria, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Republic of Guinea, India, Iran, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Palestinian Representation in Malta, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Togo and Tunisia.

The majority of requests for ETDs were sent to the following countries: Ghana, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Mali (including via Consul of Mali in Malta). During this period the embassies which replied with requested ETDs were of the following countries: Pakistan and Nigeria.

**Rogatory Letters**

During 2013 DPCS facilitated the correspondence of around 52 sets of letters rogatory between the Maltese and foreign judicial authorities.

**Arrest and Detention of Maltese**

This Directorate deals with cases of Maltese nationals detained abroad and with cases of foreign nationals detained in Malta. In the latter case foreign governments submit requests concerning their nationals who are detained in Malta. In 2013 there were 18 requests regarding foreign nationals who were arrested or detained in prison in Malta.

**Adoptions**

DPCS also handles cases of adoption of foreign children from some countries when cases prove more difficult. These countries include Cambodia, Pakistan and Morocco. The Ministry receives requests to transmit documents to foreign Diplomatic Missions for verification or to issue documents relative to the adopting couple. In 2013 DPCS dealt with 12 such adoption cases.

**Maltese Nationals in Distress**

From January to December 2013 there were 20 consular cases of certain importance. These can be categorised as follows:

- 8 cases of arrests abroad in connection with theft, smuggling, drug possession and there was one case of abduction and rape;
- 4 death of Maltese nationals abroad was registered, two were in tragic circumstances and two natural deaths. All 4 nationals with the exception of one have been repatriated;
- 3 cases of child abductions (Maltese nationals) (mainly children) withheld by a relative of theirs with a foreign nationality (in particularly from Libya);
- 2 medical assistance cases were also registered during 2012;
- This Ministry also assisted three (3) Maltese nationals in their request to Foreign States on the reacquisition or compensation for the confiscation of their property (mainly in Libya and Algeria)
Other requests include:
- requests on whereabouts of Maltese nationals by the relatives in Malta
- transfer of funds to Maltese nationals in distress abroad.

In every consular case, this Ministry could count on the invaluable assistance of the Maltese Embassies and Consulates abroad.

**Travel Advice**

This Directorate prepares travel advice for eventual publishing on the Ministry’s website. This advice is issued in the light of events in particular countries and in accordance with travel advice issued by other Member States of the European Union and by receiving feedback on the situation from resident missions abroad.

**Other Consular Services**

DPCS is in continuous contact with foreign Diplomatic Missions accredited to Malta. In 2013 this Directorate processed documentation in relation to 2 accidents in which foreigners were involved and to the demise of 52 foreigners in Malta.

This Directorate deals with requests for information regarding specific aspects of Maltese laws, complaints from foreign Diplomatic Missions as well as other requests from International Organisations present in Malta.

DPCS also acts as a facilitator through which Maltese nationals transfer money to relatives and friends in distress in other countries.

Additionally, officials from DPCS give evidence in Court regarding the implementation in Malta of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, as well as evidence relating to other issues falling within the remit of this Directorate.

**Working Groups**

**Consular Cooperation (COCON)**

This Directorate participated in the six meetings of the Consular Co-operation Working Group, which aims to facilitate consular co-operation between the member states for the benefit of European nationals. During this year, negotiations continued on the Commission proposal for a Council Directive on consular protection for citizens of the Union abroad. Other topics that have been discussed were the use of social media in consular protection, the EU-U.S consular co-operation, and consular cooperation in crisis areas in particular, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt.

**Chiefs of Protocol Informal Meetings (COPRO)**

Director also participated in the Informal Meeting for Chiefs of Protocol organised in Lithuania on 7-8 October 2013 by the Presidency. During this meeting current consular and protocol issues were discussed between EU Member States with a view to establishing common practices where possible. The subjects discussed were:
- Updating Common EU Protocol Guidelines on official visits;
- Greeting of VIPs and delegations at the aircraft. Exemption from security screening;
- Accreditation of administrative-technical staff and service staff;
- ID card/certificate issued by the state to its Honorary Consuls abroad;
- Violation of traffic rules and diplomatic immunity. Practise in collecting fines;
- EU diplomat's rights and immunities: clashes between EU legislation and international law/status of diplomats.
International Connectivity

As the main source of connectivity to Malta, the Office has continued throughout 2013, to monitor the performance of all connections. Where it was deemed necessary an upgrade to the current connections was introduced. New upgrades were address in our offices in Beijing, Riyadh, New York, and Warsaw. When monitoring connections, the office in collaboration with MITA ensure that there is an uptime link of approximately 98%.

Website

The Ministry website has remained stable and continues to have over 1,000 hits per day. Given that the site is now showing signs of ‘old’ age, the Information Management Unit, is currently looking into changing the current website using more modern tools and a fresher outlook. The new website is envisaged to be available in Q2 2014.

External Border Funds

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has been allocated €3.4 million which may be used to finance, the refurbishment of our Consulate in Tripoli, following damages it has sustained during the revolution. Furthermore these funds will also be used to upgrade the security of the premises in view of the ever increasing security situations in Libya. Furthermore in view of the increase in visa applications, the current premises will be enhanced to take on board these new volumes.

The project also includes the purchase and it refurbishment of two properties to serve as Consulate, one in Misurata and one in Benghazi.

Furthermore under the 2013 Annual Programme, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will also be benefitting from €5.4 million for similar projects aimed at improving Consular operations in Shanghai, Sao Paolo, Kuwait, and Qatar.

The completion date of these projects is June 2015.

National Visa System (N_VIS)

The Information Management Unit has participated fully in EU meetings in relation to the European Visa Information System (VIS). In a nutshell the EU VIS will bring together all Schengen states in an effort to share visa information. With the launch of the EU VIS, Malta has been participating fully in the EU rollout plan. Malta has so far met all EU deadlines and is in line with the current EU rollout plan. Plans for further rollouts to other locations/countries are envisaged to continue towards Q2 2014, it is to be noted that Malta is already prepared and has no difficulty with keep up with the EU rollout pace.

2013 has been a very busy and interesting year for the Information Management Unit, where External Border Funds are concerned. The Ministry had in 2011 acquire funds for the purchase of mobile kits to be used in connection with the Visa Process. These mobile kits will allow for better planning where business continuity is concerned and will allow the Consul to be more closer to the applicant. With the mobile kit, the Consul will be able to collect visa applications not only from within the Consulate premises but also away from the Consulate. This means that medical cases and other remote sites can easily be reached. Through this same project, all officers were trained in security awareness, given that now officers will be able to move out of the Consulate comfort zone. Furthermore, as part of this
project, a security audit was carried out in identified Consulates in order to ensure the best possible security environment. This project was completed successfully in June 2013. Through this project, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was also able to continue collaborating with External Service Providers where the collection of visa applications and the required biometric data is concerned. Through this project the Ministry for Foreign Affairs benefitted from over €800,000 out of which 75% were funded through EU Funds.

Also under the umbrella of the External Border Funds, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will be benefitting from EU funds related to the VIS Mail implementation. The amount of funds allocated for this project is €250,000 out of which 75% are EU funded. VIS Mail will form an integral part of the national Visa System and will be the medium whereby all Member States will communicate together on visa matter. This project will be completed by June 2015.

Electronic Cash Management System

In an effort to manage public funds more efficiently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has in 2009 introduced a new cash management system to be used by all embassies abroad. As the payment process within Embassies is different from the local scenario, a cash management system has been designed with the help of MITA to meet the requirements of each individual embassies but still keep in line with financial regulations and which will also be able to update the government Department Account System (DAS). In doing so the Corporate Services Directorate will have ‘near’ real time figures of the financial situation in each individual embassy. All Embassies with the exception of Kuwait and Libya are connected and are using this system. Together with the Director Corporate Services, the Information Management Unit is continuously seek to improve the system by introducing new processess that will facilitate the use of data available.

Information Security

As part of its role, the Information Management Unit, was also heavily involved in information security matters. The Unit has carried out a number of initiatives to increase information security awareness amongst its officers. As indicated above, through EU funds, the Ministry has invested in awareness programmes where officers working locally and abroad were invited to attend. Furthermore, initiatives to help keep this awareness alive were also introduced such as posters and screen savers. News shots on day to day security issues have been drafted and will be circulated on a regular basis starting from January 2014. Furthermore, the Ministry has invested in an on-line computer based training on information security which will also be launched in January 2014. Security operations manuals for each Embassy are currently being drawn up and will be enforced during Q1 2014. This will ensure a corporate approach towards security by staff members. These security operations manuals will take a similar approach as the security operations manual that is currently available for Head Office.

The Information Management Unit, has, in February 2013, participated in an EU Security audit insofar as the handling of EU Classified Information. The audit was carried out on all EU sub-registries namely, the Central Registry at OPM and sub-registries at MFA, AFM and at the Permanent Representation in Brussels. The Chief Information Officer, as Deputy Head of the National Security Accreditation Authority, headed the Maltese delegation. The audit was successful.

Foreign.NET...a collaborative network

In order to improve the flow of information between Head Office and its missions, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has investing in a collaborative tool which will be used by all officers as an
intranet. Foreign.NET as this intranet was named, will the knowledge pool for the entire Ministry. Currently the system is still in its infancy and the Information Management Unit, is tasked to see it develop into a secure communication channel for all the Ministry.
Human Resources

In order to strengthen the senior management structure, throughout 2013, the appointments of Director (European General Affairs and Economic Cooperation), Director (External Relations and Mediterranean Affairs), Assistant Director (International Development, Economic Affairs and European Institutions) and Assistant Director (European Affairs) were concluded. The Human Resources Section also carried out a number of selection processes to fill various posts at different levels of the diplomatic structure in missions abroad and within the Ministry’s departments. By means of a service-wide recruitment process, a Manager, Budget Implementation Missions Abroad, Manager, Conditions of Service and two ICT, Support Officers were recruited. The selection process for the recruitment of a Technical Attaché at the Permanent Representation of Malta in Brussels was also concluded whilst the processes for the selection of Assistant Director (Cultural Diplomacy Unit) and Assistant Director (Human Resources and Support Services) were at an advanced stage of engagement although not completed by the end of 2013. The Human Resources Section also processed a number of progressions in the public service in Malta and abroad, therefore monitoring the PMP reports and requesting the necessary Performance Reports from the respective Heads of Department/Unit/Mission.

Staff training was also offered both locally and abroad. A talk was also delivered to encourage students following the Degree in international Relations at the University of Malta and students in the fifth Form at St Aloysius College to pursue a career in Diplomacy.

The Human Resources section has also supported other sections of the Directorate in particular the Finance section, by constantly monitoring the personal emoluments, particularly of allowances and overtime throughout the year.

The Human Resources Section has also continued to monitor and support the use of Family Friendly measures and has also offered provided unlimited administrative assistance to all officers who were posted overseas as well as those returning from overseas postings.

Finance

Apart from the usual meetings/lunches with foreign dignitaries and New Year Exchange Greetings, the Ministry hosted the Biennale Honorary Consuls’ meeting and the second Kunsill tal-Maltin ta’ Barra meeting. This time round sponsorships were used in order to reduce costs. The Financial Management Directorate launched a new procurement strategy during 2013. This strategy covers procurement carried out both locally as well as in our missions abroad. The objective of this strategy is to introduce standards in procurement, make it transparent and fully compliant with the obligations from LN 296/2010.

The Financial Management Directorate also managed effectively and responsibly the funds allocated in its 2013 Revised Budget and savings were still registered where possible whilst ensuring in the process that the output was of the highest standard. Talks with respect to VOM liquidation were made with the Libyan counterparts and liquidation is at a very advanced stage.

Mission Accounts Section

There are still some issues to be solved before Tripoli and Benghazi can join the Electronic Cash Management System (ECMS) while this year Kuwait accounts were recorded on the ECMS.
In August 2013 an induction meeting was made to the newly appointed Ambassadors whereby procurement regulations and good financial practices in the management of the monthly accounts by Missions were an important aspect.

In 2013 various maintenance was carried out across the Missions both at the residence and chancery which are government owned namely in Berlin, Canberra, Washington, Tripoli and London. During this year the official cars pertaining to the Missions in Geneva, Washington, Tunis and Warsaw were changed while the official car in Berlin was newly leased.

Green Initiatives

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs received the Issue paper: Towards Sustainable Waste Management as circulated by the Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change in July 2013. The paper was issued as a preliminary consultation document prior to the formulation of Malta’s Waste Management Plan 2014-2020. The Ministry has conducted an assessment in its directorates, to highlight any existing gaps. The results of this assessment will be included in a Memorandum which will be brought to the attention of the Permanent Secretary, MFA.

Project Management and Maintenance Works

Regular maintenance and upkeep was carried out at the Ministry, Directorates and Outstations throughout 2013.

Further re-instatement interventions and various consolidation works due to concrete spalling were carried out at Palazzo Parisio, at the second floor level ceiling in order to render the working place safe for MFA’s personnel.

Further regular maintenance and various upgrading works were carried on the new lift installed at Palazzo Parisio during 2013.

A new brushed metal hand rail has been fitted around the new lift staircase at Palazzo Parisio complemented with new lighting fixtures and emergency lights.

The party wall at the back of Palazzo Parisio has been pointed together with consolidation works.

All the refurbishment works and other ancillary services at the Protocol Offices at Palazzo Parisio have been completed.

A new lighting system was installed at the Permanent Secretary’s office and other various new lighting LED devices were replaced and installed at IMU and Protocol offices.

There was regular maintenance, servicing and repairs throughout the year of various air conditioning units throughout the Ministry and the Outstations.

Several meetings and site visits were held with MEPA and with the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage pertaining to the proposed project of the intermediate floor at Palazzo Parisio. Two mock-up exercises were organised under the supervision of MEPA and SCH officials in September and another one in October. The application for this project is at MEPA for further processing from their end.

The Health and Safety committee met several times during the year to discuss and address a number of issues pertaining Health and Safety matters. A risk assessment was carried out...
and a report in this sense was forwarded to MFA to carry out the necessary various recommendations in the said report.