

Ethnologue: Languages of Malta

Twenty-sixth edition data

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List of Abbreviations

A	Agent in constituent word order
<i>alt.</i>	alternate name for
<i>alt. dial.</i>	alternate dialect name for
AOV	Agent-Object-Verb
C	Consonant in canonical syllable patterns
CDE	Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)
<i>Class</i>	Language classification
CPPDCE	Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)
CSICH	Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)
<i>dial.</i>	primary dialect name for
EUD	European Union of the Deaf
FPCNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1998)
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
IMB	International Mission Board
km	kilometer(s)
L1 / L2	first language / second (or other additional) language
<i>Lg Dev</i>	Language development
<i>Lg Use</i>	Language use
m	meter(s)
P	Patient in constituent word order
PARADISEC	Pacific And Regional Archive for Digital Sources In Endangered Cultures
<i>pej.</i>	pejorative
pl.	plural
S	Subject in constituent word order
sg.	singular
SVO	Subject-Verb-Object
<i>Type</i>	Typological information
UNCRRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
V	Vowel in canonical syllable patterns

How to Use This Digest

This *Ethnologue* country digest provides an extract of the information about the language situation in Malta that is published in the 26th edition of *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (see <http://www.ethnologue.com>), including some ways of presenting the information that are not available in the online version. The digest begins with a “Country Overview” (page 6) and “Statistical Summaries” (page 8) of languages and number of speakers by language size, by language status, and by language family.

The “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) provides detailed information on the 9 languages listed in the *Ethnologue* for the country of Malta. This includes languages that are indigenous to the country, languages that have developed well-established multigenerational speaker communities after immigrating in the past, and languages that have a significant presence in the country but are not established (that is, not being transmitted to the next generation within the country). A complete language entry has the following form and content:

Primary language name [ISO 639-3 code] (Alternate names). Autonym. *Users*: Country user population. Population stability comment. Population remarks. Monolingual population. Ethnic population. *Location*: Location. *Status*: EGIDS level. Special cases. Language function in country. *Class*: Linguistic classification. Macrolanguage membership. *Dialects*: Dialect names. Intelligibility and dialect relations. Lexical similarity. *Type*: Linguistic typology information. *Lg Use*: Remarks on use of the language. Domains of use. User age range. Language attitudes. Bilingualism remarks. Use as second language. *Lg Dev*: Literacy rates. Literacy remarks. Use in education. Publications and use in media. Revitalization efforts. Language development agencies. *DLS*: Digital support. *Writing*: Scripts used. *Other*: Non-indigenous. General remarks. Religion. *Worldwide*: Total population in all countries. Other countries where used.

See <http://www.ethnologue.com/methodology/#languagePages> for a full description of these information elements. If the autonym contains the “?” character, this indicates a complex non-Roman character that the PDF-creating software we are using is not able to render. We regret the inconvenience.

Many ways of finding languages are provided. “Languages by Population” (page 13) lists the languages in order of their first-language speaker populations. “Languages by Status” (page 15) lists the languages by their level of development or endangerment as measured on EGIDS, the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). “Languages by Family” (page 17) lists the languages by their linguistic classifications. “Language Code Index” (page 18) gives an alphabetical listing of all the three-letter codes from ISO 639-3 that are used in this digest to uniquely identify languages. “Language Name Index” (page 19) lists every name that appears in the language listings as a primary or alternate name of a language or dialect. A total of 13 unique names are associated with the 9 languages described in this digest.

Finally, a listing of all the published sources cited within this digest is found in “Bibliography”

(page 20). The published sources are cited using standard in-text citations enclosed in parentheses, consisting of the author's or editor's surname followed by the year of publication. Unpublished sources including personal communications and unpublished reports are also acknowledged when specific statements or facts are attributed to them. They are identified using in-text citations enclosed in parentheses in which the year of the communication is given first, followed by the source's first initial and surname. In such a case, there is no corresponding entry in the bibliography.

This digest is designed for use in both digital and print formats. The cross-references are thus rendered as page numbers that are hyperlinks. When using the document in printed form, simply turn to the referenced page by number. When using it in digital form, click on the blue text to jump to the cross-referenced location.

If you believe any of the information about a language in this digest is in error or if you are able to supply missing information, please send your proposed change to the editor using one of the means given below. Provide as much information as possible about the source of your information. Full bibliographic details of published sources are especially helpful.

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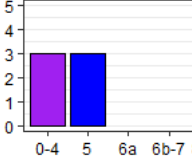
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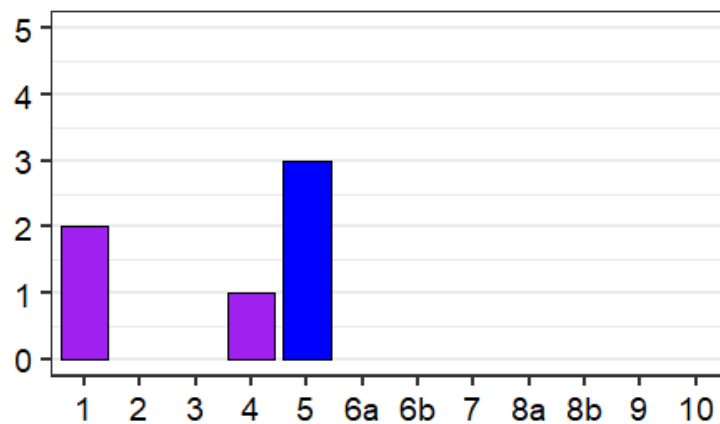
Country Overview

Name of country	Malta
Other names	Republic of Malta
Population	514,600 (2019 census)
Principal languages	English, Maltese
Literacy rate	95% (2018 UNESCO)
Deaf population	1,000
International conventions	CDE (1966), CPPDCE (2006), CSICH (2017), FCPNM (1998), ICCPR (1990), UNCRPD (2012), UNDRIP (2007)
General references	Bateson 1967, Campbell and King 2011
Language counts	<p>The number of established languages listed for Malta is 6. All are living languages. Of these, 2 are indigenous and 4 are non-indigenous. Furthermore, 3 are institutional and 3 are developing. Also listed are 3 unestablished languages.</p> 

See the next page for an explanation of the summary categories for language vitality used in the above counts and graph.

Language Status Profile

The following histogram gives a graphic profile of the established languages in Malta with respect to their status of language development versus language endangerment. This includes all of the languages appearing in the “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) that report an EGIDS level after *Status*; macrolanguages and unestablished languages are not included in the profile. The horizontal axis plots the estimated level of development or endangerment as measured on the EGIDS scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). The height of each bar indicates the number of languages that are estimated to be at the given level. Consult “Languages by Status” (page 15) in order to see the specific languages for each level.



The color coding of the bars in the histogram above matches the color scheme used in the summary profile graph on the preceding page. In this scheme, the EGIDS levels are grouped as follows:

- Purple = Institutional (EGIDS 0–4) — The language has been developed to the point that it is used and sustained by institutions beyond the home and community.
- Blue = Developing (EGIDS 5) — The language is in vigorous use, with literature in a standardized form being used by some though this is not yet widespread or sustainable.
- Green = Vigorous (EGIDS 6a) — The language is in vigorous use among all generations and remains unstandardized.
- Yellow = In trouble (EGIDS 6b–7) — Intergenerational transmission is in the process of being broken, but the child-bearing generation can still use the language so it is possible that revitalization efforts could restore transmission of the language in the home.
- Red = Dying (EGIDS 8a–9) — The only fluent users (if any) are older than child-bearing age, so it is too late to restore natural intergenerational transmission through the home; a mechanism outside the home would need to be developed.
- Black = Extinct (EGIDS 10) — The language is no longer used and no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language.

Statistical Summaries

The “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) provides a detailed listing of all the languages of Malta. This section steps back from the detail to offer a summary view of the language situation in the country. Specifically, it offers three numerical tabulations of the living established languages of Malta and their users: by language size, by language status, and by language family.

Summary by language size

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of living established languages in Malta by number of L1 speakers. The *Population range* column categorizes the sizes of the languages by order of magnitude (in terms of the number of digits in the population of first-language speakers). Consult “Languages by Population” (page 13) for a listing of the specific languages in each range category.

The *Count* column gives the number of living established languages within the specified population range. The *Percent* column gives the share of the count for that population range as a percentage of the total number of languages given at the bottom of the Count column. The *Cumulative* column gives the cumulative sum of the percentage of languages going from top to bottom in the column.

The *Total* column gives the total L1 population of all the languages in the given range category. The second *Percent* column gives the percentage of the total country population as estimated at the bottom of the Total column. Note that if the table has a row for Unknown, representing languages for which the *Ethnologue* does not have a population estimate, the calculation of population percentage is not able to take those languages into account. The final *Cumulative* column gives the cumulative sums of the population percentages going from top to bottom in the column.

Table 1: Distribution of languages by number of first-language speakers

Population range	Living languages			Number of speakers		
	Count	Percent	Cumulative	Total	Percent	Cumulative
100,000 to 999,999	1	16.7	16.7%	499,000	98.01611	98.01611%
1,000 to 9,999	2	33.3	50.0%	9,900	1.94461	99.96071%
100 to 999	1	16.7	66.7%	200	0.03929	100.00000%
Unknown	2	33.3	100.0%			
<i>Totals</i>	6	100.0		509,100	100.00000	

Summary by language status

Table 2 summarizes the distribution of living established languages in Malta by their status in terms of language development or language endangerment. The *EGIDS* column categorizes the languages by their level on the EGIDS scale. Consult “Languages by Status” (page 15) for a

listing of the specific languages that have been assigned to each level. Note that the EGIDS level reported here is for the status of the language in Malta. Languages that are also used in other countries may be assigned to a different EGIDS level in those countries.

The next six columns are as in Table 1. In addition, the *Mean* column gives the average L1 population of all the languages with the given EGIDS level and the *Median* column gives the median L1 population for the languages at that level, that is, half of the languages at that level have a higher population and half have a lower population. If there are any languages with an unknown population, these are ignored in the calculation of the mean and the median.

Table 2: Distribution of languages by vitality status

EGIDS	Living languages			Number of speakers				
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
1	2	33.3	33.3%	507,800	99.7446	99.7446%	253,900	253,900
4	1	16.7	50.0%	Unknown				
5	3	50.0	100.0%	1,300	0.2554	100.0000%	433	650
<i>Totals</i>	6	100.0		509,100	100.0000			

Summary by language family

The genealogical classifications given in the language entries of the “Alphabetical Listing of Languages” (page 10) name 3 different top-level groups. Table 3 summarizes the distribution of living established languages and their L1 populations within these families. The columns are as for table 2, with the exception that *Cumulative* is excluded since there is no inherent ordering of the families.

Table 3: Distribution of languages by language family

Language family	Living languages		Number of speakers			
	<i>Count</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
Afro-Asiatic	1	16.7	499,000	98.0	499,000	499,000
Indo-European	4	66.7	9,900	1.9	2,475	4,950
Sign language	1	16.7	200	0.0	200	200
<i>Totals</i>	6	100.0	509,100	100.0		

Alphabetical Listing of Languages

Arabic, Egyptian Spoken [arz]. *Users*: 2,600 in Malta (2019). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Afro-Asiatic, Semitic, Central, South, Arabic. *Lg Dev*: Radio. TV. Videos. Dictionary. Grammar. NT: 1932. *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant, primary usage. Braille script. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 102,436,230 (as L1: 77,436,230; as L2: 25,000,000). Global EGIDS level: 3 (Wider communication). Indigenous in: Egypt. Also established in: United Arab Emirates. Unestablished in: Australia, Canada, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Netherlands, New Zealand, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Syria, United Kingdom, United States, Yemen.

English [eng] (Ingliz). Autonym: English. *Users*: 466,800 in Malta, all users. L1 users: 8,800 in Malta (2019). L2 users: 458,000 (European Commission 2012). *Status*: 1 (National). Statutory national working language (1964, Constitution, Article 5(2)). *Class*: Indo-European, Germanic, West, English. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; genitives after noun heads; articles, adjectives, numerals before noun heads; question word initial; word order distinguishes subject, object, indirect objects, given and new information, topic and comment; active and passive; causative; comparative; consonant and vowel clusters; 24 consonants, 13 vowels, 8 diphthongs; non-tonal; free stress; phrasal verbs. *Lg Dev*: Taught in primary and secondary schools as the language of instruction in private schools and as a subject in public schools. Fully developed. Bible: 1382–2002. *Writing*: Braille script. Deseret Alphabet, developed in 1854 with limited usage until 1877. Duployan shorthand. Latin script, primary usage. Shavian (Shaw) script, no longer in use. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 1,456,448,320 (as L1: 379,682,200; as L2: 1,076,766,120). Global EGIDS level: 0 (International). Indigenous in: Ireland, United Kingdom. Also established in 167 other countries and unestablished in 16 more.

French [fra]. Autonym: français. *Users*: 58,200 in Malta (Marcoux et al 2022), L2 users. *Location*: Scattered. *Status*: 4 (Educational). *Class*: Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Gallo-Romance, Gallo-Rhaetian, Oil, French. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; noun head final for common adjectives, numbers, possessives, but most attributive adjectives come after the noun; gender (masculine/feminine); definite and indefinite articles; verb affixes mark person, number; passives; tense; comparatives; 20 consonant and 14 vowel phonemes; non-tonal; syllable-timed stress. *Lg Dev*: Taught as subject in secondary schools. Fully developed. Bible: 1530–2000. *Writing*: Braille script. Duployan shorthand. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 309,804,220 (as L1: 80,770,190; as L2: 229,034,030). Global EGIDS level: 0 (International). Indigenous in: Andorra, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Monaco, Switzerland. Also established in 95 other countries and unestablished in 24 more.

German, Standard [deu]. Autonym: Deutsch. *Users*: 9,500 in Malta (2018 Eurostat), L2 users. *Status*: 5* (Dispersed). *Class*: Indo-European, Germanic, West, High German, German,

Middle German, East Middle German. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; noun head final; gender (masculine/feminine/neuter); definite and indefinite articles; case-marking (4 cases); verb affixes mark person, number; passives; tense; comparatives; 22 consonants, 22 vowels, 3 diphthongs; non-tonal; stress on first syllable of the root. *Lg Dev*: Taught as subject in secondary schools. Fully developed. *Bible*: 1466–2016. *Writing*: Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. Latin script, Fraktur variant, used until 1940. Runic script, no longer in use. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 133,245,880 (as L1: 75,282,080; as L2: 57,963,800). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Italy. Also established in 39 other countries and unestablished in 23 more.

Italian [ita] (Italiano). Autonym: Italiano. *Users*: 289,100 in Malta, all users. L1 users: 1,100 in Malta (2019). L2 users: 288,000 (European Commission 2012). *Location*: Widespread. *Status*: 5* (Dispersed). *Class*: Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Italo-Dalmatian. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; gender (masculine/feminine); definite and indefinite articles; verb affixes mark person, number; passives; tense; comparatives; 23 consonant and 7 vowel phonemes; non-tonal; stress mostly on penultimate syllable. *Lg Use*: Some learn it from television. *Lg Dev*: Taught as subject in secondary schools. Fully developed. *Bible*: 1471–1985. *Writing*: Braille script, used since 1974. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. An official language of Malta until 1936. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 67,935,480 (as L1: 64,647,380; as L2: 3,288,100). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Croatia, Italy, San Marino, Slovenia, Switzerland. Also established in 11 other countries and unestablished in 35 more.

Maltese [mlt]. Autonym: Malti. *Users*: 499,000 in Malta (European Commission 2012). *Location*: Widespread. *Status*: 1 (National). Statutory national language (1964, Constitution, Article 5(2)). *Class*: Afro-Asiatic, Semitic, Central, South, Arabic. *Dialects*: Standard Maltese, Port Maltese, Rural West Maltese, Rural East Maltese, Rural Central Maltese, Zurrieq, Gozo. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; noun head initial; gender (masculine/feminine); definite article; verb affixes mark person, number; 23 consonants, 10 vowels, 8 diphthongs; non-tonal. *Lg Use*: Vigorous. No diglossia with Standard Arabic [arb]. Most also use English [eng] (European Commission 2006). *Lg Dev*: Taught in all primary and secondary schools. Grammar. *Bible*: 1932–1984. *DLS*: Vital (0.77). *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant, no longer in use, attempts at using Arabic script have failed. Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Descended from Tunisian Spoken Arabic [aeb] with heavy borrowings from Italian [ita]; separately developed with different syntax and phonology. Influence from Romance began in the late eleventh century when the Normans ousted the Arabs from the islands and the language was isolated from its Arabic source, continuing to develop alongside Italian [ita] (Fabri 2010). *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 572,540 (as L1: 571,460; as L2: 1,080). Unestablished in: Australia, Canada, Italy, Libya, Tunisia, United Kingdom.

Maltese Sign Language [mdl] (Il-Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija, LSM, Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija, Lingwi tas-Sinjali Maltin). *Users*: 200 (2014 Malta Deaf People's Association). 200 deaf signers, less than 0.1% of the total population. Another estimate: 2,000 (2014 IMB). *Location*:

Scattered. *Status*: 5 (Developing). Recognized language (2016, Maltese Sign Language Recognition Act No. XVII of 2016), declared LSM as an official language, established a Sign Language Council to promote and develop it, and to regulate interpreting services. *Class*: Sign language, Deaf community sign language. *Dialects*: None known. Language isolate, but influence from British Sign Language [bfi] (Azzopardi-Alexander 2009). Lexical variation between generations, with younger signers often borrowing from British Sign Language [bfi] and American Sign Language [ase] (Azzopardi-Alexander et al 2019). Fingerspelling system similar to French Sign Language [fsl]. *Type*: One-handed fingerspelling. *Lg Use*: Vigorous. Used by all. Also use English [eng]. Also use Maltese [mlt]. *Lg Dev*: Videos. Dictionary. Agency: Maltese Deaf People's Association. *DLS*: Still. *Other*: Developed starting in 1956 when a deaf unit was established in a mainstream school; little is know of signing before then. Taught as L2 at University of Malta starting in 1995. Some use of SignWriting with deaf children. (Azzopardi-Alexander et al 2019). 8 working sign language interpreters (2019 EUD). Taught as an L2. Christian.

Somali [som]. Autonym: Af-Soomaali, Afka Soomaaliga. *Users*: 1,200 in Malta (2019). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Afro-Asiatic, Cushitic, East, Somali. *Type*: SOV; prepositions; noun head initial; gender (masculine/feminine); enclitic definite article; verb affixes mark number, person, gender of subject; tense; comparatives; 22 consonant and 10 vowel phonemes; tonal (3 grammatical tones: high, low, falling); inclusive/exclusive pronouns. *Lg Dev*: Literature. Radio. Videos. Dictionary. Grammar. Bible: 1979. *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant, no longer in use. Latin script, used since 1972. Osmanya script, no longer in use. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 22,044,840 (as L1: 21,937,940; as L2: 106,900). Global EGIDS level: 1 (National). Indigenous in: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia. Unestablished in: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Yemen.

Spanish [spa]. Autonym: Castellano, Español. *Users*: 8,200 in Malta (2019). *Status*: Unestablished. *Class*: Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Ibero-Romance, West Iberian, Castilian. *Type*: SVO; prepositions; genitives, relatives after noun heads; articles, numerals before noun heads; adjectives before or after noun heads depending on whether it is evaluative or descriptive; question word initial; gender (masculine/feminine); definite and indefinite articles; verb affixes mark number, person; passives; tense; comparatives; 20 consonants, 5 vowels, 5 diphthongs; non-tonal; stress on penultimate syllable. Silbo Gomero whistled variety of Spanish used in Canary Islands. *Lg Dev*: Fully developed. Bible: 1553–2012. *Writing*: Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Other*: Non-indigenous. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 559,078,890 (as L1: 485,063,960; as L2: 74,014,930). Global EGIDS level: 0 (International). Indigenous in: Andorra, Gibraltar, Spain. Also established in 40 other countries and unestablished in 32 more.

Languages by Population

In this section the languages of Malta are listed in order of their population of first-language speakers within the country, from highest to lowest. The entries report just the population and status elements.

100,000 to 999,999

Maltese [[mlt](#)] *Users:* 499,000 in Malta (European Commission 2012). *Status:* 1 (National). Statutory national language (1964, Constitution, Article 5(2)). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 572,540 (as L1: 571,460; as L2: 1,080).

1,000 to 9,999

English [[eng](#)] *Users:* 8,800 in Malta (2019). 466,800 in Malta, all users. L2 users: 458,000 (European Commission 2012). *Status:* 1 (National). Statutory national working language (1964, Constitution, Article 5(2)). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 1,456,448,320 (as L1: 379,682,200; as L2: 1076,766,120).

Spanish [[spa](#)] *Users:* 8,200 in Malta (2019). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 559,078,890 (as L1: 485,063,960; as L2: 74,014,930).

Arabic, Egyptian Spoken [[arz](#)] *Users:* 2,600 in Malta (2019). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 102,436,230 (as L1: 77,436,230; as L2: 25,000,000).

Somali [[som](#)] *Users:* 1,200 in Malta (2019). *Status:* Unestablished. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 22,044,840 (as L1: 21,937,940; as L2: 106,900).

Italian [[ita](#)] *Users:* 1,100 in Malta (2019). 289,100 in Malta, all users. L2 users: 288,000 (European Commission 2012). *Status:* 5* (Dispersed). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 67,935,480 (as L1: 64,647,380; as L2: 3,288,100).

100 to 999

Maltese Sign Language [[mdl](#)] *Users:* 200 (2014 Malta Deaf People's Association). 200 deaf signers, less than 0.1% of the total population. Another estimate: 2,000 (2014 IMB). *Status:* 5 (Developing). Recognized language (2016, Maltese Sign Language Recognition Act No. XVII of 2016), declared LSM as an official language, established a Sign Language Council to promote and develop it, and to regulate interpreting services.

Unknown

French [[fra](#)] *Users:* L2 users: 58,200 in Malta (Marcoux et al 2022), L2 users. *Status:* 4 (Educational). *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 309,804,220 (as L1: 80,770,190; as L2:

229,034,030).

German, Standard [[deu](#)] *Users*: L2 users: 9,500 in Malta (2018 Eurostat), L2 users. *Status*: 5* (Dispersed). *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 133,245,880 (as L1: 75,282,080; as L2: 57,963,800).

Languages by Status

In this section the languages of Malta are listed in order of their status within the country as represented by their level on the EGIDs scale (Lewis and Simons 2010). The language entries are reduced to just the information elements that are relevant to assessing the EGIDS level: population, status, language use, language development, and writing.

1 (National)

English [eng] *Users:* 466,800 in Malta, all users. L1 users: 8,800 in Malta (2019). L2 users: 458,000 (European Commission 2012). *Status:* Statutory national working language (1964, Constitution, Article 5(2)). *Writing:* Braille script. Deseret Alphabet, developed in 1854 with limited usage until 1877. Duployan shorthand. Latin script, primary usage. Shavian (Shaw) script, no longer in use. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 1,456,448,320 (as L1: 379,682,200; as L2: 1076,766,120).

Maltese [mlt] *Users:* 499,000 in Malta (European Commission 2012). *Status:* Statutory national language (1964, Constitution, Article 5(2)). *Lg Use:* Vigorous. No diglossia with Standard Arabic [arb]. Most also use English [eng] (European Commission 2006). *Lg Dev:* Grammar. Bible: 1932–1984. *Writing:* Arabic script, Naskh variant, no longer in use, attempts at using Arabic script have failed. Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 572,540 (as L1: 571,460; as L2: 1,080).

4 (Educational)

French [fra] *Users:* 58,200 in Malta (Marcoux et al 2022), L2 users. *Writing:* Braille script. Duployan shorthand. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide:* Total users in all countries: 309,804,220 (as L1: 80,770,190; as L2: 229,034,030).

5 (Developing)

Maltese Sign Language [mdl] *Users:* 200 (2014 Malta Deaf People's Association). 200 deaf signers, less than 0.1% of the total population. Another estimate: 2,000 (2014 IMB). *Status:* Recognized language (2016, Maltese Sign Language Recognition Act No. XVII of 2016), declared LSM as an official language, established a Sign Language Council to promote and develop it, and to regulate interpreting services. *Lg Use:* Vigorous. Used by all. Also use English [eng]. Also use Maltese [mlt]. *Lg Dev:* Videos. Dictionary.

5 (Dispersed)

German, Standard [deu] *Users:* 9,500 in Malta (2018 Eurostat), L2 users. *Writing:* Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. Latin script, Fraktur variant, used until 1940. Runic script, no

longer in use. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 133,245,880 (as L1: 75,282,080; as L2: 57,963,800).

Italian [ita] *Users*: 289,100 in Malta, all users. L1 users: 1,100 in Malta (2019). L2 users: 288,000 (European Commission 2012). *Lg Use*: Some learn it from television. *Writing*: Braille script, used since 1974. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 67,935,480 (as L1: 64,647,380; as L2: 3,288,100).

Unestablished

Arabic, Egyptian Spoken [arz] *Users*: 2,600 in Malta (2019). *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant, primary usage. Braille script. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 102,436,230 (as L1: 77,436,230; as L2: 25,000,000).

Somali [som] *Users*: 1,200 in Malta (2019). *Writing*: Arabic script, Naskh variant, no longer in use. Latin script, used since 1972. Osmanya script, no longer in use. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 22,044,840 (as L1: 21,937,940; as L2: 106,900).

Spanish [spa] *Users*: 8,200 in Malta (2019). *Writing*: Braille script. Latin script, primary usage. *Worldwide*: Total users in all countries: 559,078,890 (as L1: 485,063,960; as L2: 74,014,930).

Languages by Family

This index gives an alphabetical listing of the linguistic classifications used for the established languages of Malta. The entries in this index represent the full path in the linguistic family tree from the highest level grouping down to the lowest. All the languages listed in the same entry are members of the same lowest-level subgroup. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language.

Afro-Asiatic, Semitic, Central, South, Arabic

Maltese [mlt], [11](#)

Indo-European, Germanic, West, English

English [eng], [10](#)

Indo-European, Germanic, West, High German, German, Middle German, East Middle German

German, Standard [deu], [10](#)

Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Italo-Dalmatian

Italian [ita], [11](#)

Indo-European, Italic, Romance, Italo-Western, Western, Gallo-Iberian, Gallo-Romance, Gallo-Rhaetian, Oïl, French

French [fra], [10](#)

Sign language, Deaf community sign language

Maltese Sign Language [mdl], [11](#)

Language Code Index

This index gives an alphabetical listing of all 9 three-letter codes that are used in this work to uniquely identify languages. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language. All codes listed are part of the ISO 639-3 standard; see <http://www.sil.org/iso639-3/>.

arz	Arabic, Egyptian Spoken, 10	mdl	Maltese Sign Language, 11
deu	German, Standard, 10	mlt	Maltese, 11
eng	English, 10	som	Somali, 12
fra	French, 10	spa	Spanish, 12
ita	Italian, 11		

Language Name Index

This index lists every name that appears in the language listings as a primary or alternate name of a language or dialect. The following abbreviations are used in the index entries: *alt.* ‘alternate name for’; *alt. dial.* ‘alternate name for a dialect of’; *dial.* ‘primary name for a dialect of’; *pej. alt.* ‘pejorative alternate name for’; and *pej. alt. dial.* ‘pejorative alternate name for a dialect of’. Each index entry resolves to the primary name for the language with which the indexed name is associated, followed by square brackets containing the unique three-letter language code from ISO 639-3. The referenced page contains the main entry that describes the language. If the language appears on a map, the entry for the primary name also lists page numbers for the maps on which the language occurs.

Egyptian Spoken Arabic, *see* Arabic,
Egyptian Spoken [arz], 10

English [eng], 10

French [fra], 10

German, Standard [deu], 10
see German, Standard [deu], 10

Gozo, *dial.* Maltese [mlt], 11

Il-Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija, *alt.* Maltese Sign
Language [mdl], 11

Ingliż, *alt.* English [eng], 10

Italian [ita], 11

Italiano, *alt.* Italian [ita], 11

Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija, *alt.* Maltese Sign
Language [mdl], 11

Lingwi tas-Sinjali Maltin, *alt.* Maltese Sign
Language [mdl], 11

LSM, *alt.* Maltese Sign Language [mdl], 11

Maltese [mlt], 11

Maltese Sign Language [mdl], 11, 0

Malti, *alt.* Maltese [mlt], 11

Port Maltese, *dial.* Maltese [mlt], 11

Rural Central Maltese, *dial.* Maltese [mlt], 11

Rural East Maltese, *dial.* Maltese [mlt], 11

Rural West Maltese, *dial.* Maltese [mlt], 11

Standard Maltese, *dial.* Maltese [mlt], 11

Zurrieq, *dial.* Maltese [mlt], 11

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