

annual

# REPORT 2022



# 10 aditus

**accessing rights**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'f' followed by a horizontal line.A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'a' followed by a horizontal line.

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# introduction

## CHANGING GEARS IN OUR ADVOCACY: STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2022 - 2024

2022 was the first year of our new three-year Strategic Plan. For years, we have been taking small steps towards become more targeted and structured in our work. Whilst we are happy to be a human rights NGO looking at horizontal and structural issues, this broad approach presents resource and prioritisation challenges. If unseen to, it runs the risk of reducing our impact and demotivating our team members.

A Strategic Plan allows us to focus our attention of key targets, to seek and allocate the required resources and to rally support from people and entities who share our values and vision. Our entire team jointly formulates the organisation's Strategic Plan, on the basis of our assessment of past years' achievements and challenges together with a prediction of what lies ahead. We try to be ambitious but realistic, expansive yet cost-effective, inclusive yet efficient...importantly we are constantly asking ourselves: what do we want to achieve?

Most of the Plan's first year is devoted to its formulation and revision, the second year and most of the third to its implementation whilst during the latter part of the Plan's third year we assess and evaluate. We've learnt that it's a great process to unite our team and remain relevant, yet we are constantly seeking to improve it. Our next major challenge is to find efficient and effective ways of incorporating within the planing process the views of our partners and beneficiaries.

This Annual Report is an opportunity to share our 2022-2024 Strategic Plan and to comment on its first year of implementation. I hope this overview gives an insight into our activities and results, and to encourage you to engage more actively with us and with the human rights themes we are working on.

**Neil Falzon, Director**

**"...we are constantly asking ourselves:  
what do we want to achieve?"**

# 2022 - 2024 strategy

## Internal

### Our Goals

Ensuring our team members' well-being is a priority, as also encouraging them to grow personally and professionally. We need to provide an office environment that is functional, comfortable, healthy and fun whilst guaranteeing a service-provision that is always efficient and ethical.

Remaining financial sustainable remains a key challenge, underlining a need to diversify our sources of income.

Our public-facing profile, particularly our website, needs to be regularly updated to remain relevant, and our Statutes should reflect our developed structures and ethos.

We need to strengthen cooperation with our partner NGOs.

Our Strategic Plan contains clear goals and objectives, and ensures its revision and assessment of our performance.

### Key Activities

- A Team Well-Being Policy was adopted and we embarked on a more structured approach to social activities. Together with Richmond Foundation, we organised a team-building workshop.
- Team meetings include refresher components of the Malta Refugee Council's Code of Conduct.
- Financial forecasts are being built into our strategic planning.
- We initiated process of redesigning our Home Page, and aim to publish at least one blogpost per week. Client profiles are a regular feature on our blog.
- We coordinate the Malta Refugee Council, and maintain a close relationship with key national and international NGOs in our thematic areas.
- The 2022 - 2024 Strategic Plan was successfully adopted, and implementation is underway.

## Rule of Law

### Our Concerns

The manner of appointment of the judiciary and members of quasi-judicial entities is problematic since too close to the Government to guarantee impartiality and independence. Law-making is not transparent, especially in relation to subsidiary legislation, with little room for engagement and consultation. Furthermore, our Courts' declarations that laws are unconstitutional, including on human rights grounds, do not have erga omnes effect and the unconstitutional laws remain valid and applied until Parliament - effectively, the Government - decides to act. Investigations and prosecutions also lack transparency: the results of public inquiries are rarely made public and there is limited distinction between prosecutorial and investigative roles.

### Key Activities

- On-going dialogue with the EU Commission and a shadow report for the [2022 Rule of Law Report](#). The report contains 13 substantive references aditus foundation.
- A [project](#) publishing recommendations on how to improve access to justice for human rights violations, within a rule of law framework.
- Mainstreaming rule of law observations in our work, flagging the impact of bad governance on access to human rights particularly for minority or vulnerable groups
- Attended several demonstrations, commemorations and public events on Malta's rule of law issues.

*Read Carla's team contribution for further details.*

## Statelessness

### Our Concerns

Although Malta signed the 1954 Statelessness Convention in 2019, it has not yet established a procedure to determine statelessness and no stateless status exists. Furthermore, statelessness is not immediately relevant for pre-removal detention decision-making.

### Key Activities

- Updated and published the Malta page of the [Statelessness Index](#).
- Delivered training to several NGOs on statelessness in Malta.
- Held advocacy meetings with Governments and other stakeholders.

## LGBTIQ+ & Equality

### Our Concerns

LGBTIQ+ migrants, including asylum-seekers, are discriminated against in their attempts to exercise their fundamental rights including in the asylum procedure, family reunification ineligibility, gender/name change ineligibility, and lack of security in detention. Till September 2022, men who have sex with men were also discriminated against in terms of their capacity to donate blood.

Malta remains one of the few countries worldwide criminalising abortion, and free and informed sex work is not possible.

The number of female MPs is far too low, and the new 'adjustment mechanism' is a farce.

Malta's equality legislation is fragmented, with protection gaps for protected characteristics in some areas of life. None of Malta's equality bodies conform to the Paris Principles for NHRI's.

### Key Activities

- Advocacy meetings with Government and other stakeholders flagging the challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ migrants.
- Launch of the [#Safe4All](#) campaign during Malta Pride 2022.
- We provided free legal services to LGBTIQ+ asylum-seekers, refugees and other migrants.
- Active participation in the [Voice for Choice](#) coalition, including through attending demonstrations and public events, and contributing to advocacy and strategy planning.
- Mainstreaming our priorities on the equality legislation and NHRI across all our activities.

## General

### Our Concerns

Malta has not yet ratified important human rights instruments, particularly those permitting individual complaints: [ESC](#), [OPESCR](#), [OPCROC](#), [ICMW](#) and [OPCEDAW](#).

Access to state-provided legal aid is limited to litigious causes and eligibility rules are often confusing or restrictive. Furthermore, a pro bono legal culture is underdeveloped and not formalised.

The Constitution needs revamping for broader human rights provisions, stronger institutions.

### Key Activities

- These areas were not given priority throughout 2022.
- Our earlier efforts urging an inclusive, civil-society led discussion on Malta's Constitutional future failed to convince the Office of the President. A revisitation of our strategy is required.

### Our Concerns

Malta's laws and practice punishes refugees for entering the country in an irregular manner, whilst distress calls from persons at sea are often either ignored or forwarded to the Libyan Coast Guard for an eventual push-back, at times with violence.

Administrative detention decision, including the initial so-called 'medical detention', are often illegal and increased rules barring our access to clients means detained persons have limited access to legal information and services. Living conditions in the centres are abysmal. In open centres, conditions are also extremely challenging and a number of policies do not conform to EU legal obligations.

The accelerated procedure denies asylum-seekers the right to an appeal and fast-tracks them to removal.

Integration is not a policy priority, reflected in limitations on family reunification eligibility, no second national integration strategy, no political rights and excessive arbitrariness in citizenship decisions.

The closure of the Specific Residence Authorisation scheme means Malta offers no regularisation for undocumented migrants, no matter the number of years spent in Malta and integration activities.

Migrants in an irregular situation and asylum-seekers are barred from marriage.

Malta is yet to adopt its second national integration strategy.

### Key Activities

- We stepped up our strategic litigation work: national and ECtHR cases and EU complaints on illegal detention, squalid living conditions, the accelerated procedure, lack of effective remedy, improper treatment of children.
- Launched the [#Safe4All](#) campaign during Malta Pride 2022.
- Weekly visits to detention centres to provide legal information and support.
- We provided free legal services to hundreds of asylum-seekers, refugees and other migrants, outlined in our list of projects.
- Boosting our advocacy through the [#ThereAreAlternatives](#) campaign.
- Collaboration with [ACRiSL](#) to strengthen our protection of detained children
- Regular stakeholder meetings with various Governmental and other entities, including UNHCR, EUAA, the EU Commission and NGOs.
- We created the [Malta Legal Network on Asylum](#).

*Read Marine's team contribution for further details.*

# team contribution

## **NO ONE IS ABOVE THE LAW: LAW SHOULD BE APPLIED EQUALLY TO BOTH THE GOVERNMENT & CITIZENS.**

Central to our work in 2022 was the continued focus on addressing the rule of law failings which have come to the forefront in Malta in recent years. While it is easy to use the term to refer to any or all failings of government, the rule of law is a concept that has at its core the principle that no one, including governments, politicians, or lawmakers, is above the law. While this principle can seem to be abstract or theoretical in nature, its application in practice is what modern democracies should be built on.

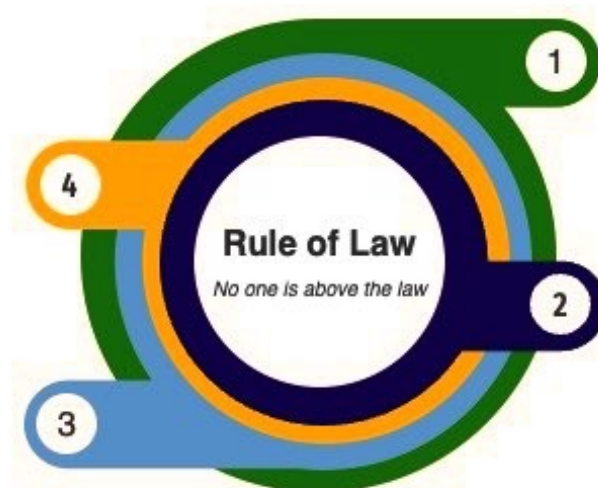
The rule of law broadly translates into 4 guiding principles:

### **Accessible & Impartial Justice**

Those that enforce the law should be independent, adequately qualified. There should be separation of powers between enforcement, the judiciary, & those that hold political power.

### **Open Government**

Government should be transparent when drafting and enforcing such laws.



### **Accountability**

Government and its institutions should not given preferential treatment because they are in a position of power.

### **Laws must be Just**

Laws should be understandable, accessible and applied equally and not more or less strictly to some people.

It is with these four guiding principles in mind that we have focused our advocacy efforts and carried out a number of projects in 2022. We met with several key stakeholders such as Amnesty International, the OSCE-OIDHR and the LIBE Committee - Rule of Law & Fundamental Rights Monitoring Group, in order to discuss the situation of the rule of law in Malta. A key meeting was held with the European Commission DG Justice during their country visit for the Malta Chapter for the Rule of Law Report 2022.

In tandem with our advocacy work, aditus had a number of projects which focused on the rule of law, such as Strengthening Access to Justice for Improved Human Rights Protection. This project has the objective of improving access to justice for individuals wishing to strengthen their human rights protection in those instances when they feel that they have been violated. In several of our earlier projects, alone and also with several other NGO colleagues, we identified institutional obstacles to effective to justice for human rights protection.

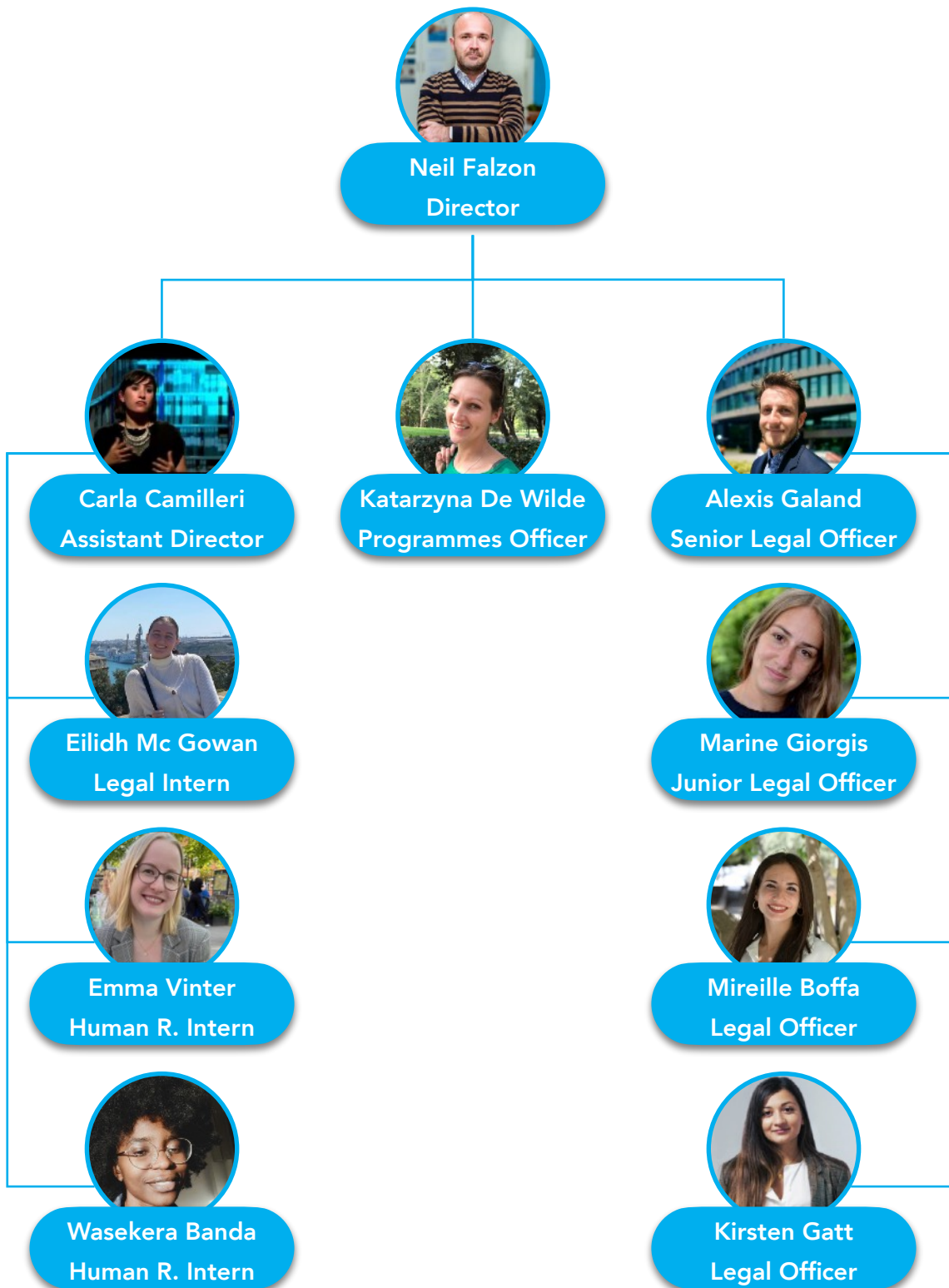
These obstacles have also been identified by several esteemed reports and research, including by the Venice Commission, the European Parliament, the European Commission and in the Vanni Bonello report on Malta's justice system. The PATFox – Pioneering AntiSLAPP Training for Freedom of Expression, seeks to train lawyers on SLAPP litigation in order to protect the fundamental right to the freedom of expression.

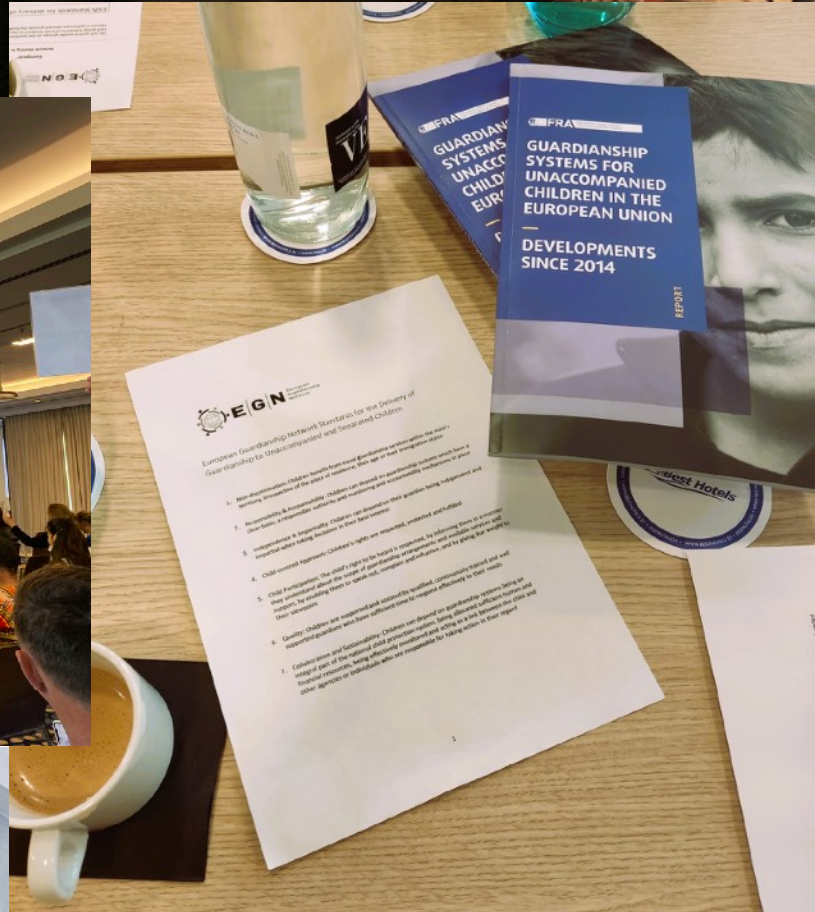
Neglect, complacency and corruption had embedded itself so deeply that we saw the gradual erosion of the rule of law in Malta, which led to a brave journalist, Daphne, paying the ultimate price. Her death led to a shocking public recognition that something deep and visceral in our young democracy was wrong.

It is with this background that we continue to work with the hope that the much needed structural and judicial reforms are carried out with a view to bettering access to justice for all.

**Carla Camilleri, Assistant Director**

# team 2022





# team contribution

## TEAMWORK IS THE FACE OF ADVERSITY.

It's time for introspection, to look back to take stock of the past year. And the least we can say is that the aditus' team has once again been very busy! Unfortunately, 2022 was not able to break with the austere migration policies initiated in 2021. On the contrary, we have witnessed a hardening of the position of the Maltese authorities vis-à-vis the reception and integration of migrants.

Therefore, NGOs such as aditus foundation found themselves on the front lines to deal with the consequences of measures that flouted respect for the dignity and fundamental rights of individuals. More and more people had to seek our help or have been referred to us by various entities operating in a variety of sectors in Malta or even abroad. For many of these people, we represent their only hope of seeing their rights respected since they cannot afford the services of a private consultant, or the latter do not have aditus' expertise on extremely specific migration issues.

To provide our clients with quality legal support, I had the chance to work during 2022 in close collaboration with my colleagues from the Legal Unit, Alexis & Mireille. I was also promoted to the position of Junior Legal Officer. Teamwork was the cornerstone of our daily activities.

Our complicity and complementarity enabled us to accomplish a substantial work. We found our cruising speed thanks to a well-rehearsed organisation: Legal Unit meetings set up every two weeks; a clear distribution of tasks according to each one's interests; organisation of trainings between us; regular work-related frustration debriefings. In addition, the establishment of a new clients' database better suited to our needs greatly facilitated our activities. Thus, we were able to strengthen the monitoring of cases and quantify/qualify the duration and impact of our actions.

**"Teamwork was the cornerstone  
of our daily activities."**

It is difficult to account for the extent of the subjects on which we were able to intervene, but you will find below a non-exhaustive list of the main cases handled in 2022 by aditus' team:

- First of all, we continued our work related to the Captain Morgan Constitutional Court case initiated in 2021. No less than three hearings took place this year, requiring colossal work upstream of each of them. In particular, I had the delicate task to collect the harrowing testimonies of our clients in order to report to the judge the terrific conditions in which these men were detained for several weeks on *"floating prisons"* in violation of their fundamental rights.
- At the beginning of the year, aditus' team filed a habeas corpus to challenge the lawfulness of the detention of an alleged minor detained based on a health Restriction of Movement Order. Despite arguing that the teenager was actually detained since he was accommodated in a place described by Maltese law as *"a place of detention"*, with the impossibility to leave the centre, the Court of Magistrate confirmed the legality of his detention.

Our lawyers decided to take the case further and filed an application before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) complaining about the arbitrariness and the dismal conditions of our client's detention. aditus and the Government filed their submissions to the ECtHR and we are currently awaiting for the Court's ruling.

- During the summer 2022, our lawyers decided to take the case of a fifteen-year-old asylum-seeker who had been detained with other adult men for almost 2 months in conditions which *"may well amount to inhuman and degrading treatment contrary to*



September 2022

September 2022

November 2022

## Indiscriminate Marsa Raids

Heavy-handed and aggressive police raids result in regular migrants having doors kicked in and unable to be secured due to forced entry. Police shouted, kicked doors down and used big dogs which intimidated residents.

## 3 on-duty Police Officers abducted & assaulted black migrants

Abdulhamid Saied & Abduwili Ahmed Ali were abducted, assaulted & injured motivated by hate based on race and colour by 3 police officers.

## 2 Pakistanis illegally detained for over 40 days

Awais Mohammed and Hasan Ali were released by the Court, illegally detained in Hal Far & Safi Barracks for 42 days. It was clear that there was "confusion" as to under which entity's orders they were actually being detained and on what grounds.

*Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights*” according to the CPT’s last report. Therefore, a case was filed before the Civil Court of Malta to complain about the minor’s conditions of detention and the unlawfulness of his detention under the Prevention of Disease Ordinance. The case is still ongoing.

- Before the International Protection Appeals Tribunal, nearly thirty appeals were filed by the Legal Unit, following the rejection of the application for asylum of our clients by the International Protection Agency. More than half of these cases concerned the rejection of the claim for international protection of members of the Sudanese community.

For this reason, and due to the seriousness of the situation in Darfur, we requested the intervention of the UNHCR in support of these appeals. Our lawyers also wrote an in-depth Country of Origin Information report made available to other lawyers, especially the Legal Aid Lawyers appointed to assist asylum-seekers with regard to their appeal.

- Before the Immigration Appeals Board, nearly twenty appeals were filed in 2022 by our lawyers to challenge the lawfulness of Detention and Removal Orders issued by the Principal Immigration Officer (PIO), age assessment decisions issued by the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS), or withdrawal of Specific Residence Authorisations issued by Identity Malta. That is to say a whole panel of decisions issued by various governmental entities which involve the drafting of submissions and our presence at numerous hearings to plead the cases.
- Even though our access is limited, we were able to conduct twenty visits to the Safi detention center during the year 2022. We provided basic legal information – particularly regarding the asylum procedure – to more than 130 people, including forty alleged minors. Regrettably, despite our campaign #ThereAreAlternatives, a specific area was created in Safi to detain alleged minors pending the determination of their age rather than opting to release them to an open-center under the care of AWAS.

Moreover, as part of our monitoring activity, we requested the Immigration Police to release around ten people who had been detained for the maximum period prescribed by law under a Removal Order (18 months)! At last, as part of our fight against administrative detention, we produced three video clips based on the poignant narratives of young men who – for several months – had been detained in conditions deemed degrading and inhuman by the CPT. With a broken voice one of them declared: *“We are also human beings, please treat us as a human”*.

- Finally, to end the year 2022 on a high note, the ECtHR ruled in our favour! In the landmark case S.H. v. Malta, the Court declared that Malta violated the fundamental human rights of our client when it failed to properly assess his fear of being returned to his home country. S.H. v. Malta raises several red flags in Malta's treatment of refugees from the moment of their arrival and throughout the procedure that is intended to protect them. This is a welcome judgement that opened the door for hundreds of identical cases against Malta and we hope will lead to urgently needed reforms.

Without wishing to spoil the activity report for the year 2023, I can already tell you that key strategic litigation cases – in particular before the ECtHR and the CJEU – are in progress in order to put the Maltese State in the face of its responsibilities when it decides to implement policies that systematically flout the rights of the most at needs.

**Marine Giorgis, Legal Officer**



# significant initiatives

Throughout	Active participation in meeting with UNHCR.
	Giving interviews, comments and information to various media agencies - local and foreign.
	Attended meetings of the Anti-Racism Platform.
	Coordinated meetings for the <u>Malta Refugee Council</u> .
	Liaison with various stakeholders, including UNHCR, EUAA, embassies and representations, Frontex, CoE, CPT, EU Commission, MEPs, OHCHR and national/international NGOs.
January	Neil and Carla delivered lectures at the University of Malta to students pursuing the Diploma in Cultural Mediation.
	With JRS Malta and ASGI, the Legal Team organised and participated in legal workshop on search and rescue issues in Italy and Malta.
	We participated in an anti-femicide demonstration outside the Police HQ.
	Our team members were present at a prochoice stand set up by the <u>Voice4Choice</u> movement.
February	We met the Monitoring Board for Detained Persons.
	A meeting was held by an informal coalition on sexual violence.
	Attended the <u>Baħar Ċimiterju</u> commemoration for lives lost at sea.
	Neil and Carla met the <u>Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality</u> .
March	Participated in a meeting of the Forum against Homelessness.
	Attended an EUAA workshop on legal assistance and representation in the asylum procedure.
	With ENS, attended a meeting with officials from the Home affairs Ministry to discuss progress on Malta's establishment of a statelessness determination procedure.

April	Neil delivered lectures on Malta's human rights law for students of social work, at the University of Malta.
	Our Legal Team gave an information session to medical professionals about the asylum procedure.
	With ENS, we held advocacy meetings on statelessness and gave a training session to human rights NGOs.
May	Alexis attended an ERA conference on the recent asylum case-law of the ECtHR.
	Our Legal Team gathered our interpreters for a training on interpreting/translating in the asylum context.
	Neil and Carla met the <u>Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality</u> .
June	With ASGI, training provided to ECRE and other NGOs on legal issues relevant to search and rescue operations by Italy and Malta.
	Marine attended a meeting of the European Guardianship Network in Barcelona.
	Team members attended the fantastic events organised by Spark15 for World Refugee Day.
July	Carla participated in a panel organised by Moviment Graffiti discussing parental leave under new EU norms.
	Neil and Carla travelled to Brussels to attend the ECRE Annual General Conference and to meet various EU officials.
	We had an exchange of views with the Partit Nazzjonalista.

August	Neil spent all July in the US, with the <u>International Visitor Leadership Programme</u> .
	On an invitation from the Office of the Ombudsman, we attended an information exchange with representatives of the Turkish Ombudsman.
September	Neil facilitated a panel discussion during the annual conference organised by the Government's SOGIGESC Unit, within the Human Rights Directorate.
	Marine and Mireille attended a conference on reducing demand and preventing trafficking in human beings (Lisbon).
October	Pride March and the launch of our #Safe4All campaign!
	Neil travelled to Dublin to participate in the final meeting of the Rise Up project, discussing advocacy on regularisation of undocumented persons.
	We sat on a discussion panel on intersex rights, organised by the INIA Consortium.
	We gave a talk to employees of Betclic Group, touching on Malta's laws and policies on LGBTIQ+ issues.
	Alexis attended ERA's Annual Conference on European Asylum and Immigration Law.
	Mireille was in Paris for the first meeting of the <u>Systemic Justice Community of Practice</u> .
	With and for ECRE, we hosted organised the annual meeting of AIDA Coordinators!
	Marine travelled to Brussels to attend the EU Commission's 7th Migration Forum.

	Marine travelled to Brussels to attend the EU Commission's 7th Migration Forum.
	We were invited to a <u>roundtable</u> organised by the Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner, discussing human rights defenders (Dublin).
	The Legal Team participated in the Advanced ELENA Course 2022: 'Legal Challenges and emerging opportunities' (Latvia).
November	We participated in a Black Lives Matter demonstration.
December	Super fun evening at the anniversary party of <u>Hole in the Wall</u> , kindly donating all proceeds!
	Kasia participated in a financial literacy workshop organised by the Academy of Givers.
	Marine travels to Brussels to attend a European Guardianship Network meeting.
	Neil was in Brussels for a PICUM meeting.



# projects

## A. PROJECT REFUGEE ASSISTANCE MALTA (PRAM)

### Activities implemented

With Jesuit Refugee Service (Malta), we provided legal and social work services, employment support.

### Achievement(s)

Over 3,700 persons benefitted from the project's activities, several of whom were in a situation of vulnerability. [Webpage here](#).

## B. SUPPORT SERVICES FOR NEWLY-ARRIVED ASYLUM-SEEKERS

### Activities implemented

Information and legal services, including the publication of useful [Fact Sheets](#) (English, French, Arabic, Bengali, Tigrinya and Somali) and [video clips](#).

### Achievement(s)

We provided valuable information to over 440 newly-arrived asylum-seekers. This figures represents individuals we directly interacted with and not the several others who made use of our information tools. [Webpage here](#).

## C. OUR ISLAND III (SABAR)

### Activities implemented

Photo book of the Malta 2019/2020 protests and an online photo and video archive

### Achievement(s)

Sabar is the only available archive of the historic demonstrations, securing a legacy for future generations. [Webpages here and here](#).

## **D. CHILDREN'S ALTERNATIVES TO DETENTION PROTECTING THEIR RIGHTS IN EUROPE (CADRE)**

### **Activities implemented**

With partners in other EU Member States, seminars, conferences and training materials. We also created an online jurisprudence database.

### **Achievement(s)**

Strengthened our advocacy on non-detention of children by improving our knowledge and strategic capacity. [Webpage here](#).

## **E. DETAINED NARRATIVES**

### **Activities implemented**

A series of YouTube narratives of persons detained in Malta.

### **Achievement(s)**

By humanising our advocacy against Malta's detention regime, we hope to sensitise people to the regime's impact on hundreds of lives. [Webpage here](#).

## **F. RISE UP**

### **Activities implemented**

With our European partners, advocacy discussions and briefings on regularisation schemes for undocumented migrants.

### **Achievement(s)**

We formalised accessible and evidence-based tools for NGOs to rely on when advocating for the regularisation of undocumented persons. [Webpage here](#).

## **G. TURNING THE TABLES**

### **Activities implemented**

A series of research publications on various aspects of migrant integration.

### **Achievement(s)**

An important initiative whereby we actively supported the organisation of migrant-led conversations on integration. [Webpage here](#).

## **H. INTEGRATION MAPPING RESEARCH**

### **Activities implemented**

Engaged by the Government's Human Rights Directorate to research and draft four reports on migrant integration.

### **Achievement(s)**

Following up for our work on the Malta Integration Network, these reports not only confirm our expertise in integration-related research but they will also provide valuable input to the drafting of Malta's second national integration strategy. [Webpage here](#).

## **I. TRAINING KIT FOR EMPOWERING REFUGEE-LED COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS**

### **Activities implemented**

Finalised our training kits targeting refugee-led groups engaged in national or EU-level advocacy, freely available in English, Dutch, Italian and Greek.

### **Achievement(s)**

The Training Kit is a necessary component in our work seeking to strengthen refugee-led groups as active stakeholders in asylum-related advocacy. [Webpage here](#).

## **J. STATELESSNESS INDEX**

### **Activities implemented**

With the European Network on Statelessness, updated the Statelessness Index.

### **Achievement(s)**

The only information source for statelessness in Malta, the basis for advocacy urging Malta to sign the 1954 Convention and to establish a statelessness determination procedure. [Webpage here](#).

## **K. ASYLUM INFORMATION DATABASE (AIDA)**

### **Activities implemented**

With the European Council for Refugees and Exiles, presented an in-depth report on all elements of Malta's asylum regime.

### **Achievement(s)**

The most comprehensive report on the status of Malta's asylum situation. [Webpage here](#).

## **L. ZINCING: THINKING OF INTEGRATION PROCESS AS A TWO-WAY INCLUSION**

### **Activities implemented**

Training activities to migrant-led groups and to Government officials on engaging with each other with a view to formulating integration policy.

### **Achievement(s)**

Supporting our work on promoting migrant-led groups as key advocacy partners, the project enabled us to identify methodologies on how Government officials and migrant-led groups can best interact with each other. [Webpage here](#).

## **M. DOCUMENTATION = EMPLOYABILITY: SUPPORT SERVICES FOR THE DOCUMENTATION OF VARIOUS COMMUNITIES**

### **Activities implemented**

Information and legal services on documentation issues, and a research report highlighting the importance of personal documentation for access to various rights.

### **Achievement(s)**

Our report is Malta's first-ever report underlining the fundamental relationship between correct personal documentation and access to rights and services. [Webpage here.](#)

## **N. PATFOX – PIONEERING ANTISLAPP TRAINING FOR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

### **Activities implemented**

With our European partners, we developed and delivered a legal training curriculum on strategic litigation against public participation (SLAPP) suits.

### **Achievement(s)**

We are taking the lead in sensitising the legal field on the importance of anti-SLAPP legislation, at a time when it has become so important for Malta and for the EU. [Webpage here.](#)

## **O. COOPERATION FOR A PHOTOGRAPHIC INITIATIVE ON DETENTION**

### **Activities implemented**

We supported photographer Joanna Delia and author Julian Delia in an initiative funded by National Geographic Society. Joanna and Julian took photos and stories from people who had been detained during COVID-19 restrictions, highlighting their isolation. A photographic exhibition was also organised.

### **Achievement(s)**

Publication in Politico Europe of photos and text, giving visibility to the treatment of detained men. There is a plethora of rule of law recommendations to Malta. We prioritised them, focusing on those having a direct impact on justice for human rights violations. [Webpage here.](#)

## **P. STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR IMPROVED HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION**

### **Activities implemented**

Advocacy papers and stakeholder meetings on prioritised issues relating to the impact of rule of law on fundamental rights.

### **Achievement(s)**

There is a plethora of rule of law recommendations to Malta. We prioritised them, focusing on those having a direct impact on justice for human rights violations. [Webpage here.](#)

## **Q. PROJECT INTEGRATED**

### **Activities implemented**

With JRS, Integra Foundation and Women's Rights Foundation, provided services to asylum-seekers and refugees. Our activities focused on detained asylum-seekers.

### **Achievement(s)**

We jointly offer refugees a level of support they are unable to find elsewhere. [Webpage here.](#)



Today's panel mediated  
by Daniela DeBono



# team contribution

## A YEAR OF MEANINGFUL WORK.

In 2013, I went into the law course with the intention of working in the field of human rights, I wanted to have a job which was fulfilling and that would enable me to work towards the changes I wanted to see in society.

At the end of law school, I found myself in a rush to find employment, to start becoming independent, and through this I forgot about my ambitions. During the first few years of employment, I mainly worked in the field of corporate law, employment, and data protection. My job offered me stability, but I felt that I was merely working to make a living and not because I was passionate about what I was doing.

I remember scrolling through social media and seeing a post saying that aditus foundation were looking for a lawyer to join their team, the post contained the following phrase in bold - 'frustrated? Looking for meaningful work?' Upon seeing this, I almost immediately sent my CV and cover letter and knew that this was the end of my corporate career. I can safely say that this was one of the best decisions I have made in my life.

Working with aditus foundation has changed my whole perception about what it means to be a lawyer. In the past I believed that being a lawyer meant that you had to be stern, assertive, and argumentative, to show as little personal emotions as possible to your clients and focus on the business side of things. I was focused on billables, and the invoices issued to the clients in turn represented how hard I had worked.

Nowadays, my work is driven by passion, knowing that my work can change a person's life. Providing free legal advice and assistance means that it is not the payments received by the clients that signify our hard work and success, but rather the victories of our clients become our own.

**"The past year has provided me with  
incomparable growth..."**

I started working at aditus foundation with limited knowledge of immigration law, and was not aware of what realities asylum seekers, persons with international protection and rejected asylum seekers were facing in Europe and in Malta.

During the first week of my employment, I remember reading the AIDA report thoroughly, to get an understanding of the legislation in force, and what happens in practice. After this first week, I started accompanying my colleagues in meetings with clients, appeared with them in Court and before the Immigration Appeals Board (IAB).

I quickly started to be involved in more complex legal work, which included appealing decisions of the International Protection Agency (IPA) before the International Protection Appeals Tribunal (IPAT), appearing before the Immigration Appeals Board in order to challenge detention orders, removal orders and age assessment procedures, assisting in pending domestic court cases, assisting in the filing of applications before the European Court of Human Rights, and regularly visiting the Safi Detention Centre in order to provide information relating to the asylum procedure.

The past year has provided me with incomparable growth, both in a professional and personal sense. I have been faced with numerous challenges, and often feel frustrated and angry towards the laws and policies which are in place in Malta and with the treatment that our clients must endure.

At times when I feel overwhelmed, I think about the clients who trust us enough to share their stories with us and seek our assistance and this gives me the motivation to keep working towards lasting change.

**Kirsten Gatt, Legal Officer**

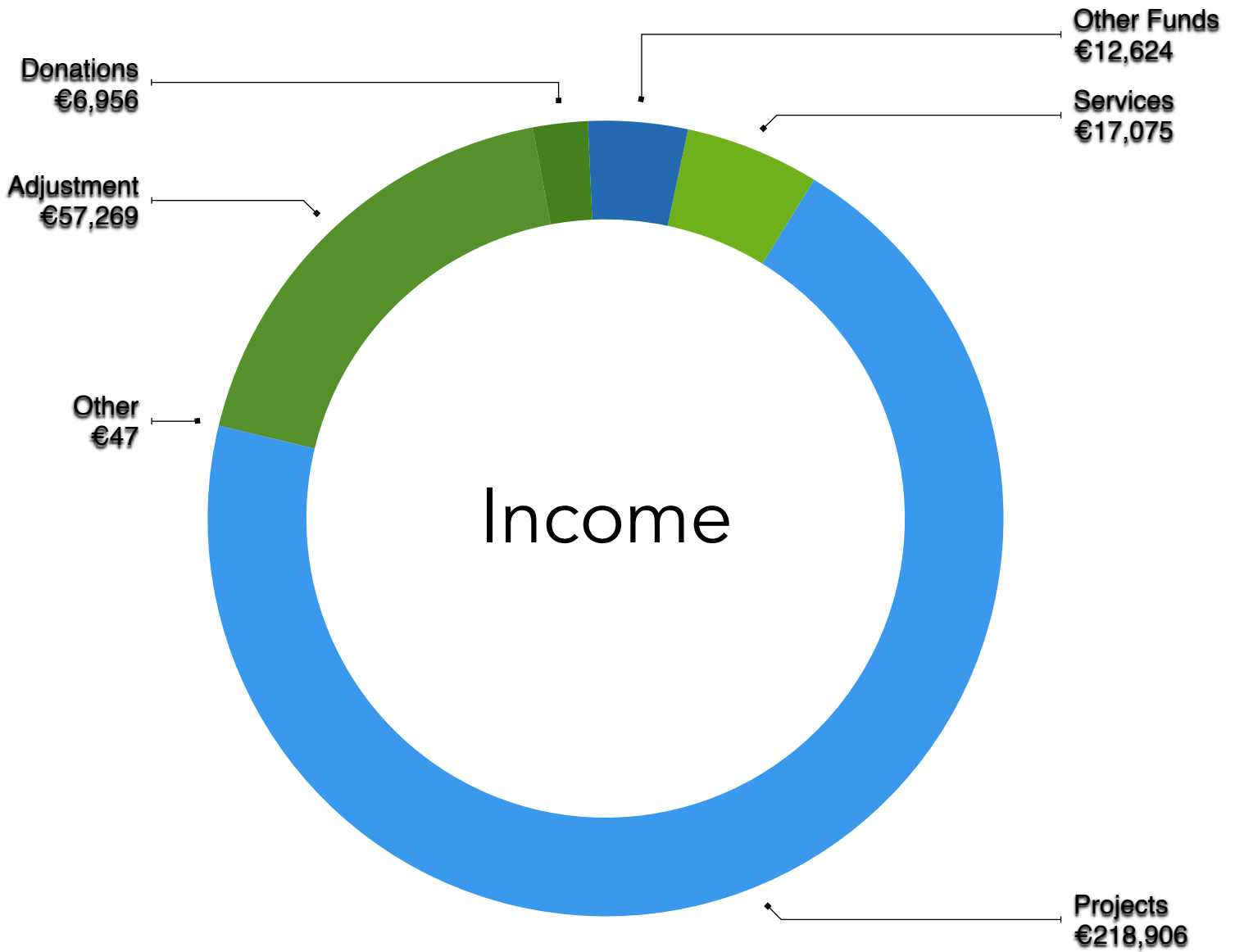
# publications

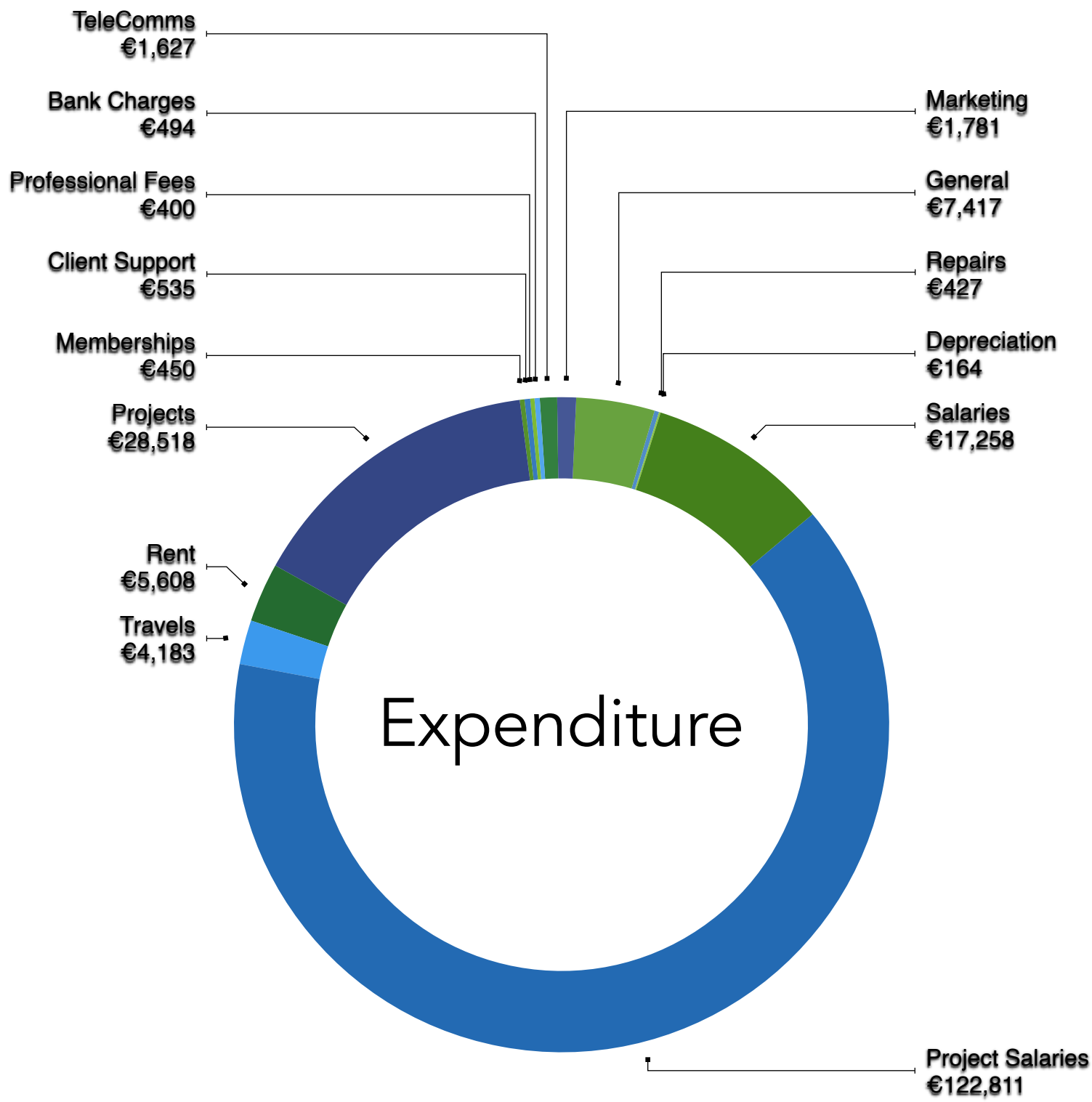
- Accelerated procedures in Maltese asylum law: Making Violations of Fundamental Rights the order of the day, Id-Dritt XXXII
- Children in Limbo Youth Transitions Among Asylum Seekers in Malta
- Documentation = Employability: Support Services for the Documentation of Various Communities
- Fact Sheet 24: Temporary Protection for persons fleeing Ukraine
- Integration Mapping Research Report on Family Reunification
- Integration Mapping Research Report on Mental Health
- Integration Mapping Research Report on Migrants and Citizenship
- Integration Mapping Research Report on Socialisation
- #Safe4All Refugee Stories
- #Safe4All Practice in other EU Member States
- Technical Comments on Bill No. 2 of 2022
- Training Kit on Empowering Refugee-Led Community Organisations: EU
- Training Kit on Empowering Refugee-Led Community Organisations: National

- Turning the Tables Report on Political Rights;
- Turning the Tables Report on Detention;
- Turning the Tables Report on Integration Governance;
- Turning the Tables Report on Migrant-Led Initiatives;
- Turning the Tables Report on Compendium of Recommendations.



# accounts





# thanks

It is impossible for us to keep going without the valued support of our funders, followers and community of human rights defenders.

A big thanks to all, and an invitation for others to [join this community!](#)

## memberships & affiliations



European  
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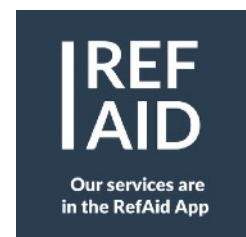


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# **REPORT 2022**

1A Rhea Building,  
Triq is-Santissima Trinitá,  
Hamrun MRS2280  
Malta

[info@aditus.org.mt](mailto:info@aditus.org.mt) | [www.aditus.org.mt](http://www.aditus.org.mt)