



aditus

accessing rights

Annual Activity Report 2019

Prepared by: aditus foundation team

Prepared in September 2020 for: Board of Governors, Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations

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Staff Input: Neil Falzon (Director)

2019 will go down in history as one of Malta's most tumultuous years. On-going investigations into the brutal assassination of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia continued to unveil shocking stories of corruption at Malta's highest political levels, including the Office of the Prime Minister and other Ministries, as well as in Malta's most prominent and influential business circles. The impact on the nation was unprecedented, with upset crowds – led by civil society organisations – taking to the streets for several days with loud calls for justice, accountability and resignations. At the end of the year, the disgraced Prime Minister resigned as also the disgraced Minister for Tourism and the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff.

The scandals are nowhere near resolved and justice for Daphne and for the criminal activities she was in the process of revealing is far from being secured. In a recent [opinion piece](#), I underlined that, as long as Joseph Muscat and Konrad Mizzi remain members of Parliament, Malta will remain besieged by corruption and criminal activity, unable to restore democracy.

aditus foundation has for years been lamenting the state of Malta's democracy, rule of law and governance. So it was only natural for us to stand outside Parliament, shouting "*Barra! Korrotti! Ġustizzja!*". It was clear to us that Joseph Muscat, Konrad Mizzi and Keith Schembri needed to resign and to have criminal investigations opened into their shady dealings. In her contribution to this report by Carla (Assistant Director) explains our activities and motivations, with the conclusion being that good governance and rule are undeniably human rights issues for which aditus foundation will continue to fight for, doing whatever it takes to set Malta on a path of true democracy.

This report also hints at the list of projects and stand-alone initiatives we worked on throughout the year, covering most of the themes we had identified in our two-year Strategic Plan: unjust rules preventing undocumented migrants from marrying, Malta's failure to acknowledge the issue of statelessness, safe and legal access to Malta and to asylum for refugees, illegal detention in undignified and inhumane conditions, access to gender recognition procedures for the trans and non-binary communities, broader dissemination of human rights values through art and cultural engagement, empowerment of refugee communities.

2019 also confirmed a shift we had triggered in our advocacy strategy. Increasingly, we are adopting a broader range of advocacy tools in order to fulfil our human rights mission. With all our stakeholders – Government, non-governmental entities, private sector, general public – we stress the primacy of open dialogue based on mutual trust in the process. When seeking to resolve individual and institutional issues, we approach public entities with this spirit. Our engagement with the public, largely through interviews, opinion pieces, blogposts and social media is honest, transparent and often hard-hitting and brutal. Consistently based on technical expertise, research and community voices, our advocacy positions invite a collaborative approach.

Yet in 2019 we further consolidated the importance of resorting to strategic litigation when attempts at dialogue fail, when the severity or consistency of human rights violations shocks us, when a violation is indicative of institutional failures. Aware of the impact this tool-box approach has on our relations with several public entities, partners and the general public, we are nonetheless adamant to fulfil our mission and support victims of human rights victims in their quest for justice and will not hesitate to resort to Court of Law (national, European or International) where violations are systemic and our appeals to dialogue ignored. This report flags those cases we have proudly taken on.

In all honesty, aditus foundation closed 2019 utterly exhausted and burnt out. All our team members spent the year working tirelessly on the various projects and initiatives we chose to implement, taking to the streets almost every day for the last months of the year. Our work does take its toll on us all. As Director of this small but effective NGO, I am extremely proud at our achievements throughout 2019. We forged new significant alliances, we stood firmly for democracy when Government and the nation was rallying against us, we defended the meekest and ensured an unwavering human rights voice in a difficult and at times toxic environment. We now look forward to the years ahead, with a new Strategic Plan for 2020-2022 based on our successes, weaknesses and vision for a better Malta for all persons living here.

Note: The wonderful artworks presented in this report are from our poster exhibition 'Larger Than Life'. All posters were designed specifically for us by leading visual artists and are available for purchase via our site at <https://aditus.org.mt/support-us/larger-than-life-poster-gallery/#.X3RYBVmxVhE>.

Posters are:

- Architects of our Destiny, Magda Azab, cover page
- Born UN/equal, Seb Tanti Burló, page 5
- Global Injustice, Luke Caruana, page 7
- The Promised Land, Ed Dingli, page 15
- 27, Daniela Attard, page 19
- Remembrance, Sarah-Maria Scicluna, page 30.



About us

“aditus is strongly committed to the universality, interdependence and indivisibility of all human rights and is therefore established with the following aims:

- a) to reinforce the universality, interdependence and indivisibility of human rights;*
- b) to observe, act and report on human rights access, particularly in relation to marginalised, vulnerable and excluded persons or groups;*
- c) to promote a rights-based understanding and application of human rights;*
- d) to foster a human-rights friendly environment based on individual and social empowerment and dialogue; ad*
- e) to highlight the regional and international dimensions of human rights in Malta.”*

Article 2 – Purpose and Aims, aditus foundation Statutes

The idea to establish aditus foundation was born in 2009. Our current Director (Neil) had just left his position as Head of the UNHCR Office in Malta in order to take a personal break and to rethink his personal and professional future. The idea was to remain in the national human rights sector, to provide a valid and sustainable contribution and to avoid replicating the work being done by other organisations.

Malta’s NGO landscape was, and largely remains, one dominated by organisations providing extremely valuable and needed services to various sectors within the community. Human rights advocacy at the level of targeting laws and policies was limited to a small number of NGOs highly specialised in their respective fields.

Within this context, aditus foundation’s founders (Neil Falzon, Nicola Mallia and Carla Camilleri) wanted the organisation to focus almost exclusively on advocacy, on constantly pushing the bar higher and higher in order to achieve stronger and more effective human rights protection for all persons in Malta.

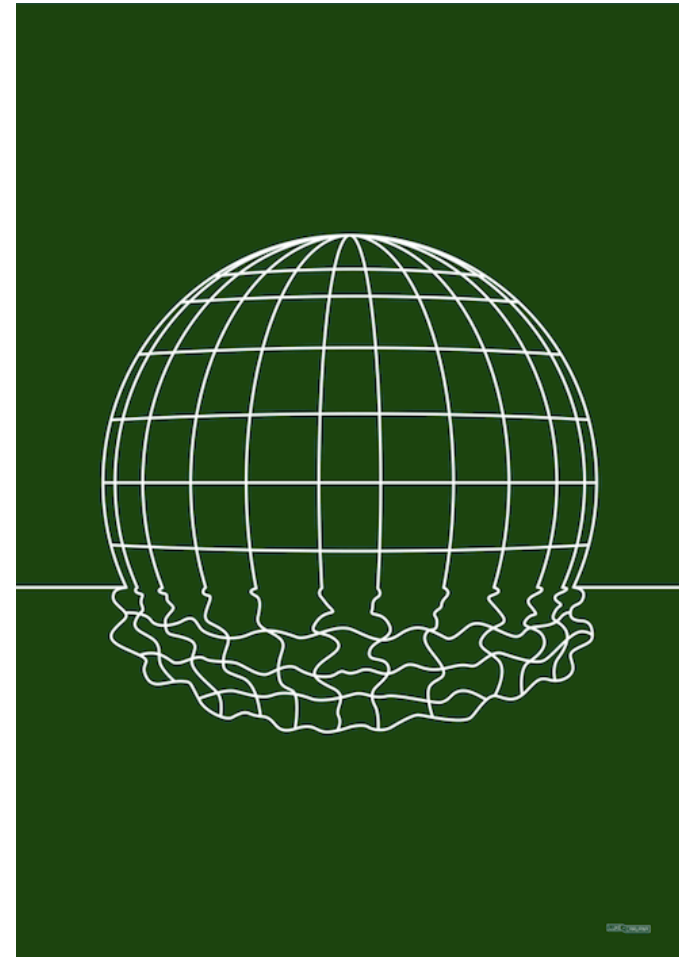
We are inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and as lawyers are wholly committed to removing those obstacles preventing anyone from accessing and enjoying their fundamental human rights.

After a period of operating from Neil's living-room with a handful of excited and eager volunteers, aditus foundation was formally registered with the Malta Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations in March 2011.

Our emphasis remains advocacy, achieved through our three activity groups: Monitor, Report, Act.

We are a small team, relying heavily on volunteers and interns. To get to know us, use the drop-down options in the main menu bar (above) to meet our [Board of Governors](#), [Operational Team](#).

aditus foundation is an active member of various NGO networks, listed on the homepage. We are also members of the [Fundamental Rights Platform](#) within the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), and of the [Consultative Council](#) managed by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO).



Our 2019 Team

**Neil Falzon,
Director**

**Carla Camilleri,
Assistant
Director**

**Claire Delom,
Legal Officer**

**Katarzyna De
Wilde,
Programmes
Officer**

**Andras Alföldi,
Legal Officer**

**Sarianna Mileski,
Information
Officer**

**Michael
Scicluna, Legal
Intern**

**Peter Szanto,
Human Rights
Intern**

**Elysia Rezki,
Legal Intern**

**Juliette Trouillet,
Legal Intern**

**Sarah Rocourt,
Legal Intern**

**Fanny Gaultier,
Legal Intern**

**Julia Zammit,
Human Rights
Intern**

Projects

Projects are listed in alphabetical order. To facilitate reading, each project is described in three bullets, covering:

- tags that describe the project's main activities, and also its theme;
- any organisation with which the project was implemented. In the case of multiple partners, as with many of our EU-funded projects, the Project Leader is listed and not the entire consortium;
- the project's funding authority, if any. This includes total and partial funders.

Where available, links are provided since more detailed information – including publications – is readily available online.

Asylum Information Database (AIDA)

- Research and analysis, online publication tool, national asylum law/policy
- European Council on Refugees and Exiles
- <http://aditus.org.mt/our-work/projects/aida/>

EU Commission Study on the Obligation of Carriers to Communicate Passenger Data

- Research and analysis on Council Directive 2004/82
- EU Commission

FRANET

- Research, stakeholder discussions, various themes
- EU Fundamental Rights Agency
- <http://aditus.org.mt/our-work/projects/franet/>

The Importance of Appearances: How Suspects and Accused Persons are presented in the Courtroom, in Public and in the Media

- Research, awareness-raising, rights of accused persons, presumption of innocence
- Hungarian Helsinki Committee (Lead Partner), Fair Trials Europe, Human Rights House Zagreb, Mérték, Rights International Spain, Vienna University.
- Justice Programme (EU)
- <http://aditus.org.mt/our-work/projects/appearances-suspects-accused/>

(Ir)regular Love: Right to Marry Campaign

- Research, social media campaign, publications (online and report)
- Small Initiatives Support Scheme (SIS)
- <https://aditus.org.mt/our-work/projects/article-12-right-to-marry>

Larger Than Life!

- Human rights posters, art exhibition
- Creative Communities (Arts Council Malta)
- <https://aditus.org.mt/our-work/projects/larger-than-life>

Our Island I and II

- Refugee personal stories, personal stories of persons protecting refugees, publication
- Creative Communities, President's Award for Creativity (Arts Council Malta)
- <https://aditus.org.mt/publications/our-island/>

Pool of Legal Migration Experts

- Support and network provision
- European Commission

Pride and Protection

- Personal interviews, analysis, publication on the experiences of LGBTIQ+ asylum-seekers in Malta
- Allied Rainbow Communities (ARC), Pride Funds

Project Integrated 2019

- Legal information and services asylum-seekers, international protection beneficiaries and other migrants, stakeholder meetings on key advocacy points, publications
- JRS Malta, Integra Foundation, Migrant Women Association (Malta), Women's Rights Foundation
- UNHCR Malta
- <https://aditus.org.mt/our-work/projects/project-integrated-2019/>

Project Refugee Assistance Malta (PRAM)

- Legal information and services to asylum-seekers and international protection beneficiaries
- JRS Malta
- Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)
- <http://aditus.org.mt/our-work/projects/project-refugee-assistance-malta/>

Protecting Together

- Facilitated workshops with the aim of formalising the coalition of Maltese NGOs active in the asylum sector
- Dutch Refugee Council
- <https://aditus.org.mt/our-work/projects/protecting-together/>
- <https://malta-refugee-council.org.mt/>

Statelessness Index

- Research as experts in issues of statelessness, online publication
- European Network on Statelessness (ENS)
- <https://index.statelessness.eu/>

Support Services for Newly-Arrived Asylum-Seekers

- Research as experts in issues of statelessness, online publication
- European Network on Statelessness (ENS)
- <https://aditus.org.mt/our-work/projects/support-services-for-newly-arrived-asylum-seekers/>

Staff Input: Claire Delom (Legal Officer)

New Year, Same Challenges

In 2019, challenges remained the same for asylum-seekers in Malta and in some instances their situation got worse. Due to the increase of newly arrivals, lack of capacity and unwillingness of the authorities to cope with this increase of new asylum-seekers, many new issues emerged while the ones already present got worse.

We saw serious delays with applications at RefCom, with applicants waiting between one and two years to receive a decision. At appeal stage, we saw the same situation, with applicants having to wait for several years to get an answer. Shortage of space in reception centres led to worsened reception conditions but also to increased reliance on a systematic detention system for all new asylum-seekers arriving by boat.

This situation was problematic for us at two levels. First of all, the dysfunction of the asylum and reception systems creates severe human rights issues that need to be addressed legally and practically, requiring a lot of resources. Secondly, these problems force us to focus our attention on emergencies and demand that we put other work to sleep. With thousands of people illegally detained, we have limited time – and energy – to advocate for a most-needed reform of the Refugee Appeals Board or to push the authorities to make the necessary amendments to the Refugees Act.

Hello Rule of Law!

Finally, 2019 was the year many Maltese institutions collapsed when it was revealed that the Office of the Prime Minister might have been involved in the assassination of journalist Daphne Caruana Galicia. It did not take very long for aditus to come to the conclusion that our place was in the streets, demanding justice, not just as citizens but also as a human rights NGO fighting for justice for all. These weeks were extremely intense and provoked deep self-reflection to decide on how best to navigate the situation.

Besides taking to the streets, we relentlessly called for the Prime Minister to be kicked out of Castille. We alerted the EU and UN Institutions and provided legal expertise and feedback on the numerous issues as the situation unfolded. These days also allowed us to forge new alliances and to build new connections within other civil society organisations.

Our work in this area does not stop with the appointment of a new PM. Malta has a long way to go and a real constitutional reform is needed. I'm happy aditus is taking part of that journey.

Initiatives

The El Hiblu 1 Case

Throughout 2019 we continued our [defence work](#) of the three men charged with a range of serious crimes – including acts of terrorism and terrorism activity – after they had refused to be returned to Libya by their rescuing ship, the El Hiblu 1.

We are working on this together with our legal partners Mifsud and Mifsud Advocates, with the support of Sea Watch.

Upholding the Rights of Sex Workers

Within the context of the [Government's reform on human trafficking and prostitution](#), our [joint input](#) with Integra Foundation on sex work marked an important policy statement for us. Our position, adopting a rights-based approach to sex work acknowledges the widespread abuse and exploitation of sex workers yet also endorses the right of all persons to choose to engage in sex work.

We presented this paper to Parliament and to the Equality Ministry, and engaged in a difficult conversation about empowerment, protection, vulnerability, agency, choice and abuse.

The dialogue continues into 2020.

Monitoring Child Rights in Malta

2019 saw the review by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child of the situation of child rights in Malta. Several civil society organisations and other entities submitted shadow reports to inform the Committee on the national situation.

We provided our technical input to the shadow report submitted by the [Platform of Human Rights Organisations in Malta](#). For an overview of the Committee's Concluding Observations on Malta, see our two [related blogposts](#).

Introduction of the Specific Residence Authorisation (SRA)

To start on the positive note, 2019 was the year that the Specific Residence Authorisation's scheme was fully implemented in Malta. This new policy allows for undocumented migrants, rejected from the asylum procedure but working regularly in Malta for at least five years, to be granted a renewable two-years residence permit. This new residence permit replaced the THPn permit which was an unregulated and not satisfying temporary authorisation to stay in Malta.

This long-awaited scheme is the concrete result of the tireless work of NGOs advocating for the full respect of the basic rights of migrants working regularly and contributing fully to Maltese society. Many people easily accessed this new scheme and were quickly granted a residence permit, making their lives easier and redressing a long-standing injustice for all these people living, working and contributing in Malta for years.

With our team of interns, we have assisted numerous migrants in making such applications, helping them to gather documents and sorting countless documents attesting for years of life in Malta. ID Malta processes such applications in their office in Hal Far.

Our goal for the months to come is to address the remaining gaps of the scheme so that every person working regularly in Malta can finally enjoy basic rights for a dignified life.

Defending the duty to save lives at sea

In 2019 Claus-Peter was found guilty of operating a vessel without the necessary documentation. In summer 2018, following days stranded out at sea without permission to disembark a group of rescued migrants, [Claus-Peter Reich](#) had entered Malta as captain of the *Lifeline*, the rescue vessel managed by the rescue NGO Mission Lifeline. Following entry and disembarkation, Claus-Peter had been charged before Malta's Courts on issues mainly relating to the registration of the *Lifeline* vessel.

Together with our Legal Partners Mifsud and Mifsud Advocates, we defended Claus-Peter and advised him to appeal the conviction.

We are happy to announce that in January 2020 our efforts and Claus-Peter's determination were rewarded and he was cleared of all charges against him!

The Murder of Lassana Cisse

On 6 April 2019, Lassana Cisse Souleymane, a 42-year-old migrant worker from the Ivory Coast, was [killed in a racially-motivated drive-by shooting](#) in Ħal Far, Malta. Two other African migrants were also injured in the attack. In May 2019, the Armed Forces of Malta soldiers Francesco Fenech and Lorin Scicluna were charged with the murder of Cisse and attempted murder of the two others, along with the attempted murder of another migrant in a hit and run attack the previous February.

We condemned the attack and are closely following the trial. Yet we feel that far more needs to be done to combat racism in Malta, particularly the institutionalised hatred or disregard of migrants. This is why we consistently engage with the Integration Unit and put forward recommendations on how Malta's legal and policy regimes need to be improved so as to create an environment that fosters equality, protection and dignity of all members of Malta's various communities.

Challenging Illegal Detention

Since mid-2018 Malta reintroduced a regime of automatic detention for asylum-seekers entering the country in an irregular manner. The new regime is, according to the authorities, based on public health legislation that allows the health authorities to adopt measures limiting a person's free movement in cases of suspected spread of contagious disease.

This legislation does not permit the authorities to detain persons, least of all persons who have been medically screened and 'Ok-ed' a few days after their arrival in Malta. These, and a number of other reasons, render Malta's use of this legislation to systematically detained hundreds of asylum-seekers – including children, illegal and a violation of the fundamental right to personal liberty.

In September, together with our colleagues at JRS Malta, we successfully [challenged](#) the detention of [six](#) men, relying on the above argumentation. The Court upheld our arguments are ordered the immediate release of all men. It was unfortunate that Government refused to provide support for the men, despite their entitlements for reception conditions under national and EU law, resulting in their reliance of NGO services for sustenance and accommodation.



At the end of 2019, Malta was detaining hundreds of people under this illegal regime and it remains our priority to ensure that Malta introduces a reception system that is in conformity with its legal obligations and not in violation of the fundamental human rights of migrants.

Pro Bono Unit

The provision of legal information and services has slowly become a core activity for the organisation, being also the main activity of some of our major projects funded by EU funds and by UNHCR. Our services cover a broad range of topics, wherein we try to remain focused on those themes that reflect an institutional or systemic problem and on those beneficiaries who are unable to secure private legal assistance or the public legal aid service.

In this report, various examples are given of the high-profile and very important cases we are involved in, yet throughout the year we [supported](#) hundreds of persons seeking information on asylum, their rights, civil unions, residence permits, discrimination, transgender issues, etc.

This is incredibly valuable work for us, as it can dramatically improve the quality of life of our beneficiaries. Internally, it also has a serious value for us as it informs our advocacy work with Government and with other institutions, feeding into our research, input, and recommendations.

“When faced with human rights violations, or a challenge to one’s enjoyment of fundamental human rights, the law provides safety, security and redress. Malta has ratified several international and European instruments to protect our human rights, and has in place quite strong national systems and mechanisms. Yet, in most cases, order to access and make best use of these instruments and procedures, legal assistance is required. As with every other area of law, human rights law is complex, intricate and varied and requires a level of technical expertise.

It is for this reason that aditus foundation’s mission includes, in our Statutes, to also act on levels of access to fundamental human rights in Malta. Our mission calls us to intervene where violations have occurred or where they are likely to occur. We bring our legal expertise to support our clients who are either unable to engage a private lawyer, ineligible for Malta’s [legal aid system](#), or who require a level of expertise that might be hard to otherwise secure.

Our [Pro Bono Unit](#), composed of Neil, Carla Claire and supporting Legal Interns, provides legal information and representation to over 300 clients per year. This free service covers several areas, including:

- publication of [Fact Sheets](#) on core issues;
- asylum-seekers wishing to file and prepare their application;
- asylum appeals;
- human trafficking;
- challenges against administrative detention;
- transgender persons wishing to affirm their gender and name;
- refugees seeking family reunification;
- victims of hate speech who'd like to file police reports;
- other NGOs seeking guidance on statutes or possible legal challenges;
- appeals for persons denied social security...

It is a long list that keeps our team super busy and stress but also extremely motivated to securing justice for our clients."

Human rights voice in the media

As in previous years, throughout 2019 we maintained a strong presence in national and international media, constantly providing a human rights dimension to issues of importance to our work. A full list of our press statement is provided below, yet so much more media work is conducted on an almost weekly basis.

This work ranges from our monthly presence on Radju Malta's popular programme *Familja Waħda* to in-depth interviews given by our Director to local or foreign journalists. Topics covered include migration/asylum, reproductive health, rule of law and governance.

On 13 January our Director gave an [in-depth interview](#) to The Malta Independent on rescue at sea issues. Key excerpts:

"From the beginning, we've been saying that Italy and Malta need to be a bit more mature. They need to sit down, accept that the disagreements are in the way they interpret their maritime law obligations, and resolve them. And resolve them not in a case-by-case way, but come up with proper procedural rules on how the two governments will deal with boat incidents, depending on how the facts emerge.

But we do admit that, yes, Malta does face challenges because of its size. It is undeniable and we have always said it. We have consistently told the EU - and every single member state - that Malta, as well as other member states, needs a European approach.

We agree that there are challenges, but just because there are challenges does not justify us behaving in an appropriate way.”



4,670 people like our Facebook page, and we have **4,889** followers.



Our Twitter account is followed by **2,106** persons.



952 persons follow our Instagram feed.

Challenging an Unjust Asylum Procedure

In 2019 we continued our representation in Court of an asylum-seeker who faced a particularly unjust aspect of Malta's asylum procedure: the accelerated procedure. European law allows for certain categories of asylum applications to be channelled to an accelerated procedure, a procedure intended to be swifter and more efficient yet which nonetheless guarantees the minimum procedural

safeguards: a personal interview that gives applicants the possibility of present their claims and an effective remedy, being an appeals procedure.

Malta's accelerated procedure has a number of problems that could result in refugees being returned to a country where their lives are at risk. In a procedure that can last for just six days, an applicant might not be notified that his/her case is being fast-tracked, might not be granted a personal interview, might not allowed the possibility to file an appeal. In practice this means that, for example, a person coming from a country deemed safe by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner might have his/her claim done and shelved in six days without the possibility of questioning the decision that the country is safe or that he/she is safe in that country.

We are represented a client who decided to challenge this procedure, alleging it to be contrary to relevant EU law.



#DontLetThemDrown, #LetThemIn

2019 opened with a series of public advocacy activities related to Malta's decision not to allow the disembarkation of a group of rescued migrants, an all too familiar scene in Malta. Yet again, the episode underlined the need for increased EU solidarity to Malta in order for it to better uphold its international obligations, and also the need for Malta to be more respectful of human life. The #DontLetThemDrown initiative now attracts a long list of supporting organisations, all keen to see Malta fulfilling its obligations towards human life and the plight of so many people getting onto boats to flee the atrocities in Libya.

Throughout the year, we were engaged in a series of initiatives seeking to ensure respect for international maritime law, international human rights law and international refugee law. In all cases, we reiterated – publicly and also in our attempts to engage with Government – the need to prioritise human life and the urgency of a European Union system for support towards Malta.

Sexual and Reproductive Rights

We continued our active participation in the pro-choice movement. Together with participation in discussions and activities of the Voice 4 Choice movement, we also [published an opinion piece](#) on the subject:

"For us, a human rights NGO, abortion has a strong foundation in international human rights law and social justice. While there might not be a clearly formulated fundamental human right to abortion, it has repeatedly been read into other rights: to life, health, freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment, freedom from gender-based discrimination, privacy and family life.

To be clear, this 'reading' is a common exercise in human rights interpretation, where the actual text is broad and vague in order to allow for those shifts in interpretation that necessarily follow from our increased understanding of how people, societies and communities work."

Access to Housing as a Human Right

Throughout 2019 we continued our advocacy work on promoting housing as a fundamental human right. Much of this work was done within the coalition on rent regulation, publishing comments and input to proposed policy measures.

Challenges accessing decent housing made the headlines in 2019 with revelations of migrants being accommodated in stables. A series of incidents revealed the level of exploitation faced by migrants as they attempt to leave the open reception centres – they themselves a major challenge to the notion of dignified living – in order to live in the community. Other stories related to the importation of workers from Turkey and the treatment they would receive upon arrival and throughout their stay here. We issued a public statement on this, flagging our concerns for the way Malta's booming economy treats the same people supporting it:

"It would also appear that the security and wellbeing of these workers are ruthlessly set aside. It is unfair, irresponsible and morally questionable for Malta to transform its economic success into a burden on the shoulders of foreign workers. Malta remains bound by legal standards that demand the full respect for human dignity, yet it seems that our understanding of these standards is limited to the protection of our own economic well-being."

"Barra!": Our Calls for the PM and others to be thrown out

Since the brutal assassination of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia we've been stepping up our efforts in the area of rule of law and governance. We believe that her murder is the result of a series of institutional failures that have led to an erosion of those entities and processes intended to protect us. Together with other NGOs we reiterate our call for an independent inquiry into her murder, and have publicly criticised Government for its handling of the murder investigation and of the Valletta memorial used by mourners.

On an advocacy level, we have flagged our concerns to all those entities visiting Malta to report on the state of our rule of law and governance structures, such as the Council of Europe's Venice Commission. We do this out of a firm belief that serious changes must be implemented in order to overcome the worrying state Malta is in.

In 2019 our activism took us to the streets to join the thousands calling for the removal of Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, Keith Schembri and Konrad Minister. We attended several meetings with the Venice Commission, also providing written feedback and [issued harsh statements](#) condemning the Government's reaction to the mass protests happening towards the end of the year.

Notably, on 28 November we sent an open letter to all EU institutions underlining our very serious concerns at the degradation of Malta's rule law.

Malta's Commitments to the Universal Periodic Review

In late 2018 Malta's human rights performance was monitored by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The review resulted in a series of recommendations to Malta on a long list of topics, including statelessness, detention, rights of the child, reproductive health, rule of law and national human rights institutions.

The UPR is one of the main international human rights monitoring mechanisms that we actively liaise with, submitting shadow reports and monitoring on-going implementation of recommendations.

A useful summary of Malta's performance and related recommendations is found [here](#).

Miscellaneous and On-going

- Participation in UNHCR's Integration Roundtable Meetings;
- Delivery of presentations at various events, mainly on diversity, human rights and migration/asylum;
- We continued to provide Secretariat services to the Platform of Human Rights Organisations in Malta (PHROM), being also on its Executive Committee;
- Participation in the LGBTIQ Consultative Council;
- Participation in the 2019 Pride March, where our presence was marked as "*I march for Sofia!*" to show our solidarity with LGBTIQ+ persons who are afraid or unable to march during Pride. We firmly believe that Pride needs to be as inclusive as possible, also in view of a number of LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees living in Malta.

Staff Input: Carla Camilleri (Assistant Director)

Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you.

Ruth Bader Ginsberg

1933 - 2020

We have rarely seen such an active year as 2019 in terms of direct advocacy by way of demonstrations and protests. While protests may cause some upheaval, which may involve minor disturbances or the taking over of public space, they are the most basic form of civil society action. Taking to the streets to show concern or anger allows for the people to shift from voiceless to vocal, from weak to powerful. The ultimate aim is that of effecting change, influencing policy and showing disapproval at state action.

We were front liners in the Don't Let them Drown protest in January 2019, after which the 49 migrants that were stranded at sea for weeks were let into Malta's port. aditus was also there at the 'Iż-Żejjed Kollu Żejjed' national protest in September 2019 which brought together residents, workers, farmers, students and organisations who are fed up with excessive and haphazard construction. Again, in September we were walking for those LGBTIQ refugees who don't dare march themselves during the local Malta Pride march.

Throughout the months of October, November and December aditus was also present at the national protests and demonstrations calling for justice and accountability following the 2nd anniversary of Daphne Caruana Galizia's assassination and the subsequent arrests in late 2019. The almost daily protests in Valletta and around the island called for the resignation of key political figures, for increased transparency and for the strengthening of the rule of law. Although generally peaceful, the protestors were accused by a number of Government MPs of being violent and intent only on creating chaos or bloodshed. On the 3rd of December 2019, aditus issued a press statement warning that government actions, including the shrinking of public space used for these protests, were eating away at the right to peaceful assembly and the rights to freedom of expression.

It is of paramount important that the exercise of the right to peaceful assembly, including the right to protest, should be protected at all costs and is not subject to the permission or the issuance of permits by the authorities.



Significant Participations

Centre for Reproductive Rights, European Caucus on Reproductive Rights (May)

Mosaico: Azioni per i Rifugiati, World Refugee Day celebration (June)

European Network on Statelessness, Annual General Conference (June)

European Council on Refugees and Exiles, AIDA Coordinators Meeting (September)

OSCE, Hate Speech Workshop (September)

European Council on Refugees and Exiles, Annual General Conference (October)

ELENA Network, Advanced ELENA Course: International Protection in Europe (November)

PICUM, Legal Seminar: Data Protection, Immigration Enforcement and Fundamental Rights (November)

Publications and Press Releases

All our publications and press releases are available on our website, sorted either by theme or by the nature of the document.

Month	Publication	Press Release/Statement
January	Family Unity: A Fundamental Right	Press Statement calling on the Government of Malta to Open Port for Safe Disembarkation of 49 Refugees and Migrants
	Input to the Ministry for European Affairs and Equality on the Migrant Integration Strategy and Action Plan	PEOPLE ARE MORE IMPORTANT – Joint NGO Statement
February	Long-Term Residence and Citizenship by Naturalisation: A Necessity for Integration	Less worthy, less human. Joint NGO Statement on the treatment of Turkish workers in Malta
March		Voice for Choice on International Women's Day
April		Together, we remember Lassana Cisse Souleymane, whose life was so callously taken away.
		Malta can and must do better!
		We express solidarity and deep sorrow
May		Future Generations Guardian must be dismissed following his racist comments
		Lassana's death: A call to action

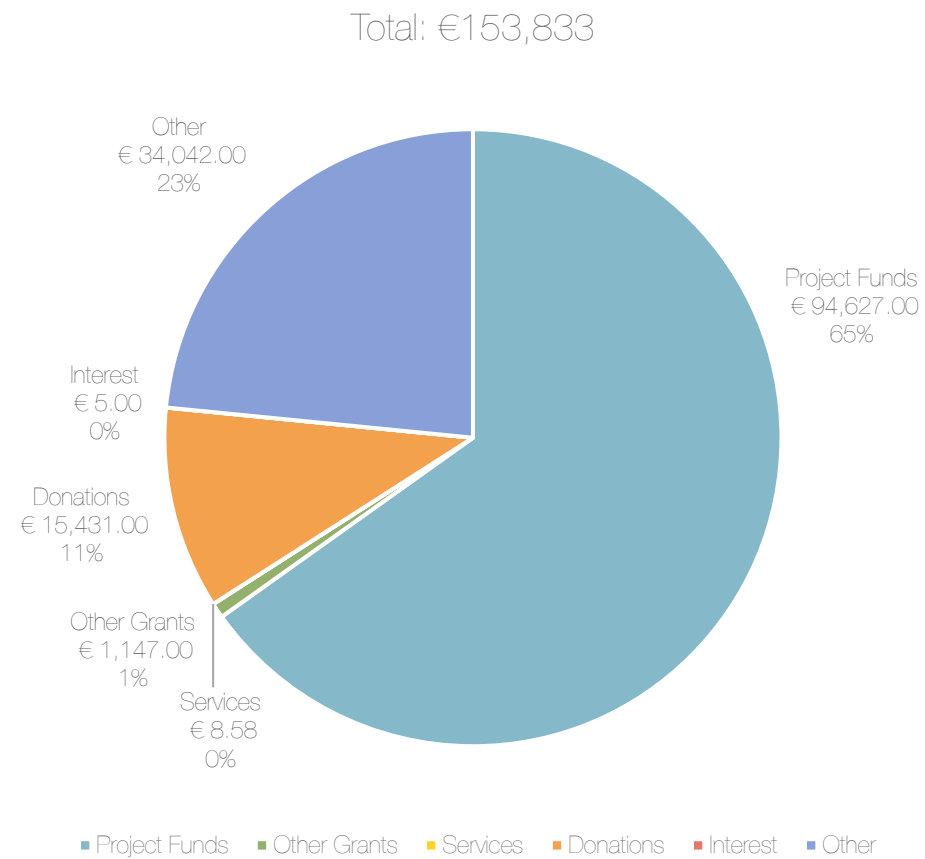
June	On Being Moved: Refugee Perceptions of Being Relocated to Malta	Innocent Until Proven Guilty? – The Presentation of Suspects in Criminal Proceedings
July		Joint Statement: The EU must stop the criminalisation of solidarity with migrants and refugees
		Residential Leases Act: The First Step Forward – Instability and Exorbitant Prices Yet To Be Addressed
		NGO reaction to comments made by Mr. Charles Caruana Carabez, the Commissioner for Education in his Annual Report
August		NGOs commend Maltese Government and call on European Member States to do more
		Europe must take collective responsibility for rescued migrants
September		NGO Statement on the European Meeting of 23 September
		Civil Society Statement regarding the ongoing detention of asylum seekers at Safi Barracks and the Initial Reception Centre
October		

November	Input to the 'Reform on Human Trafficking and Prostitution', from aditus foundation and Integra Foundation	The Prime Minister must resign at once
	Open Letter to the President of the European Council, Finland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the President of the European Parliament, the President of the European Commission	
December	Unfulfilled Potential: Human Rights and Equality Commission Bill and Equality Bill	(Ir)Regular Love Campaign
		Watch the dividing line between maintaining public order and eating away at fundamental freedoms!

Finances

Detailed accounts, prepared and signed by our certified accountant in terms of our legal obligations, are submitted to the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations. These charts present a visual summary of our finances for 2019.

Income



Expenditure

