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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL  
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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT  
ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Initial reports submitted by States parties under  
articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant

Addendum  
MALTA

[7 February 2003]

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**Measures taken to realize the right of everyone to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress**

913. There are no restrictions whatsoever on the diffusion of information on scientific progress. In 1988 the Government set up the Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST). In this role, MCST has pioneered visionary approaches to the deployment of science and technology in Malta. The MCST Board is composed of prominent members of the public and private sectors and academia. MCST work has focused over the years on promoting increased networking between these sectors and the development of public/private sector partnerships. MCST mandate is:

- (a) To advise the Government on strategic direction for national research and innovation policies, and the development of related investments and programmes;
- (b) To promote such public/private sector partnerships.

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**Measures taken to ensure the application of scientific knowledge for the benefit of everyone**

918. In 1994, a National Science and Technology Policy was approved by Cabinet, outlining the direction of Maltese future activity in developing effective science and technology policies. The policy document highlights the key role that science and technology can play in promoting the country's sustainable development.

919. In 1995, the Foundation for Science and Technology was established as a public foundation to work on the implementation and coordination of the National Science and Technology Policy under the Direction of MCST. The priorities identified are:

- The establishment and implementation of a National Information and Technology Strategy; telecommunications infrastructure; technological applications in industry;
- Coordination of sea- and land-related activities; coastal management; exploration of alternative, economically feasible, energy-saving and renewable energy applications; Water Information Management Network; improvement of water production and water use production; biotechnology;
- Sustainable development, identification of niche market in order to establish a National Information Technology Strategy;
- Human resources requirements for establishing a National Information Technology Strategy; and promoting increased support for research and development activity and training with a view to attaining the level of quality assurance required by the highest world standards in product and services.

920. Since 1995 MCST has hosted the National Coordinating Unit for Malta's Participation in the European Union's Fourth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, which promotes public awareness of the existing opportunities to join European research projects.

921. In case of the Fifth Framework Programme (FP5) Malta has submitted two proposals under the 1999 INCO Call for pre-Accession Countries. Maltese research organizations have also been involved in project proposals under the FP5 thematic programmes and the INCO-MED and INCO-DEV Programmes. MCST is also the government agency responsible for the management and coordination of Malta's participation in FP5. In this regard, MCST has set up the National Contact Point Organization (NCPO) for FP5, composed of the National Contact Points (NCPs) for each of the seven programmes. NCPO is responsible for information and awareness-raising as well as matters concerning advice, assistance, training in procedures, partner search, proposal-preparation, training sessions and seminars for target groups. Under this programme, 47 projects with Maltese partners have been approved by the EU Commission.

922. Malta has participated in a number of EU science and technology programmes, including Avicenne and the Fourth Framework Programme. Maltese research organizations have participated in 6 Avicenne projects and a total of 14 Fourth Framework Programme projects (7 in the first activity areas and 7 under the INCO Programme) have been put into operation.

923. Moreover, Malta is currently participating as a full member in three COST actions and is seeking to become a full member of a fourth action. Malta is also active at the Euro-Mediterranean level through regular participation in the meetings of the Euro-

Mediterranean Committee for Research and Technological Development. In a wider international context, Malta is actively involved in a number of intergovernmental organizations, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Commonwealth Science Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

924. On 29 October 2002 Malta and the EU signed a Memorandum of Association to the EU Sixth Framework Programme for Research (FP6). This programme was subsequently launched in Malta on 6 December 2002. MCST has also appointed National Contact Points (NCPs) for all the thematic priorities and horizontal activities as well as horizontal activities within FP6. NCPs assist, inform and provide advice to interested parties wishing to participate in this research programme.

**Measures taken to prevent the use of scientific and technical progress for purposes contrary to the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to life, health, personal freedom and privacy**

925. The Constitution of Malta encompasses the fundamental rights of the individual, and any action in breach of these rights, including the diffusion of scientific information, may be remedied through an action in the civil courts.

926. The Criminal Code provides that the taking of life by any means whatsoever is punishable with life imprisonment.

927. Other legislation which seek to check/regulate the diffusion of information are the Broadcasting Act, 1991, the Malta Communications Authority Act, 2000, the Telecommunications Act, 1997, and the Data Protection Act, 2002.