

# Statistics on Libraries: 2023

NR 128/2024

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In 2023, total book loans stood at 685,469, an increase of 25,853, or 3.9 per cent, over the preceding year.



When compared to the preceding year, public libraries in the district of Gozo and Comino and in the district of the Southern Harbour registered the largest increases in book loans, at the rates of 9.6 per cent and 4.5 per cent respectively. In Gozo, the majority of book loans was registered at the public library of Victoria numbering 30,962, followed by Nadur public library with 24,253 book loans (Table 3).

Despite the fact that the majority of the libraries of the Western district had increases in book loans, the locality of Ғaž-Żebbuġ registered a significant drop (87.1%), such that this locality contributed to the overall drop of 9.7 per cent in this district year-on-year.

The public libraries of the South Eastern district also registered a decrease (6.8 per cent) in book loans. Compared to the previous year, the biggest decrease in book loans from the public libraries was registered in Ғal Ġħaxaq (8,473), Gudja (5,615), and Mqabba (3,488). On the other hand, in the same district an increase of 48.5 per cent in book loans was registered in the public library of Marsaxlokk (5,682) (Table 3).

With reference to the Northern district, the public libraries of Mosta and Naxxar recorded most of the book loans amounting respectively to 50.5 and 15.0 per cent of the total registered in the district. (Table 3).

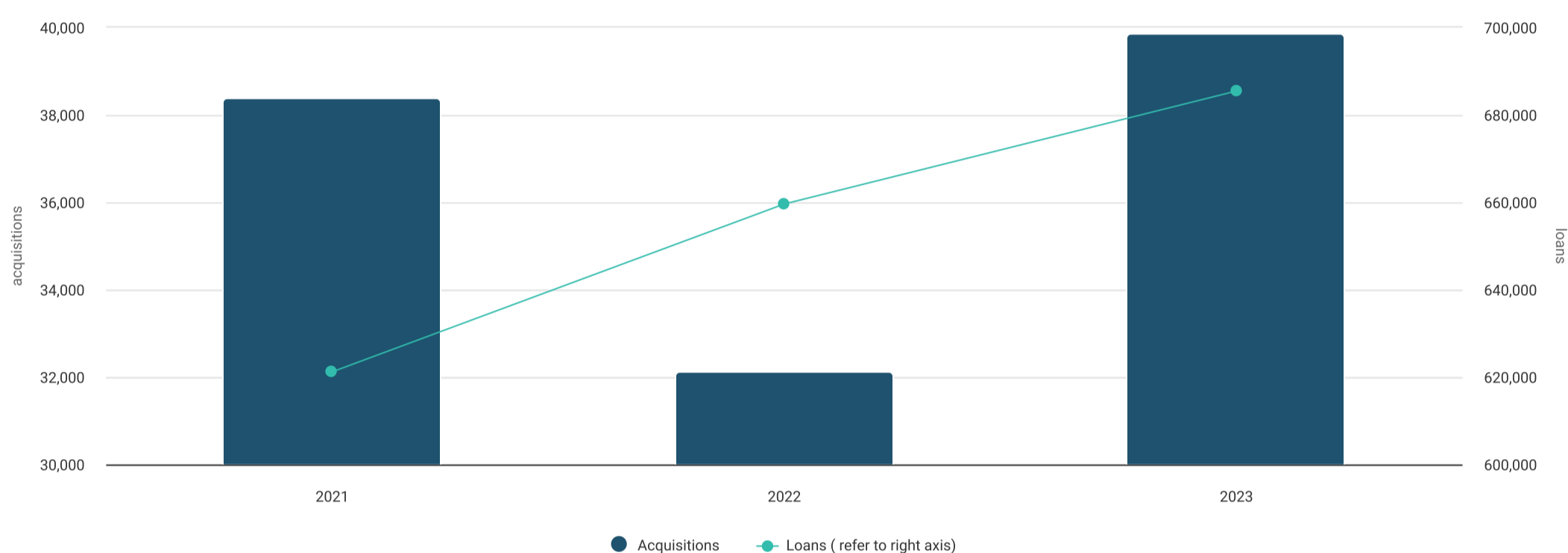
In 2023, book acquisitions amounted to 39,881, up by 24.1 per cent when compared to the preceding year. The biggest increase has been registered in book donations that rose by 4,902, followed by eBooks with an increase of 3,892. On the other hand, the acquisition of book purchases recorded a drop of 1,037 when compared with the previous year (Table 1).

New members of public libraries, in 2023, stood at 8,188, up by 37.7 per cent when compared to the preceding year. Likewise, the share of persons over the age of 18 among the new library members went up from 41.1 to 46.3 per cent (Table 2).

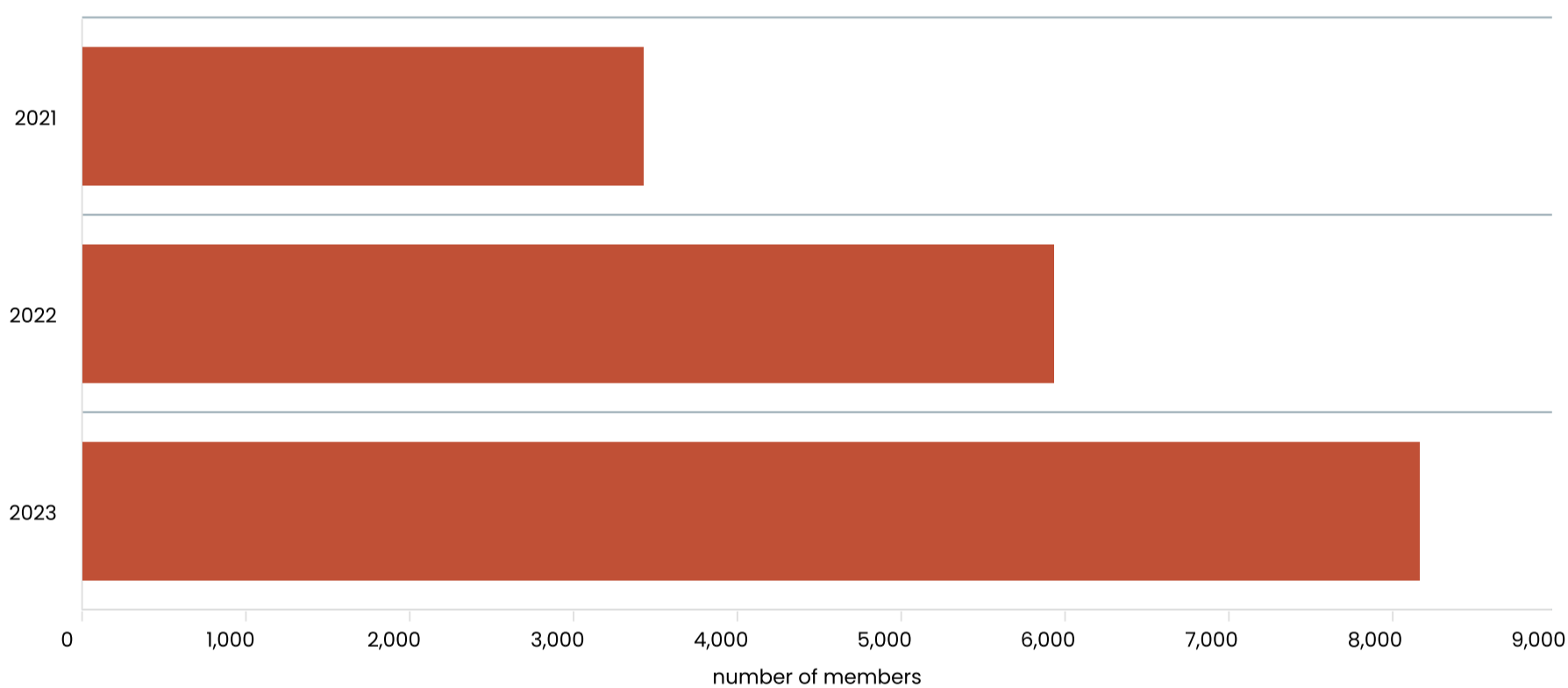
The number of books and periodicals received by the National Library of Malta under legal deposit amounted to 1,072, up by 21.7 per cent when compared to 2022. Last year, the number of books overtook the number of periodicals (Table 4).

Data of the International Trade Statistics indicated that, last year, imports of printed book material increased while periodicals decreased. On the other hand, exports of printed book material decreased while periodicals increased. Indeed, overall imports went up by 9.2 per cent, whereas overall exports went down by 13.4 per cent (Table 5). At the same time, National Accounts data revealed that the total private final consumption expenditure on books; and newspapers and periodicals grew by 2.0 per cent and 2.7 per cent respectively (Table 6).

## Chart 1. Book acquisitions and loans

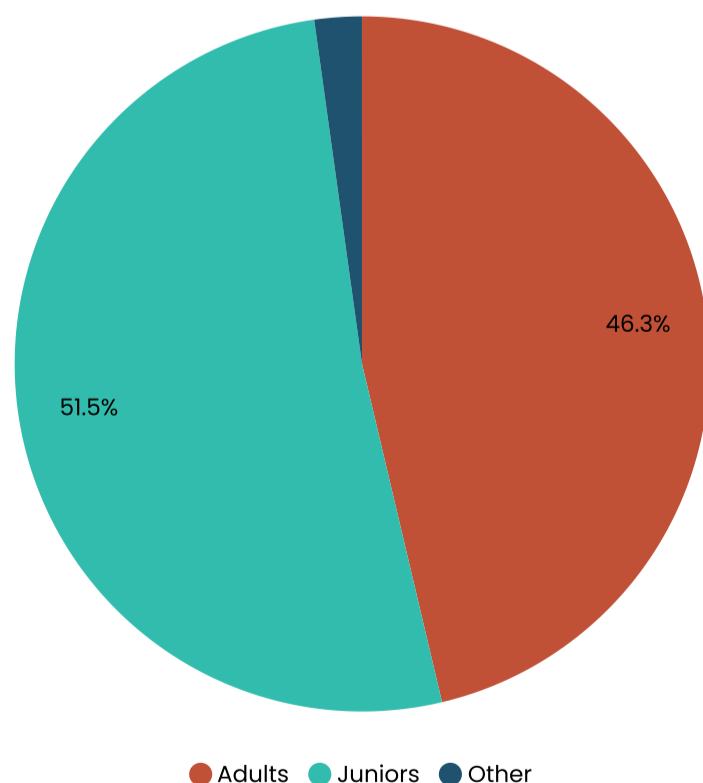


## Chart 2. New library members



## Chart 3. New public library membership by category (%)

2023



Note: 'Other' includes Guests, Staff members and Teachers.

**Table 1. Public libraries at a glance by year**

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Book acquisitions</b>	<b>38,379</b>	<b>32,124</b>	<b>39,881</b>
<i>of which:</i>			
Book purchases	9,615	11,031	9,994
Book donations	23,816	19,974	24,876
eBooks	4,948	1,119	5,011
<b>New library members</b>	<b>3,435</b>	<b>5,947</b>	<b>8,188</b>
<b>Book loans</b>	<b>621,202</b>	<b>659,616</b>	<b>685,469</b>
<i>of which:</i>			
Central Public Library	76,016	91,134	104,903
Regional libraries	148,051	164,361	166,872
Branch libraries - Malta	267,004	277,552	255,482
Gozo Central Public Library	19,718	29,061	30,962
Branch libraries - Gozo	69,513	61,831	68,675
eBooks	40,900	35,677	58,575

Source: Malta Libraries

**Table 2. New public library memberships by year**

Type of membership	2021	2022	2023
	Number of new members		
	18 and over		
Adults <sup>1</sup>	1,415	2,415	3,730
Adults residing in Malta without Maltese citizenship <sup>1 &amp; 3</sup>	9	30	51
Adult foreign visitors <sup>1 &amp; 3</sup>	-	1	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,424</b>	<b>2,446</b>	<b>3,793</b>
	Junior and Intermediate - under 18		
Junior - 12 years & under	1,614	3,025	3,915
Intermediate - 13 years to 17 years	161	236	190
Intermediate - 13 years to 17 years with additional adult lending rights <sup>2</sup>	4	6	10
Junior - 12 years & under without Maltese citizenship <sup>3</sup>	10	79	80
Intermediate - 13 years to 17 years without Maltese citizenship <sup>3</sup>	1	9	12
Junior foreign visitors <sup>3</sup>	-	4	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,790</b>	<b>3,359</b>	<b>4,215</b>
	Others		
Guests <sup>4</sup>	193	99	132
Staff members	-	3	5
Teachers <sup>5</sup>	28	40	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>3,435</b>	<b>5,947</b>	<b>8,188</b>

<sup>1</sup> From 2014 all adults have additional junior lending rights

<sup>2</sup> Require a written permit from a parent or guardian

<sup>3</sup> Require a Maltese citizen guarantee

<sup>4</sup> Temporary borrower category for new members who enrol themselves online

<sup>5</sup> This category was added in 2018 following the migration of 8 middle school libraries to Malta Libraries

Source: Malta Libraries

**Table 3. Total book loans by year and locality of library**

<b>District and locality</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>MALTA</b>	<b>580,302</b>	<b>623,939</b>	<b>626,894</b>
<b>Malta</b>	<b>491,071</b>	<b>533,047</b>	<b>527,257</b>
<b>Gozo and Comino</b>	<b>89,231</b>	<b>90,892</b>	<b>99,637</b>
<b>Southern Harbour</b>	<b>166,088</b>	<b>186,472</b>	<b>194,905</b>
Bormla	1,286	1,513	655
Fgura	7,483	9,692	7,130
Floriana	76,016	91,134	104,903
Kalkara	1,563	2,229	2,189
Ħal Luqa	37,765	36,082	34,403
Paola	20,367	20,852	20,338
Santa Luċija	7,116	4,463	4,853
Isla	225	679	632
Ħal Tarxien	235	2,613	1,901
Valletta	-	-	-
Birgu	1,986	2,401	2,032
Xgħajra	140	515	663
Ħaż-Żabbar	11,906	14,299	15,206
<b>Northern Harbour</b>	<b>100,077</b>	<b>105,490</b>	<b>103,703</b>
Birkirkara	46,564	55,603	48,734
Gżira	4,680	5,053	5,052
Ħamrun	4,998	5,839	4,460
Msida	7,987	5,964	5,167
Pembroke	4,677	5,914	6,028
Ħal Qormi	20,420	15,793	21,824
San Ġwann	5,118	4,856	4,778
Tas-Sliema	5,633	6,468	7,660
<b>South Eastern</b>	<b>116,120</b>	<b>110,628</b>	<b>103,120</b>
Birżebbuġa	4,294	5,036	6,048
Ħal Għaxaq	10,235	8,557	84
Gudja	22,680	20,904	15,289
Ħal Kirkop	2,840	4,329	3,552
Marsaskala	9,401	8,078	8,812
Marsaxlokk	13,069	11,727	17,409
Mqabba	16,784	12,094	8,606
Qrendi	7,578	7,971	8,606
Ħal Safi	5,030	5,813	6,180
Żejtun	14,371	13,890	15,562
Żurrieq	9,838	12,229	12,972

<b>Western</b>	<b>51,379</b>	<b>61,666</b>	<b>55,667</b>
Rabat	6,042	7,060	6,297
Ħad-Dingli	6,552	8,738	10,737
Mtarfa	3,487	5,339	7,689
Ħ'Attard	13,698	15,886	19,353
Sigġiewi	6,612	8,987	9,579
Ħaż-Żebbuġ	14,988	15,656	2,012
<b>Northern</b>	<b>57,407</b>	<b>68,791</b>	<b>69,862</b>
Ħal Għargħur	2,934	3,268	4,228
Mellieħa	8,131	10,111	9,700
Mġarr	6,196	6,453	6,541
Mosta	27,918	34,165	35,268
Naxxar	7,888	10,143	10,456
San Pawl il-Baħar	4,340	4,651	3,669
<b>Gozo and Comino</b>	<b>89,231</b>	<b>90,892</b>	<b>99,637</b>
Għajnsielem	4,220	5,503	7,357
Għarb	2,458	2,256	1,615
Għasri	2,281	3,438	2,954
Ta' Kerċem	419	1,304	1,294
Nadur	31,737	17,193	24,253
Qala	2,400	2,695	689
Victoria	19,718	29,061	30,962
San Lawrenz	3,253	2,741	2,766
Ta' Sannat	2,778	2,217	1,849
Xagħra	6,039	6,190	9,540
Xewkija	12,379	16,549	14,947
Żebbuġ	1,549	1,745	1,411

Note: eBooks are excluded from this table.

Source: Malta Libraries

**Table 4. Books and periodicals received at the National Library of Malta under legal deposit by year**

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>990</b>	<b>881</b>	<b>1,072</b>
Books	521	464	638
Periodicals	469	417	434

Source: Malta Libraries

**Table 5. Imports and exports of printed book material and periodicals in terms of value by year**

€ 000

	<b>2021 (Revised)</b>	<b>2022 (Revised)</b>	<b>2023<sup>P</sup></b>
<b>Imports</b>	<b>7,774</b>	<b>9,503</b>	<b>10,380</b>
Printed book material	6,220	8,352	9,315
Printed periodicals	1,554	1,151	1,065
<b>Exports</b>	<b>5,135</b>	<b>5,556</b>	<b>4,814</b>
Printed book material	5,134	5,556	4,804
Printed periodicals	1	-	10

<sup>P</sup> Provisional

Source: International Trade Statistics, NSO

Table 6. Private final consumption expenditure in the domestic market by year

€ 000

	2021 (Revised)	2022 (Revised)	2023 <sup>P</sup>
<b>Total private final consumption expenditure</b>	<b>6,587,185</b>	<b>8,344,134</b>	<b>9,655,999</b>
<i>of which:</i>			
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>37,413</b>	<b>39,830</b>	<b>41,055</b>
Books	19,739	21,138	21,562
Newspapers and periodicals	11,789	12,117	12,446
Miscellaneous printed matter	5,885	6,575	7,047
<b>% spent on printed material</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>0.43</b>

<sup>P</sup> ProvisionalNote: 2021-2023 are in line with News Release of 2024 Q1 ESA 2010 no. [099/2024](#).

Source: National Accounts (Production Unit), NSO



# Methodological Notes

1. Malta Libraries is the public entity which took over the functions of the Libraries Department in 2011. It is responsible for the Malta and Gozo National Libraries, the Central Public Library, the Regional Libraries, the Branch Libraries and the Gozo Public Libraries.

2. With reference to Table 2, from 2019 the new members in the Intermediate 13-17 age group are calculated by taking into account the enrolment of secondary school students as part of the migration process of school libraries onto the Malta Libraries platform.

3. In Table 5, goods are classified according to the Harmonised System division codes:

- 4901 – Printed books, brochures, leaflets and similar printed matter, whether or not in single sheets.
- 4902 – Newspapers, journals and periodicals, whether or not illustrated or containing advertising material.

4. In Table 6, ‘Miscellaneous printed matter’ includes:

- catalogues and advertising material;
- posters, plain or picture postcards, calendars;
- greeting cards and visiting cards, announcement and message cards;
- maps and globes.

and excludes:

- pre-franked postcards and aerogrammes;
- stamp albums.

5. References to this news release are to be cited appropriately.

6. During 2021, both Central Public Libraries as well as the Regional and Branch Libraries across Malta and Gozo operated on restricted schedules during the first and second quarter of the year. None of the libraries were closed.

7. A detailed news release calendar is available [online](#).

8. References to this news release are to be cited appropriately. For guidance on access and re-use of data please visit our [dedicated webpage](#).

9. For further assistance, please submit your query through our [online request form](#).

