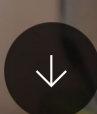


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## Statistics on Libraries: 2022

NR124/2023

Release Date: 17 July 2023

Updated: 18 July 2023

Administrative data provided by Malta Libraries revealed that, in 2022, total book loans stood at 659,616, an increase of 38,414, or 6.2 per cent, over the preceding year. After the dip in book loans in 2020, which was caused by the outbreak of the pandemic, book loans from public libraries have registered an increase for the second year running.



When compared to the preceding year, public libraries in Western and the Northern districts registered the largest increases in book loans, at the rates of 20.0 per cent and 19.8 per cent respectively. In the sister island of Gozo, the majority of book loans was registered at the public library of Victoria numbering 29,061, followed by Nadur public library with 17,193 book loans (Table 3).

The regional libraries at Ħ'Attard and Ғaḏ-Żebbuġ had most of the increase in book loans among the libraries of the Western district, such that together they represented over half of the gains in this district year-on-year.

With reference to the Northern district, the public libraries of Mosta and Naxxar recorded most of the book loans respectively amounting to 49.7 and 14.7 per cent of the total registered in the district (Table 3).

Conversely, the public libraries of the South Eastern district registered a decrease of 4.7 per cent in book loans. Compared to the previous year, the biggest decrease in book loans from the public libraries was registered in Mqabba, 27.9 per cent. On the other hand, in the same district an increase of 52.4 per cent in book loans was registered in the public library of Ғal Kirkop (Table 3).

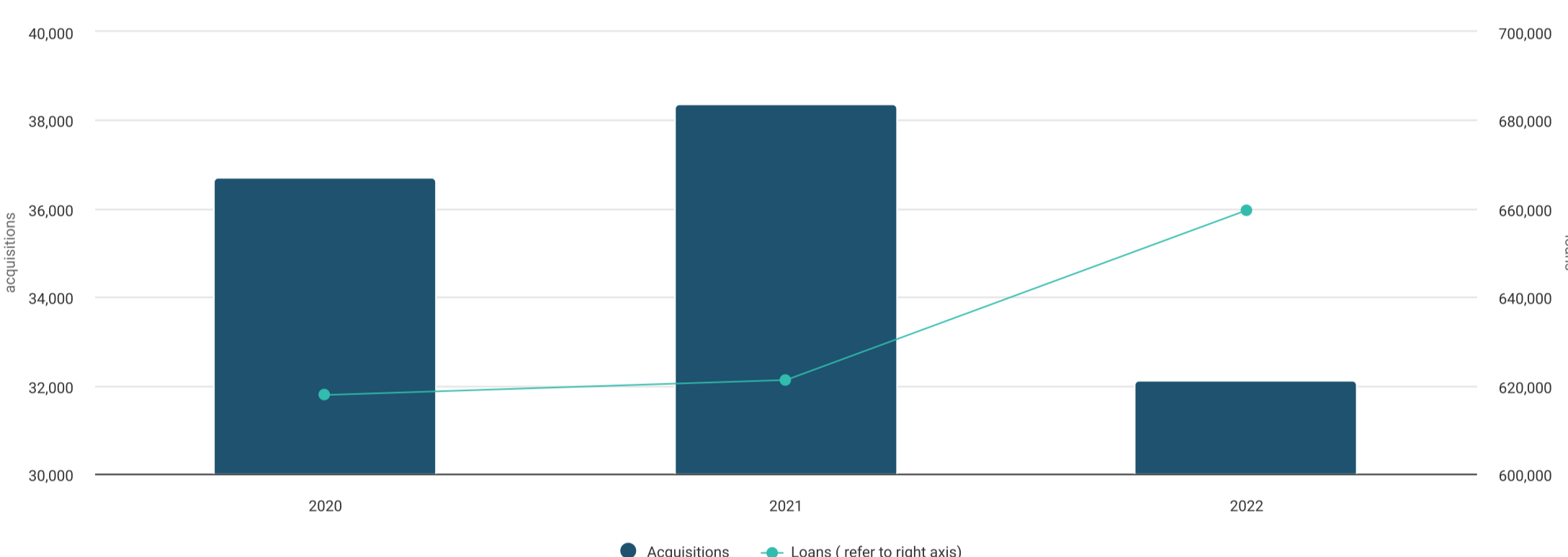
In 2022, book acquisitions amounted to 32,124, down by 16.3 per cent when compared to the preceding year. The biggest drop has been registered in eBooks which decreased by 77.4 per cent, followed by book donations with a decrease of 16.1 per cent. On the other hand, the book purchases recorded an increase of 14.7 per cent when compared with the previous year (Table 1).

New members of public libraries, in 2022, stood at 5,947, up by 73.1 per cent when compared to the preceding year. Likewise, the share of persons under the age of 18 among the new library members went up from 52.1 to 56.5 per cent (Table 2).

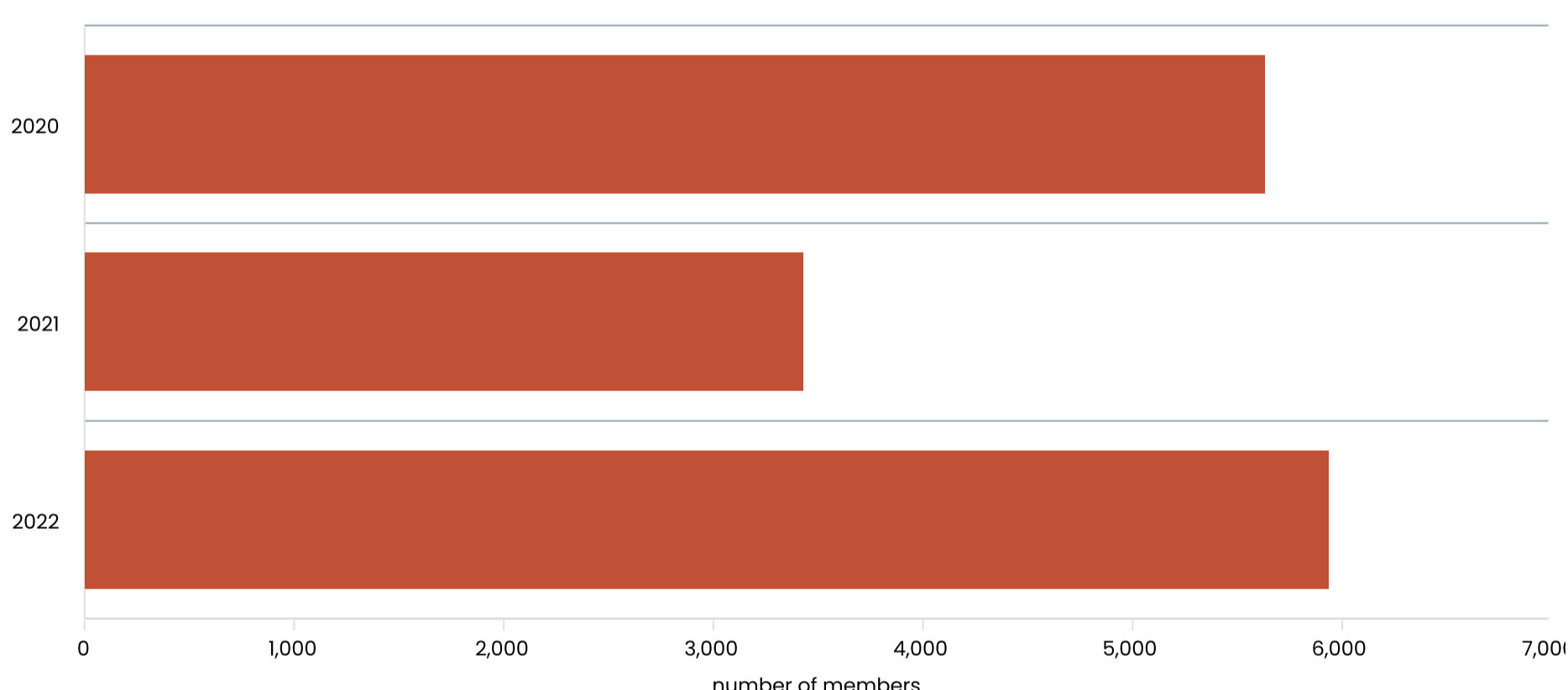
The number of books and periodicals received by the National Library of Malta under legal deposit amounted to 881, down by 11.0 per cent when compared to 2021. In 2022, the number of books overtook the number of periodicals (Table 4).

Data of the International Trade Statistics indicated that, last year, both the imports and exports of printed book material and periodicals increased. Indeed, such imports went up by 21.9 per cent, whereas exports went up by 8.2 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 10.6 per cent and 2.4 per cent respectively (Table 6).

### Chart 1. Book acquisitions and loans

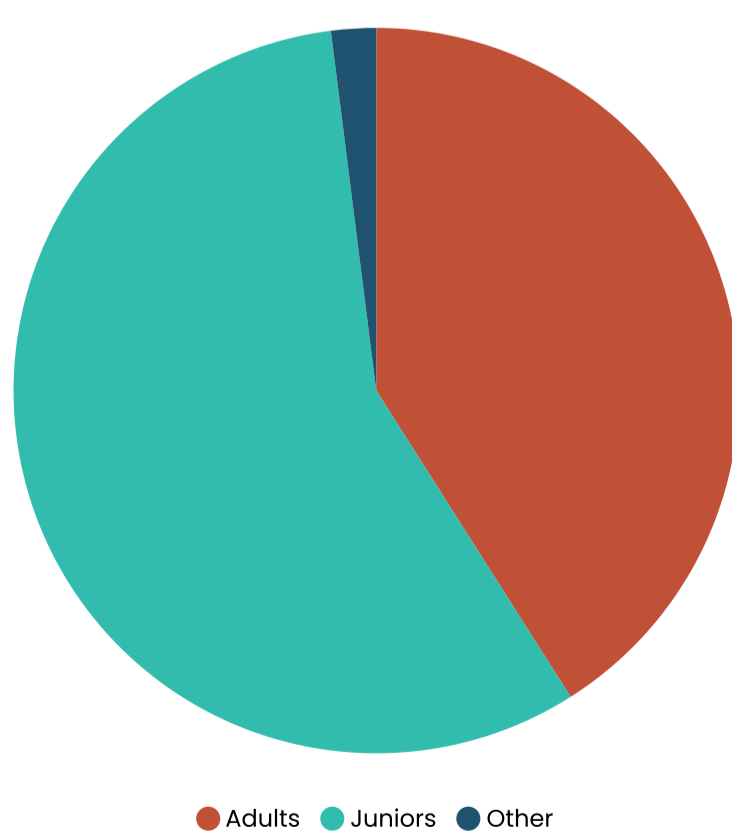


### Chart 2. New library members



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

2022



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

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

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Book acquisitions</b>	<b>36,706</b>	<b>38,379</b>	<b>32,124</b>
<i>of which:</i>			
Book purchases	10,031	9,615	11,031
Book donations	24,325	23,816	19,974
eBooks	2,350	4,948	1,119
<b>New library members</b>	<b>5,641</b>	<b>3,435</b>	<b>5,947</b>
<b>Book loans</b>	<b>617,820</b>	<b>621,202</b>	<b>659,616</b>
<i>of which:</i>			
Central Public Library	68,672	76,016	91,134
Regional libraries	148,171	148,051	164,361
Branch libraries - Malta	282,125	267,004	277,552
Gozo Central Public Library	13,071	19,718	29,061
Branch libraries - Gozo	59,739	69,513	61,831
eBooks	46,042	40,900	35,677

Source: Malta Libraries.

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

Type of membership	2020	2021	2022
	Number of new members		
	18 and over		
Adults <sup>1</sup>	1,488	1,415	2,415
Adults residing in Malta without Maltese citizenship <sup>1&amp;3</sup>	19	9	30
Adult foreign visitors <sup>1&amp;3</sup>	1	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,508</b>	<b>1,424</b>	<b>2,446</b>
	Junior and Intermediate - under 18		
Junior - 12 years & under	2,070	1,614	3,025
Intermediate - 13 years to 17 years	1,680	161	236
Intermediate - 13 years to 17 years with additional adult lending rights <sup>2</sup>	2	4	6
Junior - 12 years & under without Maltese citizenship <sup>3</sup>	19	10	79
Intermediate - 13 years to 17 years without Maltese citizenship <sup>3</sup>	1	1	9
Junior foreign visitors <sup>3</sup>	-	-	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,772</b>	<b>1,790</b>	<b>3,359</b>
	Other		
Guests <sup>4</sup>	135	193	99
Staff members	1	-	3
Teachers <sup>5</sup>	225	28	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,641</b>	<b>3,435</b>	<b>5,947</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>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>MALTA</b>	<b>571,778</b>	<b>580,302</b>	<b>623,939</b>
<b>Malta</b>	<b>498,968</b>	<b>491,071</b>	<b>533,047</b>
<b>Gozo and Comino</b>	<b>72,810</b>	<b>89,231</b>	<b>90,892</b>
<b>Southern Harbour</b>	<b>151,521</b>	<b>166,088</b>	<b>186,472</b>
Bormla	768	1,286	1,513
Fgura	8,736	7,483	9,692
Floriana	68,672	76,016	91,134
Kalkara	789	1,563	2,229
Ħal Luqa	28,076	37,765	36,082
Paola	15,547	20,367	20,852
Santa Luċija	11,599	7,116	4,463
Isla	149	225	679
Ħal Tarxien	1,745	235	2,613
Valletta	264	-	-
Birgu	1,137	1,986	2,401
Xgħajra	675	140	515
Ħaż-Żabbar	13,364	11,906	14,299
<b>Northern Harbour</b>	<b>128,204</b>	<b>100,077</b>	<b>105,490</b>
Birkirkara	53,410	46,564	55,603
Gżira	6,596	4,680	5,053
Ħamrun	4,660	4,998	5,839
Msida	9,910	7,987	5,964
Pembroke	4,293	4,677	5,914
Ħal Qormi	40,502	20,420	15,793
San Ġwann	4,091	5,118	4,856
Tas-Sliema	4,742	5,633	6,468
<b>South Eastern</b>	<b>119,863</b>	<b>116,120</b>	<b>110,628</b>
Birżebbuġa	3,185	4,294	5,036
Ħal Għaxaq	11,921	10,235	8,557
Gudja	14,119	22,680	20,904
Ħal Kirkop	3,333	2,840	4,329
Marsaskala	14,148	9,401	8,078
Marsaxlokk	26,636	13,069	11,727
Mqabba	13,310	16,784	12,094
Qrendi	11,074	7,578	7,971
Ħal Safi	2,392	5,030	5,813
Żejtun	12,271	14,371	13,890
Żurrieq	7,474	9,838	12,229

<b>Western</b>	<b>49,644</b>	<b>51,379</b>	<b>61,666</b>
Rabat	5,067	6,042	7,060
Ħad-Dingli	6,257	6,552	8,738
Mtarfa	6,605	3,487	5,339
Ħ'Attard	14,166	13,698	15,886
Sigġiewi	5,299	6,612	8,987
Ħaż-Żebbuġ	12,250	14,988	15,656
<b>Northern</b>	<b>49,736</b>	<b>57,407</b>	<b>68,791</b>
Ħal Għargħur	2,502	2,934	3,268
Mellieħa	6,828	8,131	10,111
Mġarr	5,477	6,196	6,453
Mosta	21,284	27,918	34,165
Naxxar	8,046	7,888	10,143
San Pawl il-Baħar	5,599	4,340	4,651
<b>Gozo and Comino</b>	<b>72,810</b>	<b>89,231</b>	<b>90,892</b>
Għajnsielem	4,752	4,220	5,503
Għarb	2,756	2,458	2,256
Għasri	2,078	2,281	3,438
Ta' Kerċem	526	419	1,304
Nadur	26,357	31,737	17,193
Qala	2,228	2,400	2,695
Victoria	13,071	19,718	29,061
San Lawrenz	2,208	3,253	2,741
Ta' Sannat	1,871	2,778	2,217
Xagħra	5,271	6,039	6,190
Xewkija	9,211	12,379	16,549
Żebbuġ	2,481	1,549	1,745

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>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>963</b>	<b>990</b>	<b>881</b>
Books	462	521	464
Periodicals	501	469	417

Source: Malta Libraries

**Table 5. Imports and exports of printed book material and periodicals<sup>1</sup> in terms of value by year**

€ 000

	<b>2020 (Revised)</b>	<b>2021<sup>P</sup></b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Imports</b>	<b>9,920</b>	<b>7,769</b>	<b>9,470</b>
Printed book material	7,523	6,215	8,320
Printed periodicals	2,397	1,554	1,151
<b>Exports</b>	<b>5,610</b>	<b>5,135</b>	<b>5,556</b>
Printed book material	5,610	5,134	5,556
Printed periodicals	-	1	-

<sup>P</sup> Provisional<sup>1</sup> Refer to the methodological note 3.

Source: International Trade Statistics, NSO.

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

€ 000

	2020 (Revised)	2021 (Revised)	2022 <sup>P</sup>
<b>Total private final consumption expenditure</b>	<b>5,583,842</b>	<b>6,114,164</b>	<b>7,096,500</b>
<i>of which:</i>			
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>29,867</b>	<b>29,772</b>	<b>32,583</b>
Books	20,658	19,739	21,826
Newspapers and periodicals	6,524	6,670	6,830
Miscellaneous printed matter <sup>1</sup>	2,685	3,363	3,927
<b>% spent on printed material</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>0.46</b>

<sup>P</sup> ProvisionalNote: 2020-2022 are in line with News Release of 2023 Q1 ESA 2010 no. [095/2023](#).<sup>1</sup> Refer to the methodological note 4.

Source: National Accounts (Production Unit), NSO.



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## 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. Statistics in this News Release should be interpreted in the context of the COVID-19 situation. Due to the pandemic restrictions, libraries were closed between 30th March and 25th June 2020.

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](#).

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