

# News Release



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## Special Observances

### World Refugee Day

World Refugee Day is celebrated worldwide on 20th June. The focus this year is on the hope that accompanies refugees throughout their journey to asylum.

Malta's role in the experience of asylum seekers is emerging as ever more significant by the year. This is mainly due to its geographical situation, which means that every year a number of irregular immigrants reach Maltese shores. In 2005, 48 boats brought a total of 1,822 irregular immigrants to Malta. When compared to figures for the previous year, this translates into an increase of 434 irregular immigrants. For this year, up to 14th June, the total number of boats reaching Malta was nine, which corresponds to 378 irregular immigrants.

The increase in arrivals is also reflected in an increase in the number of applications for asylum. The total number of applications received by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner during 2004 amounted to 997, whilst the number received in 2005 was 1,199. This difference translates into an increase of 20 per cent over the figure for 2004. The number of applications recorded this year up to the end of May amounted to 557, which suggests that the increasing trend will be sustained in 2006. Figures for each year (Table 4) also include pending applications brought over from the previous year.

An increase was also recorded in the number of migrants who were repatriated – from 709 in 2004 to 954 in 2005. Up to April 2006 the number of repatriations for this year stood at 349. Figures of repatriations refer to all foreigners removed from the country i.e., they include the repatriation of persons who enter the country legally but remain beyond their authorised stay, persons who arrive in Malta without the proper documentation, and others who arrive in an irregular manner.

The total number of asylum decisions taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner during 2005 was 1,102. Of these 49.6 per cent were positive decisions i.e., refugee status or humanitarian protection was granted to 36 and 510 individuals respectively during 2005. The remaining 50.5 per cent of all decisions were rejections. In contrast to the figures recorded for 2003 and 2004, the distribution of decisions taken in 2005 indicates that the percentage of rejections exceeded the percentage of grants of humanitarian protection. Between 2002 and 2005 a total of 160 persons were granted refugee status, 1,509 persons were granted humanitarian protection and 1,288 persons' applications were rejected ■

## Theme: General Statistics

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The monthly calendar of NSO News Releases may be consulted on the Office's website at [www.nso.gov.mt](http://www.nso.gov.mt)

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**Table 1. Boats arriving in Malta with irregular immigrants: 2002 - mid-June 2006**

Year	No. of boats arriving	No. of people on board	Average no. of people on board per boat
2002	21	1,686	80
2003	12	502	42
2004	52	1,388	27
2005	48	1,822	38
Up to mid-June 2006	9	378	42

Source: Immigration Section - Police GHQ

Policy Document. Irregular Immigrants: Refugees and Integration -  
Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs/Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, 2005.

**Table 2. Repatriated migrants: 2000 - April 2006**

Year	Repatriated migrants
2004	709
2005	954
Up to April 2006	349

Source: Immigration Section - Police GHQ

**Table 3. Recognised refugees in Malta: 1995-2001**

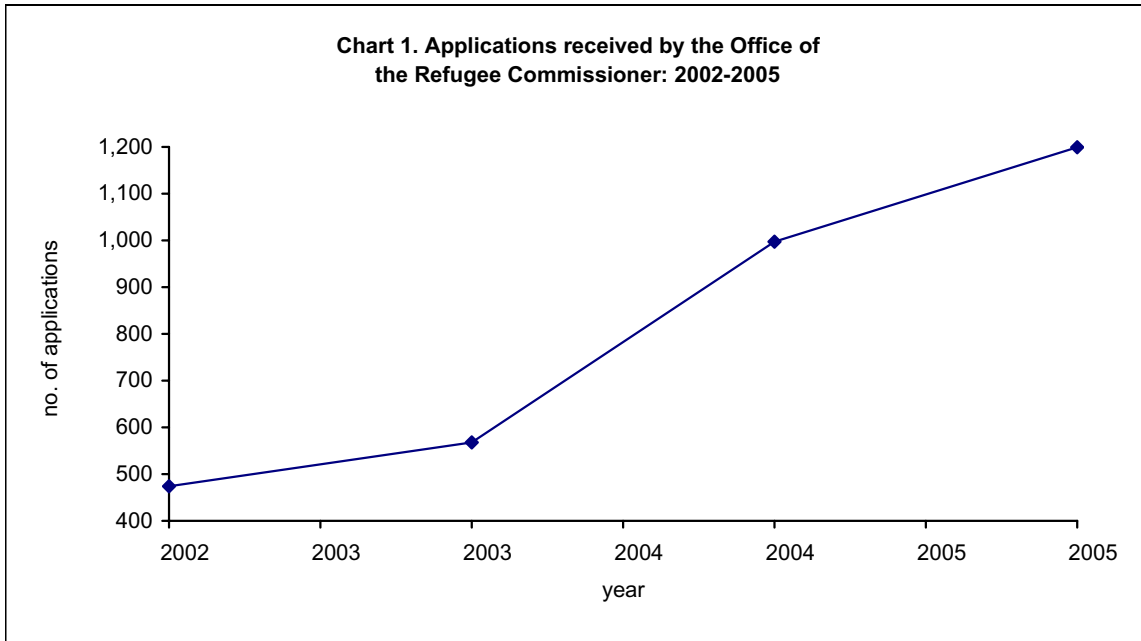
Year	No. of refugees	of whom Children
1995	698	200
1996	538	162
1997	448	140
1998	450	125
1999	378	64
2000	277	48
2001	244	55

Source: Emigrants Commission

**Table 4. Applications received by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2002 - May 2006**

Year	No. of applications
2002	474
2003	568
2004	997
2005	1,199
Up to May 2006	557

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner



**Table 5. Asylum decisions taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner: 2002-May 2006**

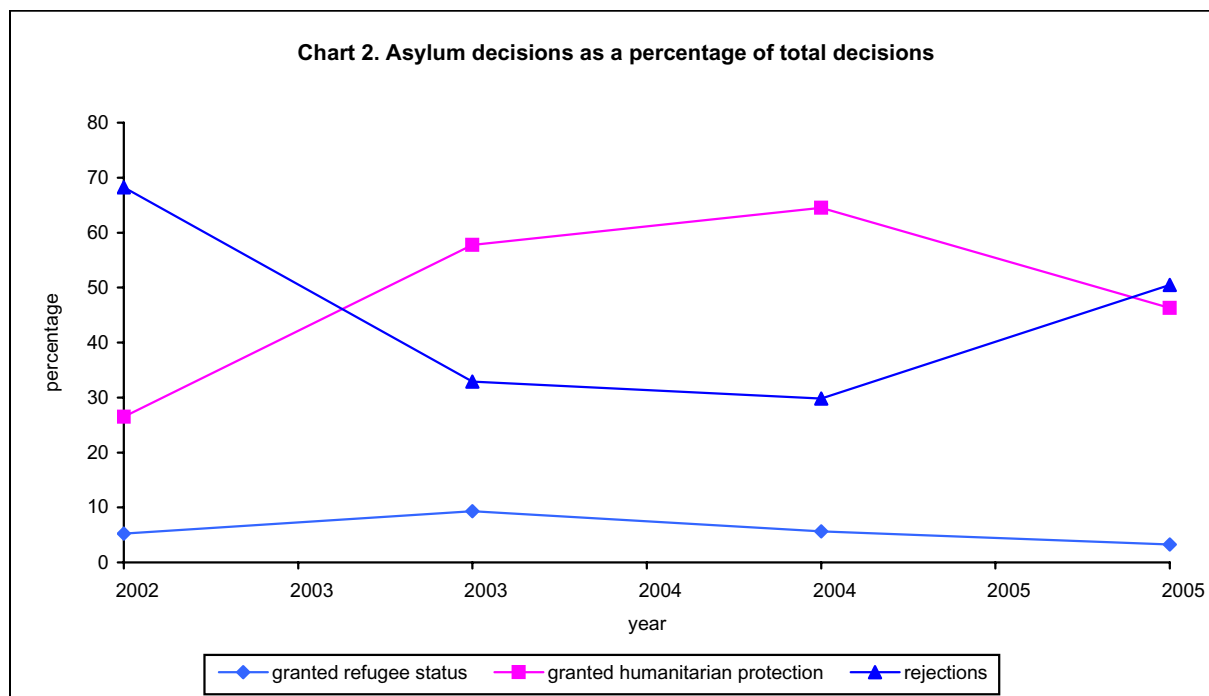
Year	Granted refugee status	Granted humanitarian protection	Rejections	Total
2002	22	111	286	419
2003	53	328	187	568
2004	49	560	259	868
2005	36	510	556	1,102
Up to May 2006	12	272	293	577

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner

**Table 6. Asylum decisions taken by the Office of the Refugee Commissioner as a percentage of total decisions: 2002-May 2006**

Year	percentage			
	Granted refugee status	Granted humanitarian protection	Rejections	Total
2002	5.3	26.5	68.3	100.0
2003	9.3	57.7	32.9	100.0
2004	5.6	64.5	29.8	100.0
2005	3.3	46.3	50.5	100.0
Up to May 2006	2.1	47.1	50.8	100.0

Source: Office of the Refugee Commissioner



## Methodological Notes

### Sources:

- Immigration Section, Police General Head Quarters;
- Emigrants Commission;
- Office of the Refugee Commissioner;
- Policy Document. *Irregular Immigrants: Refugees and Integration*. Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs/Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity, 2005.

The Emigrants Commission is the source of the numerical data for refugees in Malta prior to January 2002. The Office of the Refugee Commissioner started to function in January 2002.