



## CrimeMalta Annual Crime Review: Year 2013

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**Crime jumps 12.6% from 2012 to 2013, maintaining its consistent increase since 2009!**

**However, just one category of crime (Damages) is mainly responsible for this increase. Nearly all other categories have experienced a steady decline except for Fraud, Threats and Private Violence as well as against Violence against Public Officers.**

CrimeMalta's 6 years of crime analysis and reporting is being enhanced with its Malta Crime Observatory Initiative that will be launched later on in the 2014 together with the major players in the field: research institutes, analysts, policy-makers, enforcement entities and the public-private sector.

As part of the annual reporting process, CrimeMalta is publishing its latest findings elicited from analysis of reported crime, incarceration statistics and spatial analysis. The outputs below pertain to the closed 'accounts' for 2013 crime.

In summary, crime analysis has seen a steady year-on-year incident increase from 2009 which year had experienced the lowest-ever reported crime statistic. The increasing trend has again reached the average achieved between 1998 and 2007. Normally at 50% of all crime going unreported, keeping things constant for the 1998-2013 data the sheer potential of 15,000 'lost' offences is too large to contemplate. Interestingly, this year should have seen the launch of an EU-wide project to study unreported crime which would have enabled us to ascertain the current level that the Dark Figure pertains to and in turn study crime better, but unfortunately such a project EU-SASU has been shelved by the EU.

With respect to the Malta figures, the year 2012-2013 has seen the highest year-on-year jump since 1998 with reported crimes.

The causes of this change are multi-faceted. Social sciences point towards the relationship between crime and poverty (whether absolute or relative). As poverty increases or austerity kicks in, where disposable income decreases, crime experiences an inverse reaction in that it increases. Likewise, easy access or proximity to goods leads to an increase in crime due to the opportunity 'to pick up' that the same goods offer, as well the access to tools for use in 'new crimes' such as computer-related fraud or theft.

Following an in-depth scientific analysis of 155,175 crimes reported from 2004 to 2013, criminologist Dr. Saviour Formosa ([www.crimemalta.com](http://www.crimemalta.com)) posits that whilst Theft comprises an 90,436 component, followed by 28,333 Damages, the third highest and significant number relates to Bodily Harm at 10,521. The rest comprise 28 different offence categories. The studies take the form of a rate analysis, as against a count analysis, through the study of a RISC assessment (Relative Index of Spatial Crime), trend analysis and spatio-statistical analysis. The RISC categories that show which towns suffer most from crime, or inversely are safest in Malta and Gozo, can be found below.

Some main figures:

- Thefts have seen a 24% jump from the lowest recorded year in 2009 (6,800 incidences) to 8,469 in 2013. However, reported theft has decreased from 2012 to 2013, the first time in 4 years;
- Damages constituted the main jump between 2012 and 2013 with an increase from 2613 in 2012 to 4658 in 2013, an increase of 78% over the previous year;
- Bodily Harm averages 1,052 cases per year or 3 incidents per day (average 2004-2013). This statistic shows a consistent occurrence every year;
- Fraud is on the increase averaging 2 cases per day (626 per year in 2012) up from 359 in 2012 (1 case per day) and 160 in 2004; This major increase change to a 78% year-on-year increase from 2012 to 2013;
- Computer related crime is on the increase due to victim-awareness of the need to report and ever-ambitious offenders trying new tools, which figures have gone up from 10 in 2004 to 211 in 2013, however down from 243 in 2012;
- Drugs have gone up from 78 in 2004 to 208 in 2013;
- Abandonment of child / Infanticide has decreased to its lowest figure from 2009 to 6 in 2013, down from 11 in 2012;
- Prostitution is on the decrease, experiencing a 52% drop in reported offences from 101 in 2013, which though is still high compared to the lowest ever reporting of 16 in 2004 through lower than the experienced peak of 130 in 2011;
- Domestic Violence has increased from 450 in 2008 to 1024 in 2013, though it has practically stabilised over the past two years;

- Threats and Public Violence have practically tripled from the lowest figure of 63 in 2008, the year which saw a steady increase year on year to a figure of 185 in 2013, up 31% from the 141 reported in 2012;
  - Violence against Public Officers have also practically doubled from 111 in 2004 to 262 in 2013, up from 230 in 2012, signifying a 14% year-on-year increase.
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### **Prison numbers maintain their high rates that go beyond the Psychological Threshold!**

In a year that has seen the first steps towards parole implementation, an increase in warders, changes related to the administration of the prisons, a revolving director's door and the subsequent flux, the prison regime has yet to establish itself as a sustainable structure. The steps are gradually being put in place following years of governmental abandonment. Time will tell whether the new structure will bear fruit, as the prisons cannot serve as a self-fulfilling process but only one cog in a very complex social machine.

Such issues have also been reflected in the prisons system which has been inundated with an ever-increasing number of offenders, held in the Island's only prison that comprises services for both sexes, all categories of offences, all ages, national and international provenance, sentenced and remanded offenders, amongst other categories. This type of prison, whilst manageable under normal circumstances, is being pressured by a system that refuses to entertain effective alternative-to-imprisonment services such as community service. The prisons are also ironically bearing the brunt of a more efficient sentencing practice post the signing of a judiciary salary agreement, which however did not take into account the resultant pressure on the already-overcrowded prison population, being that imprisonment is seen as a good milestone to gauge effectiveness of service.

As from 2012, CrimeMalta's research process has also been enhanced to include the prison population statistics, with data going back to 2001.

Some stats: as recorded on a Friday base-date:

- The CCF Psychology Capacity Threshold of 600 inmates was exceeded at the end of September 2012;
- The CCF Population as at 29th December 2001 (last Friday) : 252 (240 males and 11 females);
- The CCF Population as at the highest recorded Friday - 8th February 2013: 639 (587 males and 47 females);

- The CCF Population is now sustaining an ongoing population that exceeds 620.

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### **RISC Model: League Tables for 2013**

As part of a review of RISC Modelling for the Maltese Islands, a number of analytical studies have been carried out for the period between 1998 and 2013.

#### **Grand Total Offences:**

In terms of Grand Total Offences, San Giljan takes the perennial top of the League, hosting over 5 times the national rate of offences, which is calculated as the observed offences as against those which should potentially occur in those areas under study. At a rate between twice and 5 times the national rate, Bormla followed a close second at 2-5 times the national rate, which group also holds Floriana, Mdina and Valletta.

At a rate between the national up to twice that rate one can find Sliema, San Pawl il-Bahar, Msida, Birgu, Gzira, Marsa, Ta' Xbiex, Gudja, Zebbug (Ghawdex) which includes Marsalforn, Birzebbugia, Mellieha, Paola and Marsaxlokk. Interestingly San Pawl il-Bahar, has for the first time since 1998, become a safer place in terms of reported grand total crimes, having moved down 1 RISC category, having always fallen within the 2x to 5x RISC.

All the Other Councils host a lower than national rate, albeit none have a Zero Risk.

#### **Theft from Residences:**

San Giljan, Swieqi, Pembroke and Msida host a 2 to 5 times the national risk rates, rendering them the most risky places to live in. In contrast, Ghasri, San Lawrenz, Mdina and Fontana registered zero residential offences in 2013.

#### **Theft of and from Vehicles:**

Floriana has taken the top spot of the League, hosting over 5 times the national rate of offences. San Giljan and Gudja in turn gauge the highest risk areas where one's car could be vandalised, broken into and/or stolen, which towns host between 2 & 5 times. At the other end of the scale, Ghasri, Kerzem and Fontana zero vehicle-related offences.