

# Auditing in a New World Disorder

European Court of Auditors Summer School 2026  
L-Università ta' Malta

Valletta Campus  
9 – 12 June 2026



EUROPEAN  
COURT  
OF AUDITORS



L-Università  
ta' Malta

A photograph of three young men standing in front of a modern building with large glass windows. They are all looking at a smartphone held by the man on the right. The man on the left is wearing a black t-shirt and black pants. The man in the middle is wearing a black t-shirt and black pants. The man on the right is wearing a white t-shirt and blue jeans. The text 'TABLE OF CONTENTS' is overlaid in large white letters on a dark semi-transparent background.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **5 Welcome addresses:**

### **5 Dr George-Marius Hyzler**

*Member of the European Court of Auditors, Dean Chamber III  
Host of the Summer School 2026*

### **6 Prof Frank Bezzina**

*Rector-designate, L-Università ta' Malta*

### **8 Dr Marie Louise Mangion**

*Head and Deputy Dean, Department of Policy, Politics and Governance,  
L-Università ta' Malta*

## **9 Agenda**

**24 Malta**

**26 Valletta**

**28 L-Università ta' Malta**

**29 Valletta Campus: From the Knights to Today**

**30 Department of Policy, Politics and Governance**



Dear Participants,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the European Court of Auditors Summer School, which in 2026 is being held in Malta.

This initiative, which started in 2018, brings together auditors, policymakers, academics and practitioners from across Europe and beyond to reflect on some of the most pressing challenges facing the European Union today. In a period marked by geopolitical uncertainty, economic pressures, technological transformation and growing expectations of public institutions, the role of sound financial governance and effective public audit has never been more important.

Transitioning into the next Multi-annual Financial Framework 2028-2034 marks a strategic pivot towards competitiveness and security priorities within the Union, introducing greater budgetary flexibility and simplification, and proposing new own resources that can meet spending priorities while keeping national contributions stable. The discussions throughout this Summer School will explore how the European Union can align strategic ambition with effective delivery and accountability, while ensuring that public resources are managed with integrity, transparency and efficiency.

From the implications of geopolitical and macroeconomic volatility, to the impact of emerging technologies, the financing of defence and security priorities, and the

evolving architecture of EU budgetary governance, the programme aims to foster thoughtful and forward-looking exchanges.

At the same time, the Summer School seeks to strengthen dialogue between the audit community, policymakers and the academic world, recognising that complex governance challenges require cooperation, critical thinking and shared expertise.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the University of Malta for accepting to cooperate with the ECA in organising this event as well as the Ministry for Finance and the National Audit Office of Malta for their valuable support. Their collaboration has made it possible to host this initiative in Malta.

I hope that the ECA Summer School will provide an opportunity not only for engaging discussions and professional learning, but also for meaningful connections among participants from different institutions and countries.

I wish you a productive and inspiring Summer School and a pleasant stay in Malta.

**Dr George-Marius Hyzler**

Member of the European  
Court of Auditors,  
Dean Chamber III





Distinguished guests, colleagues, and participants,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the European Court of Auditors Summer School 2026 here at the University of Malta's Valletta Campus. We are honoured to host such a distinguished group of auditors, policymakers, scholars and professionals who share a commitment to strengthening governance and accountability across Europe.

This Summer School is coordinated by the Department of Policy, Politics and Governance within the Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy at the University of Malta, in collaboration with the National Audit Office and the Ministry for Finance. We are very pleased to work together with these institutions to bring this important initiative to Malta.

Your presence here reflects a shared recognition that strong public institutions depend on rigorous scrutiny, informed decision-making and continuous learning. At a time when Europe faces complex economic, geopolitical and technological challenges, the role of public audit has never been more critical.

Over the coming days, this Summer School will explore many of the issues shaping the future of governance and public finance. You will engage with topics ranging from macroeconomic volatility and geopolitical uncertainty to the disruptive potential of artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and the changing landscape of defence and security financing. You will also reflect on the evolving role of audit and control systems in the context of the next Multiannual Financial Framework and the broader challenges of multi-level governance.

Equally important, the programme invites participants to consider how audit institutions can continue to enhance transparency, resilience and public value. Sessions on performance audit, evaluation approaches and impact assessment remind us that the ultimate purpose of auditing is not only accountability, but also learning and improvement in public administration.

Hosting this Summer School in Valletta also provides an opportunity to connect these discussions with Malta's rich historical and institutional context. The field visits and cultural activities planned throughout the week highlight the close relationship between governance, heritage and public stewardship.

The University of Malta is proud to support this initiative, and we hope that the conversations you begin here will continue well beyond this week, strengthening professional networks and contributing to better public governance across Europe.

I wish you a stimulating, productive and enjoyable Summer School.

**Frank Bezzina**  
Rector-designate  
*L-Università ta' Malta*



On behalf of the Department of Policy, Politics and Governance at the University of Malta, I am pleased to welcome you to the European Court of Auditors Summer School 2026, jointly organised by the European Court of Auditors and I-Università ta' Malta. It promises to be a week of learning, debates, deliberations and explorations.

The theme of this year's Summer School, **"Auditing in a New World Disorder"**, captures the realities confronting public institutions today. Economic volatility, geopolitical uncertainty, increased complexity, regulatory transformation, and rapid technological change are reshaping the environment in which public audit operates. In this context, the role of auditors as promoters and guardians of accountability, transparency, efficiency, effectiveness and public trust has never been more critical.

The programme brings together practitioners and academics to reflect on

key contemporary challenges, including macroeconomic instability, defence and security spending, performance and impact evaluation, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and the governance of EU funds within complex, multi-level systems. These discussions highlight the evolving strategic dimension of public audit in supporting sound policymaking and resilient institutions.

As the EU's smallest member state located at the periphery of Southern Europe, in the Mediterranean, Malta provides a fitting setting for these debates. We hope that the deliberative sessions, field visits, and networking opportunities will encourage meaningful exchange and lasting collaboration that will result in a positive outcome for our European citizens, residents and future generations.

We wish you a stimulating and rewarding Summer School and a memorable stay in Malta.

**Dr Marie-Louise Mangion**  
Head, Department of Policy, Politics and Governance  
Deputy Dean, Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy  
*L-Università ta' Malta*



# AGENDA

9 – 12 June 2026



This programme reflects the current planning framework. Minor adjustments may be made as we move closer to the event.

Tuesday, 9 June 2026

1

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**15:30**    **Registration**

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**16:00**    **Opening Ceremony**

Formal addresses and welcome remarks

[Dr George-Marius Hyzler](#), *Member of the European Court of Auditors, Dean Chamber III*

[Dr Roberta Metsola](#), *President, European Parliament*

[Mr Tony Murphy](#), *President of the European Court of Auditors*

[Dr Colin Borg](#), *Academic Registrar, L-Università ta' Malta*

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**16:30**    Session 1

*Grand  
Masters  
Palace*

**Keynote speeches:**

**Un∞Competitiveness, In∞Efficiencies and  
In∞Effectiveness: The sobering rebirth or slow demise  
of Europe**

[Hon Dr Anġlu Farrugia](#), *Speaker of the House of Representatives, Malta*

[Mr Younous Omarjee](#), *Vice-President, European Parliament*

[Minister for Finance](#), *TBC*

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**17:45**    **Networking drinks**

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**18:45**    **Valletta walking tour**

*Optional*

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### **Session 1: Keynote speeches**

The ECA Summer School 2026 opens with welcome addresses and a keynote speech introducing the overarching theme: *Un-Competitiveness, In-Efficiency, and In-Effectiveness: The Sobering Rebirth or Slow Demise of Europe*. These opening remarks set the stage for the programme and the panel discussions that follow, providing a framework for exploring the profound challenges facing the EU in governance, public finance, and auditing at a time of deepening global uncertainty. Participants will be invited to reflect on whether Europe's institutional architecture, budgetary processes, and audit frameworks are genuinely equipped for the pressures of the decade ahead.

Wednesday, 10 June 2026

Part 1/2

2

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9:00 Session 2

**Macroeconomic and Geopolitical Volatility:  
Implications for EU Governance, Risk and Audit**

*Moderator: Mr Damijan Fiser, Senior Communications Officer,  
European Court of Auditors*

*Panellists:*

*Mr Petri Sarvamaa, Member of the European Court of  
Auditors, Dean Chamber IV*

*Mr Paul Zahra, Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Finance*

*Mr Hosuk Lee-Makiyama, Director of the European Centre for  
International Political Economy (ECIPE), Brussels*

*Prof Josette Caruana, Resident academic at the Department  
of Accountancy, L-Università ta' Malta*

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10:30 **Coffee break**

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11:00 Session 3

**Artificial Intelligence, Quantum and Cybersecurity:  
Are We Ready for the Disruption?**

*Moderator: Mr Damijan Fiser, Senior Communications Officer,  
European Court of Auditors*

*Panellists:*

*Mr Juhan Lepassaar, Executive Director of the European  
Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA)*

*Rev Dr Jean Gové, Diocesan coordinator for AI-related activity*

*Dr Jordi Ascensi Sala, AI Governance and Policy Advisor - AI  
Expert, Council of Europe*

*Mr Maurice Schubert, Partner, Cyber Defense & Resilience,  
Deloitte Luxembourg (Online)*

*Prof Simon Grima, Dean of the Faculty of Economics,  
Management and Accountancy and Head of the Department  
of Insurance and Risk Management, L-Università ta' Malta*

Valletta  
Campus

## **Session 2: Macroeconomic and Geopolitical Volatility: Implications for EU Governance, Risk and Audit**

The panel examines how rising macroeconomic uncertainty and geopolitical tensions are transforming EU fiscal governance and public auditing. With volatility now structural and persistent, traditional assumptions about stability and predictability no longer hold. The discussion will explore the impact of inflation, interest rates, debt pressures, and global trade fragmentation on fiscal planning and audit practices. It will also address how geopolitics, through sanctions, trade conflicts, and strategic decoupling is reshaping economic decision-making and accountability. Overall, the panel focuses on strengthening institutional resilience and ensuring effective oversight of public finances in an increasingly uncertain global environment.

## **Session 3: Artificial Intelligence, Quantum and Cybersecurity: Are We Ready for the Disruption?**

Rapid advances in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and cybersecurity are transforming government operations and the management of public resources. At the same time, increasing digital dependency introduces new vulnerabilities and systemic risks that challenge the very foundations of data security, trust, and evidence on which audit assurance depends. This session explores how these technologies are reshaping governance, control systems, and accountability frameworks within the EU, shifting uncertainty from the geopolitical sphere to the algorithmic and invisible.

The panel will bring perspectives from policy, industry, academia, and research, examining how AI is already being embedded in public decision-making and auditing through risk scoring, eligibility checks, fraud detection, and resource allocation and what this means for auditability when decisions are driven by models and algorithms that cannot be fully explained, at least for now. It will also address the less visible but deeply consequential implications of quantum computing, which facilitates for the cryptographic systems underpinning secure payments, digital signatures, and audit trails, and raises the prospect that data considered secure today may be retrospectively altered in the future as well as the security of quantum technologies and enhanced capabilities for auditing. Cybersecurity will be examined not merely as an IT issue but as a financial and governance risk, requiring audit to evolve from compliance checking to systemic resilience assessment. The panel will consider how audit and oversight must evolve to keep pace with technology-driven public administration, and whether audit institutions are genuinely prepared for disruptions that invalidate existing control assumptions before new rules are in place.

# Wednesday, 10 June 2026

## Part 2/2

# 2

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**12:30**    **Lunch**

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**13:30**    Session 4

**Defence and Security:  
Financing and Auditing New Realities**

*Moderator: Mr Damijan Fiser, Senior Communications Officer,  
European Court of Auditors*

*Panellists:*

*Dr Elena Lazarou, Director General of ELIAMEP*

*Mr Sigfried Ruhl, Director DG Budget, European Commission*

*Mr Antonio Cavarero, CIO, Generali Asset Management*

*Dr Paula Gómez-Trueba Santamaría, External Performance &  
NSIP Auditor, NATO*

*Lieutenant Colonel Russell Caruana, Armed Forces of Malta*

*Valletta  
Campus*

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**15:00**    **Coffee break**

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**15:30-**    Session 5 - Fieldtrip

**17:00**    **Fort St. Elmo Heritage Experience**

*Fieldtrip on  
EU funded  
projects*

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**18:30**    **Three Cities tour - Vittoriosa (Birgu), Senglea (Isla), and  
Cospicua (Bormla)**

*optional*

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**20:00**    **ECA Dinner - Three Cities**

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#### **Session 4: Defence and Security: Financing and Auditing New Realities**

As geopolitical tensions drive increased defence and security spending, this session examines how such expenditure departs fundamentally from conventional civilian budgets combining urgency, secrecy, and strategic risk in ways that place it precisely where public audit is most difficult and most necessary.

The discussion focuses on the exceptional governance arrangements that characterise this spending area: accelerated procurement, derogations from standard rules, confidential contracting, and elevated exposure to cost overruns, conflicts of interest, and industrial concentration. The panel also examines how defence and security commitments are financed, exploring the full spectrum of funding sources — from traditional public appropriations and EU instruments to private capital mobilised through dedicated debt instruments and public-private mechanisms and the distinct accountability challenges each presents.

The session explores the fundamental tensions between operational secrecy and democratic accountability, between the speed of response and the robustness of controls, and between national sovereignty and EU-level oversight. It also addresses trade wars, sanctions, and financial crime as audit challenges, examining how circumvention through shell companies and intermediaries, and the limits of cross-border coordination, expose the boundaries of traditional audit tools. The session closes by asking whether effective oversight now requires intelligence-informed assurance rather than formal compliance checks alone

#### **Session 5: Fieldtrip: The Fort St. Elmo Heritage Experience**

Participants will visit Fort St. Elmo, one of Malta's most significant historic sites, transformed into a comprehensive museum through European funding. Opened in 2015, the Heritage Experience combines thematic galleries on Malta's military and maritime history with multimedia installations and immersive displays. The outdoor rampart walk offers panoramic views of the Grand Harbour and Marsamxett Harbour, contextualising the fort's strategic role across the centuries. The fieldtrip provides a rich cultural and historical perspective on Malta's heritage and European-supported restoration.

## Thursday, 11 June 2026

### Part 1/2

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- 9:00** Session 6
- Auditing in an Age of Competitiveness and Uncertainty: Budgetary Alignment, Resilience and the Audit Expectation Gap**
- Moderator: Mr Damijan Fiser, Senior Communications Officer, European Court of Auditors*
- Panellists:*
- Ms Ivana Maletić, Member of the European Court of Auditors*
- Dr Jan Olbrycht, Former Member of the European Parliament*
- Mr Hilary Galea Lauri, External Consultant to the National Audit Office, Malta*
- Mr Andras Nagy, Head of EIB Division - Internal Audit, European Investment Bank*
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**10:30** **Coffee Break**

Valletta  
Campus

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- 11:00** Session 7
- Audit and Control Systems under the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework**
- Moderator: Mr Damijan Fiser, Senior Communications Officer, European Court of Auditors*
- Panellists:*
- Mr Alejandro Blanco Fernández, Member of the European Court of Auditors*
- Ms Tina Svendstrup, Director of accountability, transparency and protection of the union's financial interests, DG Budget, European Commission*
- Mr Jonathan Vassallo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry for European Funds and the Implementation of the Electoral Programme*
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### **Session 6: Auditing in an Age of Competitiveness and Uncertainty: Budgetary Alignment, Resilience and the Audit Expectation Gap**

As geopolitics increasingly drives EU spending priorities away from cohesion and growth towards security, resilience, and strategic autonomy, this session examines how budgetary priorities are aligned with EU objectives and what this means for public audit. The panel explores how built-in flexibility mechanisms, including reprogramming powers, special instruments, and emergency envelopes, challenge the boundary between sound financial management and rule-adjustment, and how the EU budget has been called upon simultaneously to function as a shock absorber, stabilisation mechanism, and political signal. The discussion addresses the audit expectation gap, the growing distance between what stakeholders expect audit to deliver and what existing frameworks are designed to provide, and asks whether audit institutions are ready to shift from verifying compliance to assessing preparedness, robustness, and institutional learning capacity.

### **Session 7: Audit and Control Systems under the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework**

As the EU prepares for its next Multiannual Financial Framework, the likely shift from classic grants towards guarantees, blending instruments, revolving funds, and risk-sharing mechanisms raises a fundamental question: are control frameworks designed for grant-based spending still fit for purpose in a world of market-facing instruments, contingent liabilities, and geopolitically driven budget flexibility? The panel draws on lessons from previous frameworks to explore how EU institutions and national audit bodies can align oversight mechanisms with evolving funding priorities and governance structures. Particular attention is given to the fragmentation of accountability across the Commission, Member States, implementing partners, and financial intermediaries, and to the intellectual pivot the next MFF demands of audit: moving from asking whether the rule was followed to asking whether the system delivers policy objectives with acceptable risk.

# Thursday, 11 June 2026

## Part 2/2

# 3

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**12:30**    **Lunch**

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**13:30**    Session 8

**Audit Challenge for Global Europe: Auditing European Funding in a Multi-Level Governance Framework**

*Moderator: Mr Damijan Fiser, European Court of Auditors*

*Panellists:*

*Mr Alessandro Cassinis Righini di San Giorgio, Auditor General, Vatican City & the Holy See*

*Mr Charles Deguara, Auditor General, National Audit Office, Malta*

*Ms Kathleen Gutman, Référendaire, Court of Justice of the European Union*

*Ms Birgit Schaeffer, Head of Legal Service, European Court of Auditors*

*Mr Julien Eloit, Chief Internal Audit, United Nations*

*Valletta Campus*

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**15:00**    **Coffee break**

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**15:30-**    Session 9

**17:00**    **MUŻA, the Malta National-Community Art Museum**

*Fieldtrip on EU funded projects*

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**18:30**    **Mdina – The old capital city tour**

*optional*

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**20:00**    **Dinner in Mdina**

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## **Session 8: The Audit Challenge for Global Europe: Auditing European Funding in Multi-Level Governance Framework**

With European funds implemented through complex arrangements spanning Member States, regional and local authorities, implementing agencies, international organisations, NGOs, and trust funds, the blurring of roles between policy owner, budget holder, implementer, and beneficiary creates accountability gaps that traditional audit approaches struggle to bridge. The panel explores the particular challenges of auditing neighbourhood policy, development cooperation, enlargement, and crisis response, where funds flow through international partners and the limits of EU audit authority are most acutely felt. The discussion examines how breakdowns in control chains create risks of audit trail loss, inconsistent data, and selective reporting, and considers recent and pending cases on rule of law conditionality before the Court of Justice of the EU and EU anti-fraud frameworks as further dimensions of the challenge. The session makes the case that building genuine audit ecosystems, rather than isolated audits, offers the most credible path to remaining effective in a globally interconnected funding landscape.

## **Session 9: MUŻA, the Malta National-Community Art Museum**

MUŻA takes its name from the Maltese title Mużew Nazzjonali tal-Arti and carries a direct reference to the mythological Muses of Classical Antiquity. It is Malta's National Community Art Museum, displaying works of art spanning from the 15th to the early 21st century. Housed in the historic Auberge d'Italie, a Baroque palace that once served as the seat of the Italian Knights of the Order of St John, MUŻA opened in its current form in 2018. As one of Heritage Malta's national sites, MUŻA manages part of Malta's National Collection, which comprises more than 15,000 works of art and artefacts. Through paintings, sculptures, furniture, silverware, works on paper and objets d'art, the museum traces artistic developments in Malta shaped by its Mediterranean setting and successive periods of governance, from the Order of St John and the British Empire to Independence and the enduring influence of the Church. The collection is organised around four themes, The Mediterranean, Europe, Empire, and The Artist — presented in an innovative format that juxtaposes Old Masters with contemporary works, incorporating interactive experiences and video alongside traditional displays.

# Friday, 12 June 2026

## Part 1/2

# 4

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**9:00**

*Session 10*

### **Integrating Evaluation Approaches into Performance Audit**

*Moderator: Ms Timea Pencz*

*Panellists:*

**Mr Emmanuel Sangra**, *Chair of the Working Group on Evaluation of Public Policies and Programs, INTOSAI*

**Ms Clotilde Pézerat-Santoni**, *Vice-President, Nouvelle Aquitaine Regional Audit Chamber*

**Mr William Peplow**, *Assistant Auditor General, National Audit Office Malta*

**Prof Philip Von Brockdorff**, *Resident academic at the Department of Economics, L-Università ta' Malta and President of the Single Market Enforcement Observatory, European Economic and Social Committee*

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**10:30**

**Coffee break**

*Valletta Campus*

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**11:00**

*Session 11*

### **Assessing and Maximising Impact in Public Audit**

*Moderator: Ms Timea Pencz*

*Panellists:*

**Ms Archana Shirsat**, *Deputy Director General, INTOSAI Development Initiative*

**Mr Kevin Agius**, *Director General, Internal Audit and Investigations Department, Malta*

**Dr Rebecca Vassallo**, *Liaison Officer, International Affairs, National Audit Office, Malta*

**Dr Marie Louise Mangion**, *Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy and Head of the Department of Policy, Politics and Governance, L-Università ta' Malta*

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### **Session 10: Integrating Evaluation Approaches into Performance Audit**

This session explores how evaluation methodologies can be more effectively integrated into performance auditing to strengthen evidence-based oversight and public sector accountability. The distinction between measuring outputs and assessing outcomes, and the challenge of attribution versus contribution in complex, multi-actor programmes, lies at the heart of what makes performance audit both demanding and consequential. Drawing on perspectives from audit practice, evaluation, and academia, and reflecting on the experience of the National Audit Office Malta, the panel considers how evaluation tools can enhance the assessment of policy outcomes, programme effectiveness, and value for money. The session asks whether performance audit can evolve quickly enough to remain decision-useful in an environment that increasingly demands proof of impact, not just process.

### **Session 11: Assessing and Maximising Impact in Public Audit**

This session examines how Supreme Audit Institutions can design and deliver audits that go beyond reporting to drive meaningful change and improve public governance. The challenge of impact, how to embed it throughout the audit cycle from planning and methodology to communication and follow-up, is not merely a technical question but a deeply institutional and cultural one. Drawing on perspectives from international audit development and academia, the panel focuses on how audit work can more effectively inform decision-making and strengthen accountability, and on what it means for audit findings to actually change something rather than simply document it. The session reflects on how SAs can demonstrate the value and relevance of their work in a results-oriented public sector environment, where audit legitimacy increasingly depends on visible impact rather than reports alone.

# Friday, 12 June 2026

Part 2/2

# 4

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**12:30 Official Closing of ECA Summer School 2026**

*Mr Glenn Micallef, Commissioner for Intergenerational  
Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport, European Commission*

*Dr George-Marius Hyzler, Member of the European Court of  
Auditors, Dean Chamber III*

*Valletta  
Campus*

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**12:45 Lunch**

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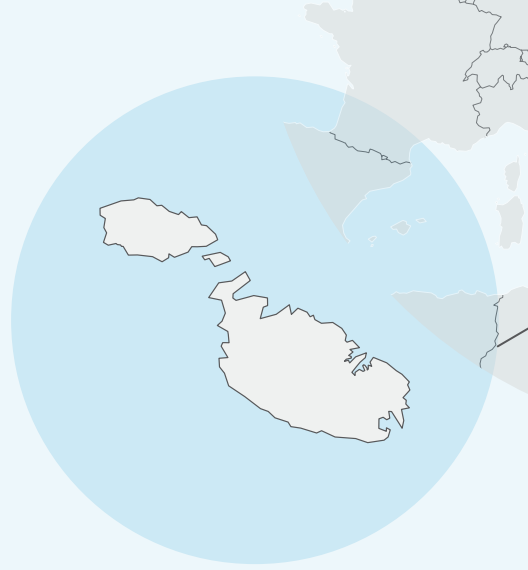
**END OF ECA SUMMER SCHOOL**

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# Malta

## *History and its Central Mediterranean Location*



Malta's history has been profoundly shaped by its **strategic position between Europe and Africa**, and along key routes linking the East and West. This central Mediterranean location made the islands attractive to successive civilisations and empires.

Until recently, scientists believed that early settlers, who were farmers, arrived in Malta around 7 500 years ago. Yet, a new discovery in 2025, led by two Maltese archaeologists, established that humans were on the island at least 8 500 years ago, if not 9 000 years ago. **These humans were the last surviving hunter-gatherers of the last European ice age!**





Administrative boundaries:  
© EuroGeographics © OpenStreetMap  
Cartography: Eurostat – IMAGE,  
02/2026

Neolithic communities who built monumental megalithic temples followed. From the first millennium BC, the Phoenicians and later the Carthaginians used Malta as a trading hub. Roman rule followed in 218 BC, integrating the islands into a vast imperial network.

After the fall of Rome, Malta passed through Byzantine and Arab rule, the latter leaving a lasting imprint on the Maltese language and culture. In 1530, the Knights of St. John transformed Malta into a fortified stronghold, particularly after the Great Siege of 1565, reinforcing its role as a frontier between Christian Europe and the Ottoman world.

French rule in 1798 was brief, and British control followed in 1800, further enhancing Malta's strategic military importance. During World War II, Malta's position made it a crucial Allied base, resulting in heavy bombardment.

Malta gained independence in 1964 and later joined the European Union in 2004, continuing to balance its European identity with its Mediterranean and North African connections.





# Valletta

*Malta's capital city*



Founded in 1566 following the Great Siege of 1565



Designed by the Italian military engineer Francesco Laparelli and Maltese architect Girolamo Cassa



Built as a fortified Renaissance city to serve as both a military stronghold and an administrative centre



Its grid-based layout and extensive fortifications reflected advanced urban planning for the time.



The city quickly developed into the political, religious, and cultural heart of Malta. Magnificent Baroque buildings, including St. John's Co-Cathedral and the Grandmaster's Palace, symbolised the power and prestige of the Knights. Valletta's location overlooking the Grand Harbour reinforced its strategic importance in Mediterranean trade and defence.

After a brief period of French rule, Valletta became a key British naval base in the 19th and early 20th centuries. During World War II, the city suffered extensive bombing due to its strategic importance but retained much of its historic character and architectural integrity.

In 1980, Valletta was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, recognising its exceptional architectural, historical, and urban value. Reflecting its continued cultural significance, Valletta was named European Capital of Culture in 2018, a milestone that highlighted the city's artistic life, heritage preservation, and role as a modern cultural hub.

Today, Valletta functions as Malta's administrative capital and a vibrant cultural centre, where historic landmarks coexist with state institutions, festivals and public spaces.

## L-Università ta' Malta

L-Università ta' Malta is one of the oldest universities in the Mediterranean. Its origins date back to 1592 with the establishment of the Collegium Melitense by the Jesuits during the rule of the Knights of St. John. The college provided instruction in theology, philosophy, and classical studies, forming the foundation of higher education in Malta.

In 1768, the Jesuits were expelled from Malta, and the following year Grand Master Manuel Pinto da Fonseca formally established a public university, marking the official foundation of the University of Malta. Although the institution faced brief suspension in the late 18th century, it was re-established and continued to evolve. During the French occupation (1798-1800), it was reorganised as an *École Centrale*, introducing reforms that emphasised scientific education.

Under British rule in the 19th century, the University expanded its academic disciplines and administrative structures. It became known as the Royal University of Malta between 1937 and 1974. Growing student numbers and modern academic needs led to the development of a new main campus at Msida, inaugurated in 1968.

Today, the University of Malta is a comprehensive public university offering a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. While the Msida campus serves as the main academic hub, the historic Valletta buildings remain an important part of the institution's identity, symbolising over four centuries of academic continuity.





## Valletta Campus: *From the Knights to Today*

The Valletta Campus, also known as the Old University Building, is one of Malta's most historically significant academic sites. Construction began in 1595 under the Knights of St. John as a Jesuit college intended to promote higher education in philosophy, theology, and the sciences. By the early 17th century, it had become a central intellectual institution within Valletta.

Architecturally, the building reflects Renaissance ideals, with later Baroque additions enhancing its façade and internal spaces. Following the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1768, the Knights retained the building for academic use, and in 1769 it became the seat of the newly established University of Malta.

During the brief French occupation, it functioned as an *École Centrale*, before returning to university use under British administration.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Valletta Campus adapted to changing educational needs, though increasing demand eventually required relocation to larger facilities. After the opening of the Msida campus in 1968, Valletta's role shifted.

Today, the Valletta Campus hosts research centres, international institutions, conferences, and ceremonial events. It remains a symbol of Malta's academic heritage and a living link between past and present scholarship.



## Department of Policy, Politics and Governance

The Department of Policy, Politics and Governance forms part of the Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy at L-Università ta' Malta. It plays a central role in the study of political systems, public policy, and governance within domestic, European and international contexts.

The Department offers programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, including degrees in politics, governance, and public policy. Its teaching philosophy combines theoretical knowledge with practical application, encouraging students to critically analyse political institutions, policy processes, policy design and leadership challenges.



**A strong emphasis is placed on evidence-based policymaking, ethical governance, and analytical skills.**

Students are exposed to real-world perspectives through applied research, guest lectures, and engagement with public and private sector stakeholders, civil society representatives and the media. This approach prepares graduates for careers in public institutions, advisory services, business representative organisations, civil society, international organisations and journalism.

Research within the Department contributes to knowledge and public debate on governance, policy design and political reform, particularly within the Maltese and European contexts. Academic staff are involved in interdisciplinary research and policy-relevant studies that address contemporary social and political challenges.

**The Department functions as a bridge between academic inquiry and practical governance, fostering informed citizenship and professional competence in political and policy-related fields.**



**L-Università ta' Malta**  
Faculty of Economics,  
Management & Accountancy

Department of  
Policy, Politics  
& Governance



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## ECA Summer School

Contact Information

### Summer School mailbox

ECA-Summer-School-2026@eca.europa.eu

### Dr Marie-Louise Mangion

*Head, Department of Policy, Politics and Governance  
Deputy Dean, Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy  
L-Università ta' Malta*

Room 205, FEMA Building  
Malta

**Phone:** +356 2340 3761

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### European Court of Auditors

12, rue Alcide De Gasperi  
1615 Luxembourg  
Luxembourg

**Phone:** +352 4398-1

**Enquiries:** [eca.europa.eu/en/contact](https://eca.europa.eu/en/contact)

**Website:** [eca.europa.eu](https://eca.europa.eu)

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### L-Università ta' Malta

Valletta Campus  
St Paul Street  
Valletta VLT 1216  
Malta

**Phone:** +356 2340 7500