

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CABINET
BY THE HON. PRIME MINISTER

Maltese Merchant Flag

With independence, it will be necessary to prescribe the national colours to be worn by ships and boats belonging to Malta.

2. The red ensign is laid down as the appropriate national colours for British ships under section 73 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894. Many countries use their national flag also as a merchant flag. Commonwealth countries tend to follow the red ensign pattern substituting their own flag for the Union flag in the red ensign. It will not be possible to do so in the case of Malta because the red in the red ensign and the red in the fly of the Maltese flag would be indistinguishable.

3. The alternative is to use the Maltese flag as a merchant flag, of the same or other dimensions and with or without a symbolic representation in the fly (e.g. crossed anchors). Such symbolic representation is not used by other countries.

4. When a decision is taken on the Maltese merchant flag, section 73 of the U.K. Merchant Shipping Act 1894, which forms and will continue to form part of the law of Malta for some time at least, would have to be amended to prescribe the national colours for Maltese shipping.

5. Ministers are asked to state whether the flag of Malta should also be adopted as the merchant flag for Maltese shipping.

30th July, 1964.

L-Arkivji Nazzjonali ta' Malta