

MEMORANDUM FOR CABINET

by the Hon. Minister of Commonwealth and
Foreign Affairs and by the Hon.
Minister of Labour, Employment
and Welfare

AMENDMENT TO NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT

One of the Conventions concluded by the Council of Europe which has not yet been signed by Malta is the European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance.

This Convention was signed in Paris on the 11th December, 1953 by 14 out of the 18 members of the Council. In terms of the Convention each of the Contracting Parties is bound to ensure that nationals of the other Contracting Parties who are lawfully present in any part of its territory and who are without sufficient resources, shall be entitled, equally with its own nationals and on the same conditions, to social and medical assistance.

For the purpose of this Convention "social assistance" and "medical assistance" mean, in relation to each Contracting Party, all assistance granted under the laws and regulations in force in any part of its territory under which persons without sufficient resources are granted means of subsistence and the care necessitated by their condition.

As a member state of the Council of Europe Malta is expected to become a party to the Convention. Adherence to the Convention would not cause a financial burden to Government as aliens living in Malta are strictly controlled and few, if any, would be eligible for the assistance in question. On the contrary an appreciable amount paid in relief to persons of Maltese origin living in Metropolitan France and in Italy would be saved as such relief would automatically become the liability of these countries.

As a preliminary step towards the signing and eventual ratification of the Convention it is necessary to amend the National Assistance Act since the provisions of this Act are applicable only to British subjects and cannot be applied as the law stands to nationals of other countries.

Hon. Ministers are requested to agree to the Amendment of the National Assistance Act extending the provisions thereof to nationals of member states of the Council of Europe which have ratified the Convention.

18th October, 1967.