

MEMO FOR CABINET
BY THE HON. MINISTER OF LABOUR & SOCIAL WELFARE

The Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration with its Headquarters in Geneva was established on November 30, 1954, with the following purpose and functions:

- (a) to make arrangements for the transport of migrants, for whom existing facilities are inadequate and who could not otherwise be moved, from European countries having surplus population to countries overseas which offer opportunities for orderly immigration;
- (b) to promote the increase of the volume of migration from Europe by providing, at the request of and in agreement with the Governments concerned, services in the processing, reception, first placement and settlement of migrants which other international organisations are not in a position to supply, and such other assistance to this purpose as is in accord with the aims of the Committee.

Though not a member of the Committee the Government of Malta has been allowed to use the facilities afforded by the Committee, namely, to use vessels and aircraft chartered by I.C.E.M. for the transportation of migrants to Australia.

The Council of the Committee meets twice a year, generally in Geneva, and the Malta Government has for the past few years been sending an Observer Delegate to these meetings, as part of the U.K. Delegation. Such contacts have brought about an immense amount of goodwill towards Malta and Maltese demographic problems.

Since 1959 Malta has been trying to find ways and means to join the Organisation but difficulties have always arisen. It was not possible to join as an associate member nor as a co-member with the United Kingdom when the latter became a member in 1961. Under the present constitution Malta can join as a full member, and this fact was kept in mind by the Malta delegate who attended the Executive Council meeting and later the I.C.E.M. Conference meetings last April.

A serious obstacle, however, cropped up. At the April meeting of the Council, the United States delegation informed the Conference that it was their Government's intention to discontinue from 30 June, 1962 the U.S. per capita contribution to subsidise, through the free funds of I.C.E.M., movements of national migrants where the countries concerned were considered economically able to support such movements themselves on a bilateral basis.

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The matter was taken up by the Malta delegate to the Conference with the head of the U.S. delegation in private talks he had with him. The plea was made that migrants from Malta should, if Malta joined the Organisation, be given no less favourable treatment than that accorded to migrants from Spain and Greece, and therefore assisted from the free funds of I.C.E.M. as were migrants from those countries. The U.S. delegate was supplied with all relevant facts and figures about Malta and the Maltese migratory movement. He was sympathetic but had no power to decide. He undertook, however, to raise the matter in Washington and to send a reply. Information has now been received that the U.S. would regard Malta as coming within the group of countries whose migration programmes would be eligible for financial assistance within the term of the letters by which the U.S. Government pledges its contribution to the Committee. This would enable I.C.E.M. to assist Maltese emigration in the same way as it assists movements from such countries as Greece and Spain.

The following benefits will accrue to Malta from participation in the Committee:

- (a) I.C.E.M. will be the first International Organisation on which the State of Malta will be represented as a full member;
- (b) Malta will make full use of the facilities afforded by the Organisation as of right;
- (c) Malta will make a substantial financial gain. On 1,000 persons assisted by Malta and Australia, a saving of about £33,000 a year will be made. It is not yet clear whether I.C.E.M. funds will also be made available in respect of unassisted cases, i.e. emigrants assisted by the Government of Malta only. If these too are accepted, another saving of about £30,000 a year will be made. These figures are based on 1,000 assisted and 1,000 unassisted emigrants, which is the present quota to Australia;
- (d) other avenues of emigration will be explored, especially South America, with the help of the Organisation;
- (e) Malta may benefit from schemes sponsored by I.C.E.M. such as language courses, technical assistance and so on.

On the other hand Malta will:

- (a) accept the Constitution of I.C.E.M.;
- (b) pay the minimum contribution, that is 0.12%, an amount of £ 3,151 (£1,126) for the year 1962 to the Administrative Fund of I.C.E.M.;

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- (c) possibly make a small voluntary contribution towards I.C.E.M.'s special fund;
- (d) send a delegation to the Council meetings in Geneva twice a year.

The balance is definitely in Malta's favour. Government is therefore required to decide whether Malta should now apply for membership. The application should be made at the earliest as it will have to be circularised to member countries, thirty at present, before being placed on the agenda of the Council's next meeting in November.

At the same time the Commissioner for Malta in Australia should be advised of developments so that he could tidy up matters with Canberra.

L-Arkivji Nazzjonali ta' Malta

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