



# Internationalisation of Maltese Society and Education

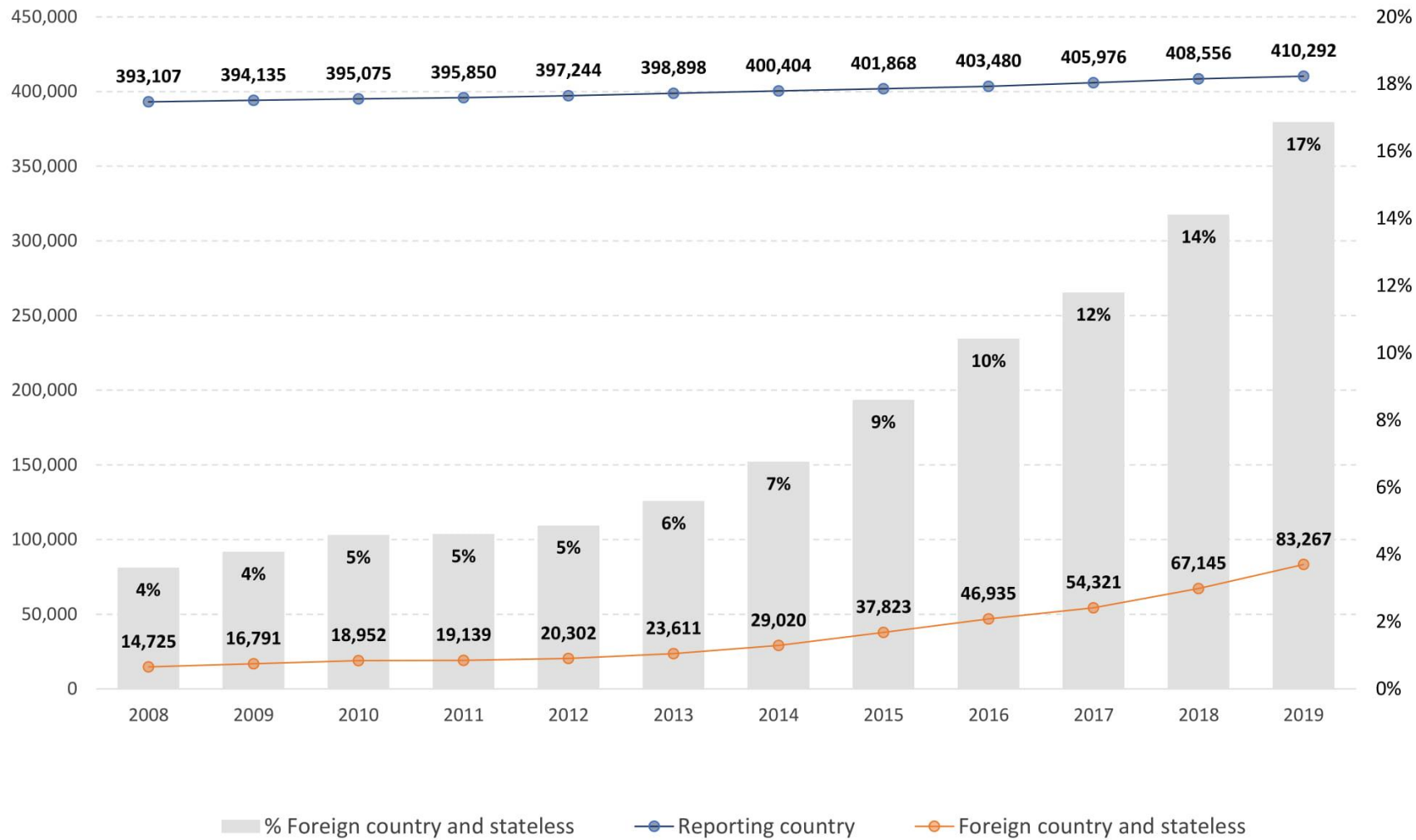
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## Research background

- Increasing and diversifying international migration (Massey 1990; Vertovec 2007; Arar et al 2020a, 2020b; IOM 2020)
- Diversifying migration channels and status entitlements
- Changes in (Vertovec 2007, 2018; Arar et al 2020a; IOM 2020):
  - Age profile
  - Gender profile
  - Spatial distribution
  - Labour market access and experiences
  - Responses in receiving countries population
  - Service provision
- Different push and pull factors (Arar et al 2019, 2020a, 2020b; Adamo & Izazola 2010; IOM 2020)

## Research questions

- What are the recent immigration patterns in society and education in Malta?
  - What is the magnitude and speed of increase in migrant residents and students?
  - Are there particular patterns to be observed between public, church and independent schools?
  - Are there particular patterns to be observed in the spatial distribution of migrant students in Malta?
- What is the public perception of this transformation?
- What are possible policy solutions?



**Figure 1: Population of Malta on 1<sup>st</sup> January between 2008 and 2019 by broad group of citizenship**

Source: EUROSTAT, [migr\_pop2ctz]

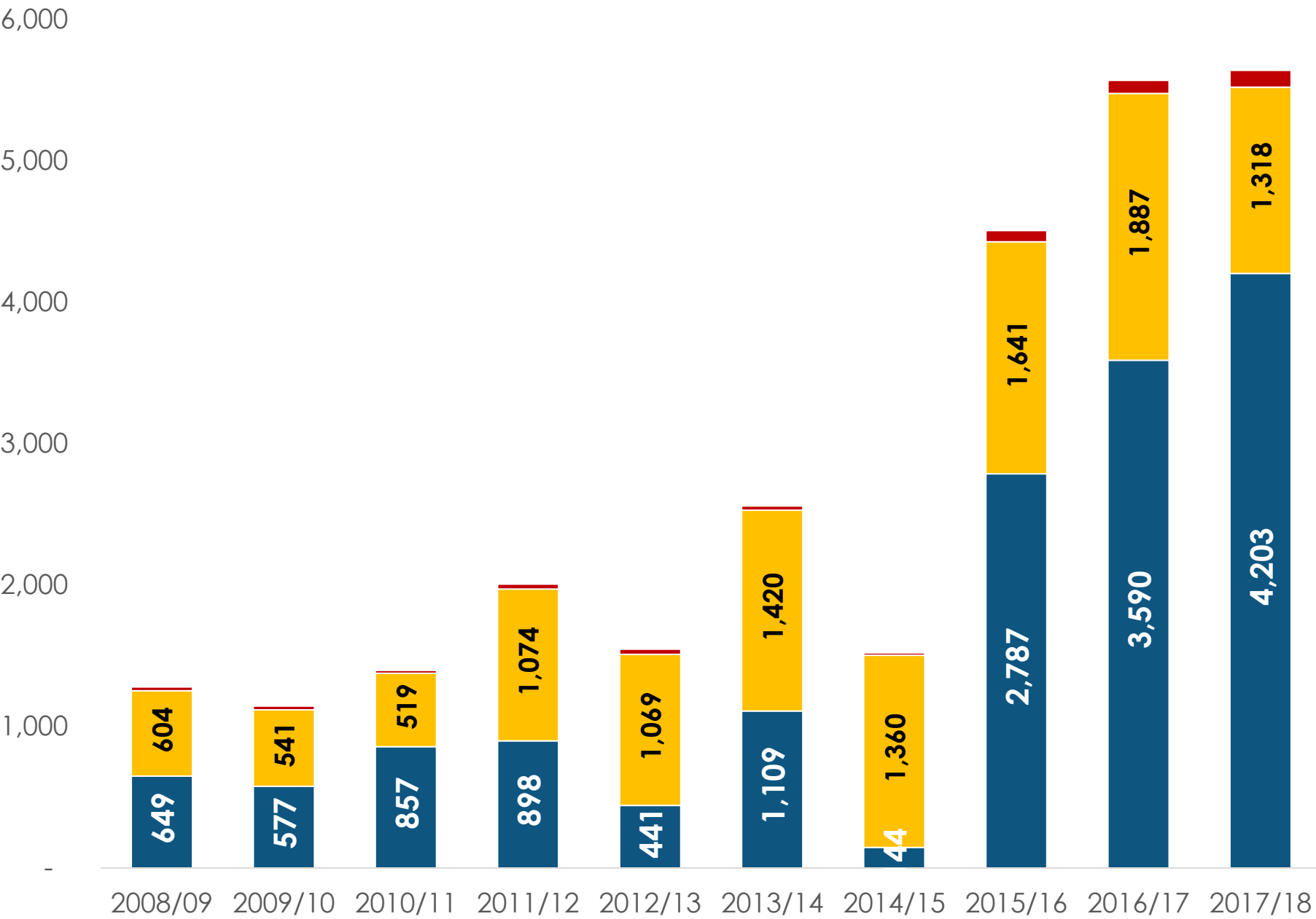
## Contributing factors

### **Economic pull factors**

- Labour migration: 5.6% in 2008 – 19.2% in 2017 (European Commission 2019)

### **Violent unrest / political upheaval as push factor**

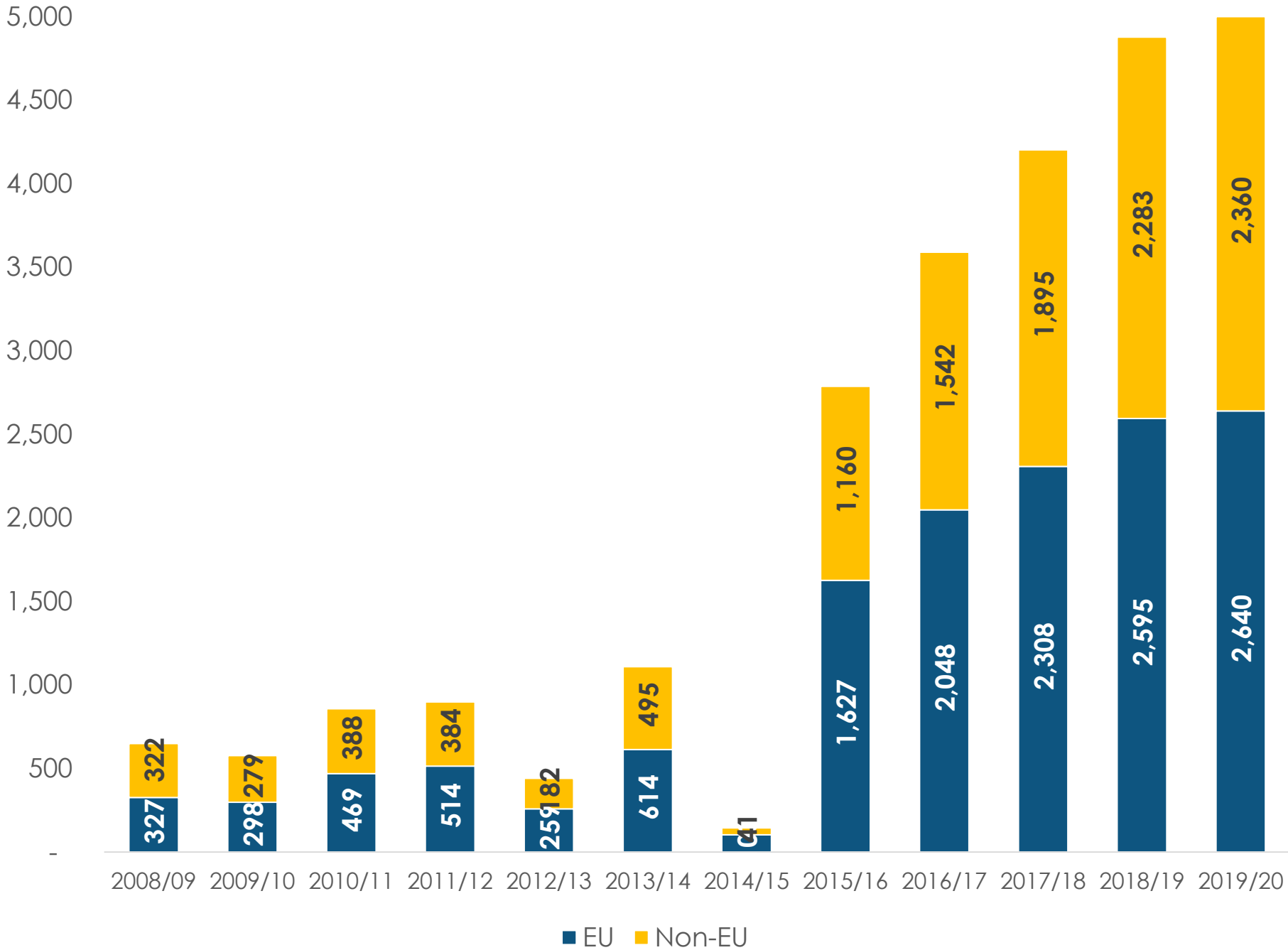
- Asylum applications particularly high in 2008 (2,607) and 2009 (2,389)
- Main country of origin Syria, Libya, Somalia, Eritrea and Iraq
- Considerable share of applications from children (Seguna 2019)



**Figure 2: Total international student population in Maltese schools by education sector**

Source: Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability 2019; MEDE 2019

■ Foreign students - State Schools ■ Foreign students - Independent Schools ■ Foreign students - Church Schools



**Figure 3: International student population in state schools**

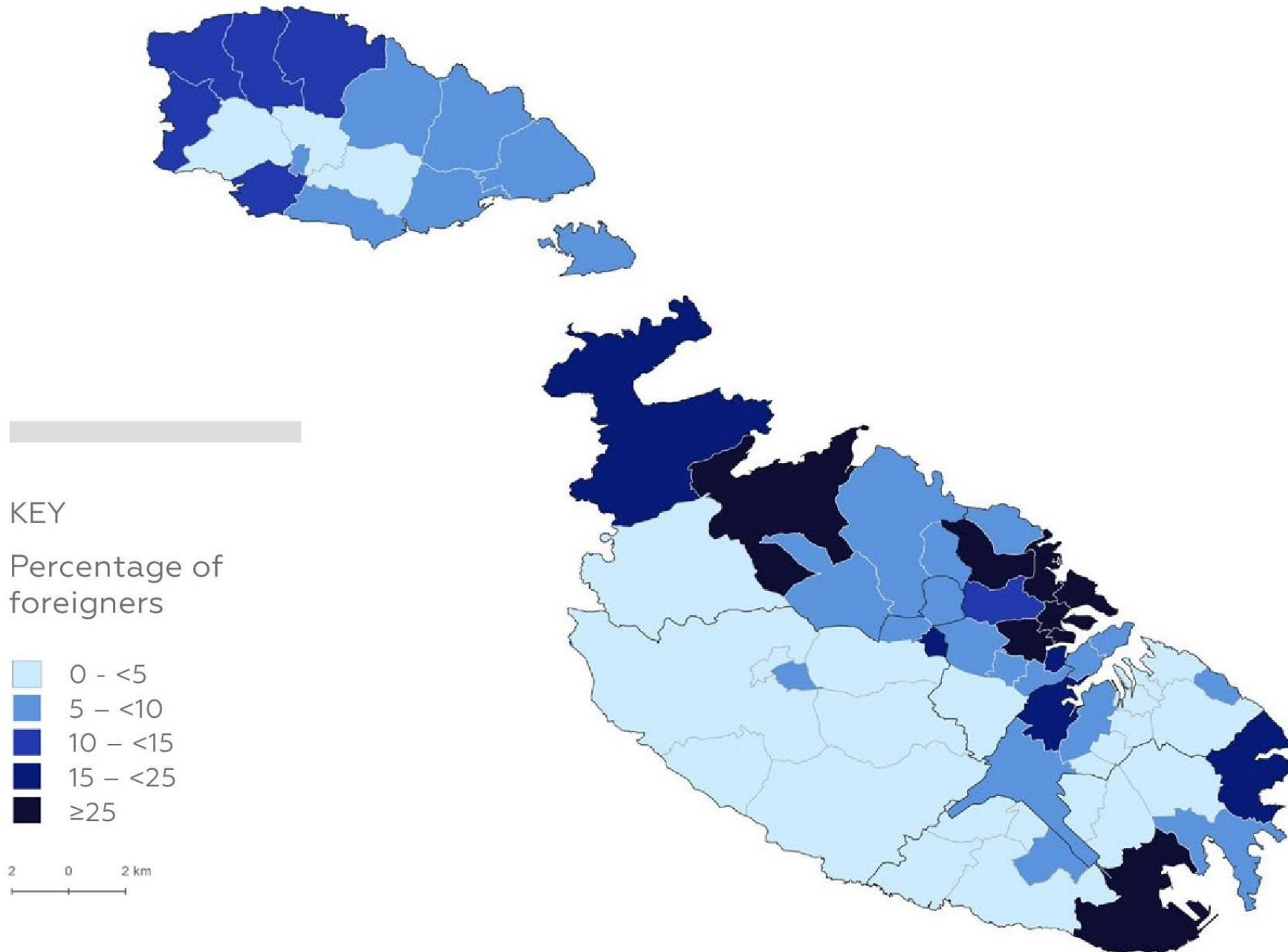
Source: Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability 2019; MEDE 2019

2008-2009	United Kingdom	265	20.7%	2009-2010	United Kingdom	143	12.5%
	Bulgaria	43	3.4%		Italy	80	7.0%
	Italy	77	6.0%		Russia	67	5.9%
	Russia	65	5.1%		Bulgaria	45	3.9%
	Germany	40	3.1%		USA	35	3.1%
2010-2011	United Kingdom	395	28.3%	2011-2012	United Kingdom	431	21.5%
	Russia	96	6.9%		Russia	112	5.6%
	Bulgaria	94	6.7%		Bulgaria	103	5.1%
	Serbia	45	3.2%		Italy	80	4.0%
	Germany	37	2.6%		Germany	48	2.4%
2012-2013	United Kingdom	414	26.8%	2013-2014	United Kingdom	414	16.2%
	Russia	235	15.2%		Italy	199	7.8%
	Italy	113	7.3%		Libya	185	7.2%
	Bulgaria	97	6.3%		Russia	172	6.7%
	Libya	82	5.3%		Germany	68	2.7%
2014-2015	United Kingdom	493	11.9%	2015-2016	United Kingdom	706	11.1%
	Bulgaria	165	4.0%		Libya	555	8.7%
	Italy	132	3.2%		Italy	540	8.5%
	Libya	100	2.4%		Bulgaria	256	4.0%
	Syria	84	2.0%		Syria	217	3.4%
2016-2017	United Kingdom	767	14.2%	2017-2018	Italy	920	14.7%
	Italy	739	13.7%		United Kingdom	813	12.9%
	Libya	627	11.6%		Libya	571	9.1%
	Bulgaria	307	5.7%		Bulgaria	344	5.5%
	Serbia	224	4.1%		Serbia	336	5.4%

**Table 1: Most common nationalities of international students in Malta by Year**

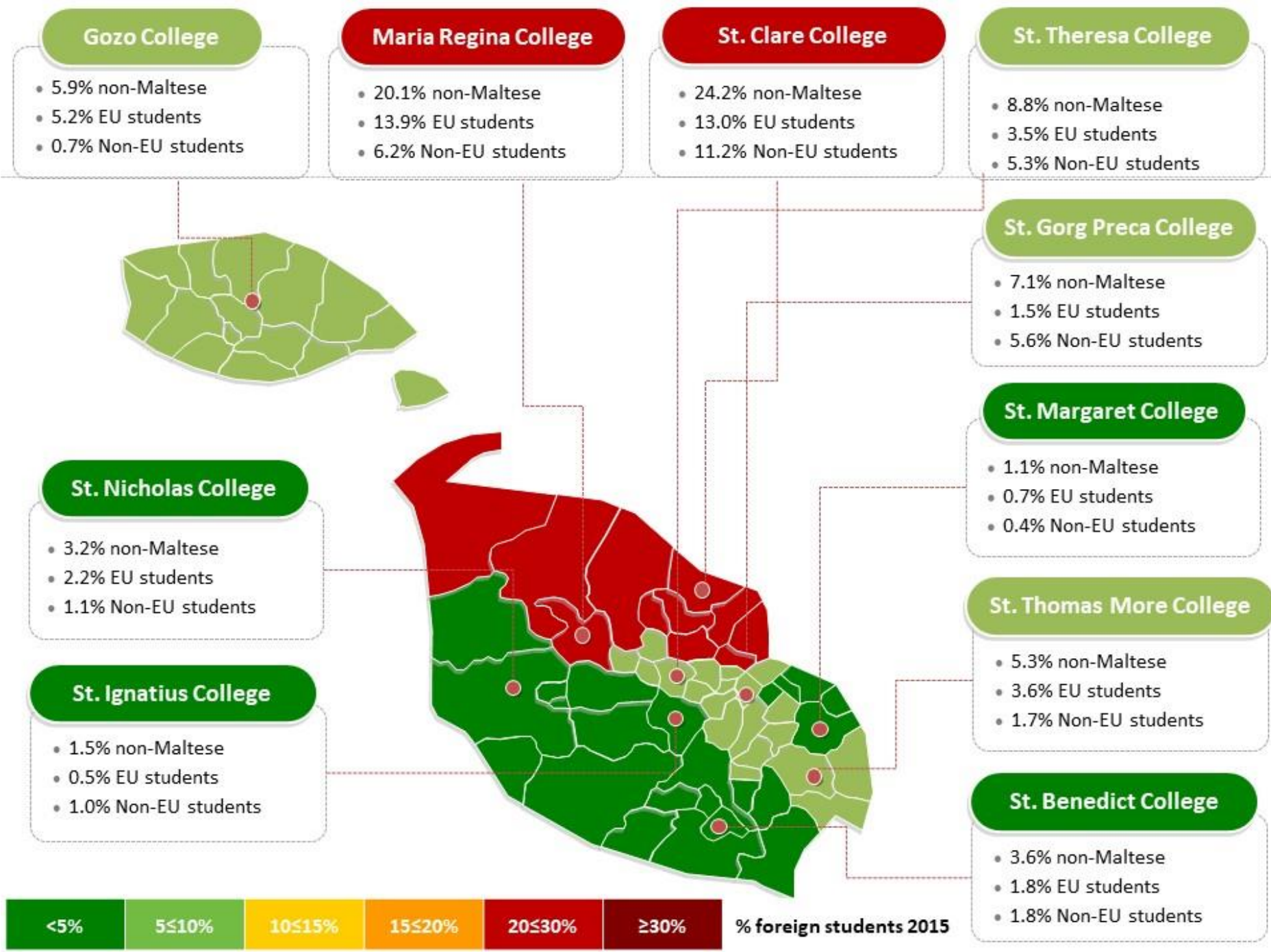
*Source: Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability 2019; MEDE 2019, NSO 2020*





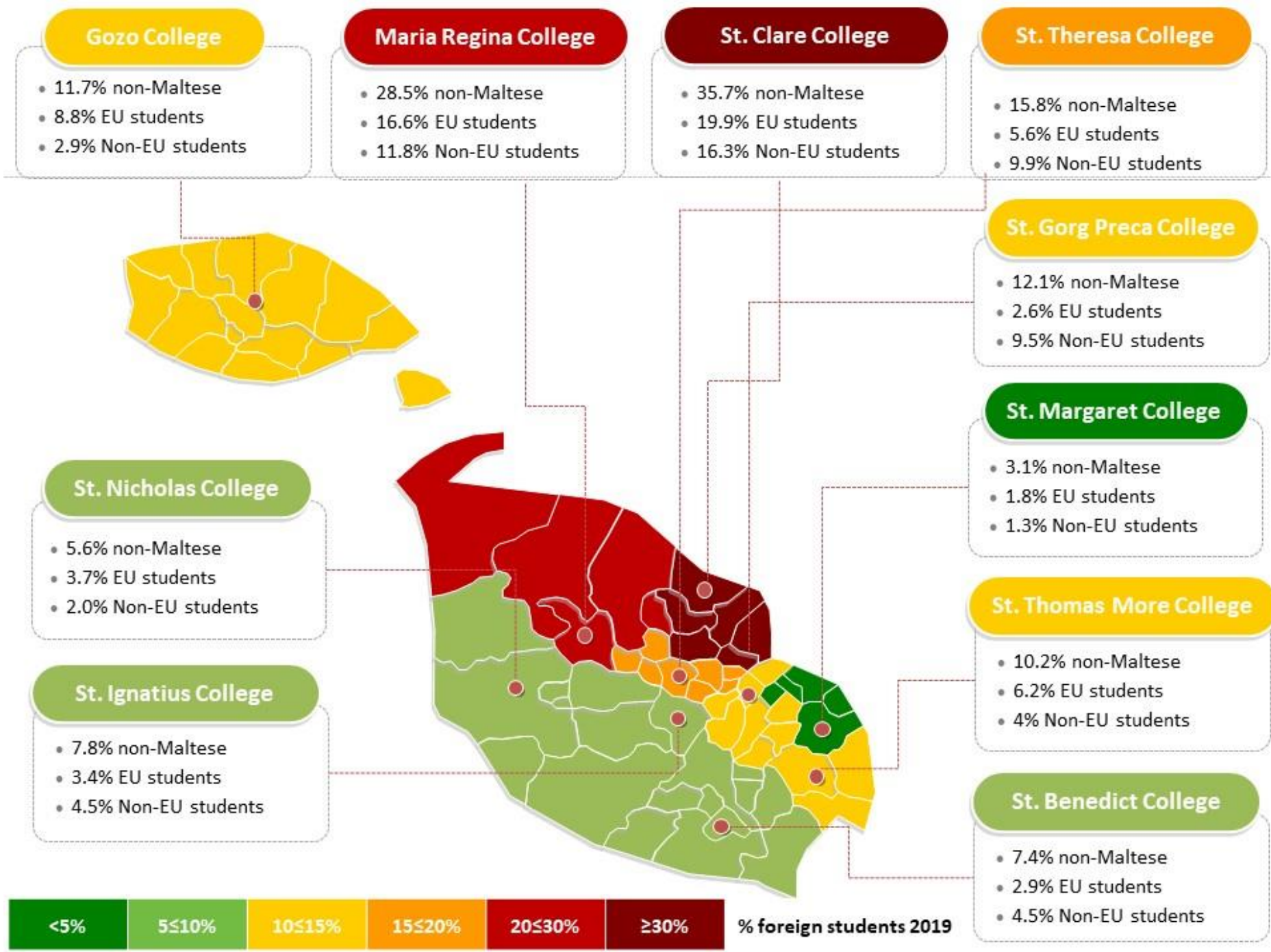
**Figure 4: Percentage of migrants to the total population of each locality: 2017**

*Source: NSO 2019*



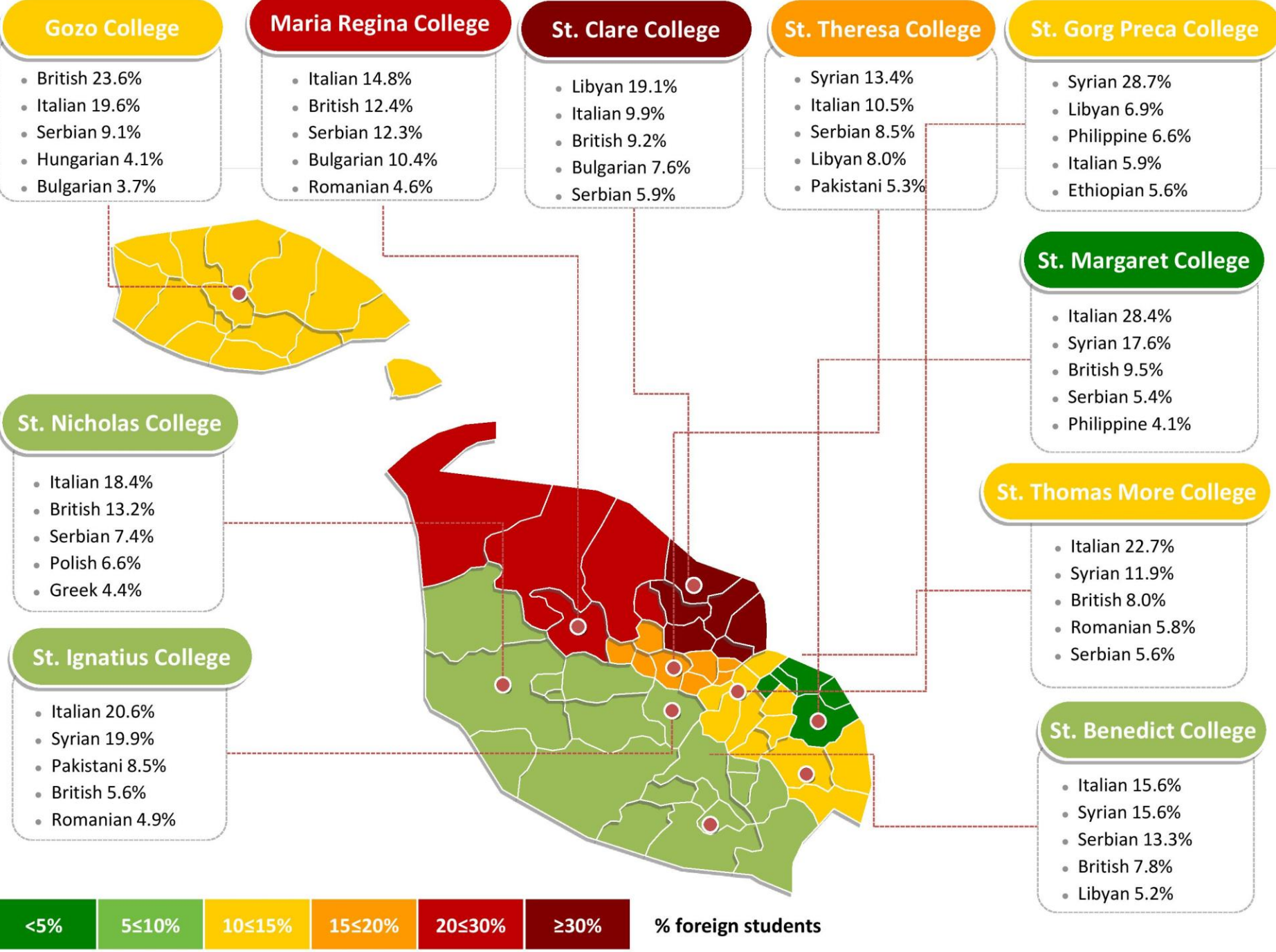
**Figure 5: Share of international learners in State schools by college, 2015/2016**

Source: MEDE 2019



**Figure 6: Share of international learners in State schools by college, 2019/2020**

Source: MEDE 2019



**Figure 7: Most common nationalities of international learners in State schools by college, 2019/2020**

Source: MEDE 2019

## Public perception

*[...] while the nature of the public discourse has changed over time, there is widespread recognition that the “toxicity” of the migration debate has further intensified over the last few years, with the politics of fear and division increasingly framing discussions. Disruption and disinformation are increasingly deployed as part of tactical pursuits of power, with negative impacts on public, political and social media discourse, on societal values, and on public policy issues such as migration, displacement and migrants (including refugees)*

(IOM 2020: 161)

## Public perception

*[...] even slight but rapid diversification has notable effects. In places where a relatively small but fast influx of migrants have arrived, tendencies toward xenophobia are greatest. Therefore, it is not just the perceived size of migrant groups that affects people's assessments of change, but it is the pace of change that some find distressing.*

(Vertovec 2018: 2)

## Public perception

### **'A passage to Malta' (Cefai et al 2019):**

- 10-20% of students with language difficulties (MT, EN) feel less integrated
- Around one third of students have witnessed arguments / fighting in their classrooms / school
- Students have witnessed racial bullying due to students' ethnic origin, religion or language difficulties
- Discrimination targeted towards particular ethnic origins
- There appears to be a link between age and discrimination

### **Fsadni & Pisani 2012; Sammut et al 2017:**

- Migrants' lack of trust in and sense of discrimination from institutions / authorities
- Lack of respect for values and traditions

## Conclusions and Recommendations

- Drastic increase in migrant students in compulsory education, particularly in State schools
- Migrant students mainly from countries with historical / cultural ties, but also due to economic pull-factors and political push-factors
- State schools in the Northern, Northern Harbour and South Eastern districts have the highest shares of migrant students, due to high shares of migrants in these areas
- Differences in the nationalities residing in different districts with some colleges having substantially higher shares of Non-EU students, particularly from Syria and Libya
- Negative attitudes particularly among older students and towards migrant students from Africa and the Middle East
- Migrants lacking trust in authorities and felt subject to discrimination



## Conclusions and Recommendations

- Importance of schools developing inclusive environments
- Schools require specific support to help students integrate and meet their emotional and educational needs
- Targeted support needed for State schools
- Targeted support for colleges with particularly high shares of international students (St. Clare College and Maria Regina College) and colleges with recent stark increases in migrant students (St. Theresa College, San Gorg Preca College and St. Thomas Moore College)
- Targeted support for colleges with high shares of students from Syria and Libya (St. Theresa College, San Gorg Preca College, St. Clare College, St. Margaret College, St. Benedict College and St. Ignatius College) to address their educational and socio-emotional needs
- Further research to understand the specific needs of different colleges and how to link schools and community

## Conclusions and Recommendations

- Strengthen data collection on migrant students
- Consistent data collection in State, Church and Independent Schools
- Monitoring perception towards migrant students
- Sharing of good practices already in place

### **IOM 2020 further recommends:**

- Fostering a balanced public debate
- Greater scrutiny of social media content
- Taking due account of the contribution of migrants to the community
- Strengthening research on migrants and their integration
- Harnessing the benefits of new technologies to support the integration of migrants

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