I assent.

(L.S.) **MYRIAM SPITERI DEBONO**
President

21st November, 2025

ACT No. XXXVIII of 2025

AN ACT to provide for the registration and warranting of sign language interpreters and any matter ancillary thereto.

BE IT ENACTED by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the House of Representatives, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:-

Short title and commencement.

1. (1) The short title of this Act is the Registration and Warranting of Sign Language Interpreters Act, 2025.

(2) This Act shall come into force within two (2) months from the date of its publication in the Gazette.

Interpretation.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires:

"Association" means the Association of Maltese Sign Language Interpreters (Assoċjazzjoni Interpreti Lingwa tas-Sinjali Malta - AILSM), registered with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations with registration number VO/1826, in terms of the Voluntary Organisations Act;

Cap. 492.

"Board" means the Interpreter Registration and Warranting Board as established in article 4;

"citizen of a Member State" shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in the Immigration Act;

Cap. 217.

"Council" means the Maltese Sign Language Council established by means of article 7 of the Maltese Sign Language Recognition Act; Cap. 556.

"Deaf People Association (Malta)" means the Deaf People Association (Malta) (Għaqda Persuni Neqsin mis-Smigħ), registered with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations with registration number VO/0021, in accordance with the Voluntary Organisations Act; Cap. 492.

"EEA State" means a State which is a contracting party to the agreement on the European Economic Area signed at Oporto on 2 May, 1992 as amended by the Protocol signed at Brussels on the 17th March, 1993 and as amended from time to time;

"interpreter" means a sign language interpreter, whether a Maltese Sign Language interpreter in accordance with the Maltese Sign Language Recognition Act or otherwise; Cap. 556.

"Maltese Sign Language" shall have the same meaning as assigned to it in the Maltese Sign Language Recognition Act; Cap. 556.

"Minister" means the Minister responsible for disability and the development of this sector;

"third country" means a country that is not an EEA State or Switzerland;

"University of Malta" means the University of Malta established by article 72 of the Education Act; Cap. 327.

"warrant" means a warrant of a Maltese Sign Language interpreter awarded in accordance with the provisions of article 9.

Requirement for interpreters to be registered or hold warrant.

3. No person shall practise the profession of an interpreter unless he:

(a) is registered with the Council in accordance with articles 7 or 12; or

(b) is the holder of a warrant of a Maltese Sign Language interpreter awarded by the Minister on the advice of the Council in accordance with article 9;

(c) is exercising the profession on a temporary or occasional basis further to a determination under article 13:

Provided that this requirement shall not apply to any

person supporting another person with sign language interpretation, during a short stay in Malta of not more than three (3) months.

Interpreter Registration and Warranting Board.

4. (1) There shall be established a Board, which shall be known as the Interpreter Registration and Warranting Board, which shall be appointed by the Minister on the advice of the Council. This Board shall be composed of:

(a) a chairperson who would have held his warrant for at least two (2) years, to be appointed following agreement between the Council and the Association;

(b) three (3) members who the Council deems to have suitable qualifications and experience;

(c) two (2) members appointed after the Council would have consulted the Association, from among members of the Association who have held a warrant for at least two (2) years; and

(d) one (1) member who shall be elected by secret ballot by warrant holders from among themselves.

(2) The chairperson shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years and under such conditions as may be set out in the letter of appointment for the said chairperson, subject to further periods of renewal.

(3) The other members of the Board shall hold office for a term of two (2) years and under such conditions as may be set out in their letter of appointment, subject to further periods of renewal:

Provided that in the first year, those members appointed in accordance with sub-articles (1)(a) and (c) shall not be required to be warrant holders, while the member appointed in accordance with sub-article (1)(d) shall be appointed in the same manner as that prescribed for the member appointed in accordance with sub-article (1)(c) in terms of this proviso.

(4) When any vacancy in the Board occurs, the Minister shall on the advice of the Council, and as soon as practicable, in the case of the chairperson, or a member appointed by the said Minister, appoint another person to fill the vacancy, and in the case of an elected member cause an election to be held to fill the vacancy.

(5) The number of members necessary to form a quorum shall be three (3) provided that, subject to the presence of a quorum, the Board

may act notwithstanding any vacancy among its members.

(6) The decisions of the Board shall be adopted by a simple majority of the members present and who have a vote. Each member of the Board shall be entitled to one (1) vote:

Provided that the chairperson shall have an initial vote and in the case of an equality of votes, a casting vote.

(7) The Minister may also delegate a public officer to act as secretary to the Board, but such person shall not have a vote.

(8) The Board may make its own rules and otherwise regulate its own procedure.

Functions of the Board.

5. (1) The Board shall have the following functions:

(a) to consider applications for registration in accordance with articles 7 or 12, or for the issue of a warrant in accordance with article 9, or declarations in respect of the provision of a service on a temporary or occasional basis further to article 13;

(b) to advise the Council in respect of regulating the conditions of practical training, including required periods thereof, further to the provisions of articles 7 and 9;

(c) to advise the Council in respect of the approval of universities or academic institutions further to the provisions of articles 7 and 9; and

(d) to advise the Council in respect of the organisation and regulation of the appropriate tests, further to the provisions of articles 7 and 9.

(2) The Board shall exercise its functions independently and according to its own judgment. In the exercise of its functions the Board may:

(a) consult such persons as it may consider necessary; and

(b) appoint committees of experts presided over by a member of the Board for the purpose of the carrying out of such duties and tasks as the Board may assign to them.

Appeals from decisions of the Board.
Cap. 490.

6. (1) The decisions of the Board shall be subject to the right of appeal before the Administrative Review Tribunal as established by

article 5(1) of the Administrative Justice Act.

(2) Any person who feels aggrieved by any decision of the Board may, within twenty (20) days after the date of service upon him of the Board's decision, file an appeal before the Administrative Review Tribunal.

(3) The Administrative Review Tribunal may, in its determination on any appeal entered in accordance with sub-article (1), confirm, reverse or vary, in whole or in part, the original decision by the Board.

(4) There shall be a right of appeal from the decisions of the Administrative Review Tribunal in accordance with the provisions of Part IV of the Administrative Justice Act.

Cap. 490.

Registration of interpreters.

7. A person shall qualify for registration as an interpreter with the Council, following a decision of the Board, if such person:

(a) is a citizen of Malta or a citizen of a Member State or otherwise permitted to work in Malta under any other law;

(b) is of good conduct; and

(c) satisfies the Council in respect of:

(i) being in possession of academic qualifications obtained after successful completion of a course of study at undergraduate level, in respect of which a prescribed score or classification would have been obtained or exceeded, at the University of Malta or such other university or academic institution as may be recognised for the purpose by the Council, after having consulted the Association;

(ii) having successfully completed:

- prescribed training in Maltese Sign Language, offered by the Deaf People Association (Malta) in conjunction with the Institute of Linguistics and Language Technology of the University of Malta, or by any other institution as may be recognised for the purpose by the Council, after having consulted the Association, and that includes standardised fluency testing in Maltese Sign Language led by Deaf users of this language; and, or

- prescribed training in International Sign and, or in at least one (1) sign language not being Maltese Sign Language, offered by such university or academic institution as may be recognised in accordance with the Mutual Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in the European Region Regulations, and attestations or proof in respect of fluency in International Sign and, or in such other sign languages; and S.L. 451.02.

(iii) being fluent in the Maltese and English languages in the case of Maltese Sign Language interpreters and, or in a corresponding spoken language in the case of interpreters for another sign language and, or in at least one (1) spoken language in the case of International Sign interpreters:

Provided that an interpreter may request to be registered for one (1) or more language pairs, with International Sign able to be a component of any such pair:

Provided further that a deaf person applying to register as an interpreter for any sign language or for International Sign shall only be required to fulfil the requirements of sub-paragraphs (i) and (ii):

Provided further that the Council, after having consulted the Association, may allow for time-limited derogations from any one (1) or more of the provisions contained in this paragraph, should it be deemed that such derogations would be necessary to ensure continued provision of interpretation services to any part of the deaf community residing locally:

Provided further that the requirements in respect of sub-paragraphs (i) and (ii), as amended from time to time, as well as the general rules on registration stipulated in this Act,

and any derogation thereto promulgated from time to time shall be made publicly available in an accessible manner by the Council on apposite websites.

Suspension or cancellation of registration of an interpreter.

8. A registration issued in accordance with the provisions of article 7 may be suspended or cancelled by the Council by notice in the Gazette, and following a decision of the Board where necessary, if a registered interpreter:

(a) has been found, after procedures before the Board, which shall decide on the suspension or cancellation of registration, initiated at the request of the Council, on its own motion, or following representations made by third parties, to have engaged in one (1) or more of the following acts or omissions:

(i) dishonesty, misconduct or gross negligence in exercising the profession of interpreter;

(ii) conduct which is discreditable to the profession; and, or

(iii) failure to comply with rules with respect to professional standards or practices, and specifically the Code of Ethics of the Association should an interpreter also be a member of said Association;

(b) has been found guilty by a competent court of a crime affecting public trust or theft or fraud or knowingly receiving property obtained by theft or fraud, and following procedures before the Board, the said Board decides to suspend or cancel the interpreter's registration; or

(c) has requested that the Council cancel the previous registration:

Provided that a fresh warrant may be awarded at any time if the conditions for such award are satisfied.

Award of warrant of Maltese Sign Language interpreter.

9. (1) A person shall qualify for the award of a warrant of Maltese Sign Language interpreter by the Minister, on the advice of the Council, following a decision of the Board, and such warrant shall be valid for a period of (5) years from the date of such award, if such person:

(a) is a citizen of Malta or a citizen of a Member State or otherwise permitted to work in Malta under any law;

(b) is of good conduct;

(c) satisfies the Council in respect of:

(i) being in possession of the requirements listed in article 7(1)(c) for Maltese Sign Language interpreters;

(ii) being in possession of academic qualifications obtained after successful completion of the post-graduate course in Maltese Sign Language Interpreting offered by the Institute of Linguistics and Language Technology of the University of Malta, or an equivalent recognised interpreter training course at Malta Qualification Framework (MQF) Level 6 or higher as may be recognised for such purpose by the Council; and

(iii) having worked as a Maltese Sign Language interpreter in Malta, for a period of not less than two (2) years on a full-time basis, or for a comparable period on a part-time basis, after having fulfilled the requirements referred to in sub-paragraphs (i) and (ii); and

(d) after having satisfied the requirements contained in the previous paragraphs, having taken before the Minister and the Council, the following prescribed oath of office:

I.....do swear/ solemnly affirm that I shall faithfully and with honesty and exactness perform the duties of a Maltese Sign Language interpreter to the best of my knowledge and ability. [So help me God.]:

Provided that the requirements contained in this sub-article, and in article 10 in respect of renewal of warrants, shall be made publicly available in an accessible manner by the Council on apposite websites.

(2) A warrant holder shall have the right to indicate this fact in his professional designation and to also specify the relevant warrant registration number in so doing.

Renewal of warrant of Maltese Sign Language interpreter.

10. On the expiration of five (5) years from the date of the initial award of a warrant in terms of article 9, or of a renewal of a warrant in accordance with this article, a warrant of Maltese Sign Language interpreter shall be renewed for a subsequent period of five (5) years by the Minister, on the advice of the Council after a decision of the Board, provided that the Council be satisfied that during the previous five (5) years, the warrant holder has:

(a) worked as a Maltese Sign Language interpreter and had a minimum of thirty-five (35) contact hours annually;

(b) satisfied all the continuous professional development requirements as may be prescribed from time to time by the Council, after having consulted the Association, for warrant holders; and

(c) been a person of good conduct.

Suspension or cancellation of warrant of Maltese Sign Language interpreter.

11. A warrant awarded in accordance with the provisions of article 9 may be suspended or cancelled by the Minister, on the advice of the Council by notice in the Gazette and following a decision of the Board where necessary, if a warrant holder:

(a) has been found, after procedures before the Board, which shall decide on suspension or cancellation of the warrant, initiated at the request of the Council, on the Council's own initiative, or following requests made by third parties, to have engaged in one (1) or more of the following acts or omissions:

(i) dishonesty, misconduct or gross negligence in exercising the profession of Maltese Sign Language interpreter;

(ii) conduct which is discreditable to the profession; and, or

(iii) failure to comply with rules with respect to professional standards or practices, and specifically the Code of Ethics of the Association should an interpreter also be a member of said Association; or

(b) has been found guilty by a competent court of a crime affecting public trust or theft or fraud or knowingly receiving property obtained by theft or fraud and following procedures before the Board, the said Board decides to suspend or cancel the interpreter's warrant; or

(c) has requested that the Minister cancel a warrant previously awarded:

Provided that a fresh warrant may be awarded at any time if the conditions for such award are satisfied.

Register of registered and warranted sign language interpreters.

12. (1) The Council shall keep a Register of interpreters registered in accordance with articles 7 or 12, warrant holders awarded in terms of article 9, and interpreters exercising the profession on a

temporary or occasional basis further to a determination under article 13, that shall be made publicly available in an accessible manner by the Council on apposite websites, and shall not later than three (3) months after the end of every year, publish in the Gazette a list of persons whose names, on the 31st December of the said year appear on the Register.

(2) A person who satisfies the requirements of article 7(a) and is registered as an interpreter in his home country, not being a third country, where such profession is regulated, and who intends to establish himself in Malta, may be considered as qualified to be entered in such Register, provided that he also satisfies the requirement of article 7(b):

Provided that an interpreter may request to be registered for one (1) or more language pairs, with International Sign able to be a component of any such pair, with such requests being assessed taking into considerations qualifications held by, training undertaken and fluency enjoyed by the interpreter.

(3) In the case of an applicant where the profession in the home country, not being a third country, is not regulated, the applicant shall satisfy the following requirements:

(a) the applicant has pursued the profession:

(i) on a full-time basis for one (1) year; or

(ii) for an equivalent overall duration on a part-time basis during the previous ten (10) years in another country, not being a third country, which does not regulate the profession; and

(b) the applicant possesses one (1) or more attestations of competence or evidence of formal qualifications issued by another country, not being a third country, which does not regulate the profession:

Provided that evidence of formal qualifications issued by a third country shall be regarded as evidence of formal qualifications for the purposes of this article, if the applicant:

(i) has obtained certification of the said evidence of formal qualifications issued by a third country from a country that is not a third country; and

(ii) furnishes proof of three (3) years professional experience as an interpreter in the territory of such other

country that is not a third country:

Provided further that an applicant may request to be registered for one (1) or more language pairs, with International Sign able to be a component of any such pair.

Temporary service providers.

13. (1) No person shall be prohibited from exercising the profession of interpreter on a temporary or occasional basis in Malta if he:

(a) satisfies the requirements of article 12(2) or (3); and

(b) has submitted to the Board a written declaration and the documentation provided for in sub-article (2).

(2) Any person who wants to exercise the profession of interpreter on a temporary or occasional basis in Malta shall, prior to the intended date of commencement of the said activity, submit to the Board a written declaration in such form as may be determined by the Board from time to time and made available by the Board, accompanied by supporting documentation, and including details of relevant services to be provided in Malta:

Provided that where, due to a material change in the status of such person, the written declaration and, or the supporting documentation being submitted no longer reflect such status, said person shall submit to the Board an updated written declaration and, or supporting documentation reflecting such change in status within fifteen (15) days from the date when the said change occurred:

Provided further that where a person wants to exercise the profession of interpreter on a temporary or occasional basis in Malta in the calendar year immediately following the year in which a written declaration has been submitted, or resubmitted as the case may be, such written declaration shall be renewed or resubmitted to the Board and, in any case, such written declaration shall be renewed or resubmitted prior to the commencement of service provision in Malta in that particular year.

(3) The determination of whether a person would be exercising the profession of interpreter on a temporary or occasional basis in Malta shall be assessed by the Board, by reference to all the particular circumstances of the relevant request entered in terms of sub-article (2) including, but not limited to the duration, frequency, regularity and continuity of the services to be provided in Malta, and:

(a) where the Board determines that relevant services would be provided on a temporary or occasional basis in Malta,

such person shall be granted temporary registration by the Board, and entered into the Register established by article 12 in addition to an indication that such registration is a temporary one, and of the time period during which the said temporary registration shall subsist. Such period shall in no case exceed the period of one (1) year;

(b) where the Board determines that relevant services would not be provided on a temporary or occasional basis in Malta, such person shall, upon notification by the Board of such a determination, be prohibited from exercising the profession of interpreter in Malta unless he fulfils any of the requirements in article 3:

Provided that a decision of the Board taken pursuant to this sub-article shall be subject to appeal in terms of article 6:

Provided further that where a person, notwithstanding being notified by the Board in terms of this paragraph, exercises the profession of interpreter in Malta, without fulfilling any of the requirements in article 3, he shall be guilty of an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine (*multa*) of not less than two thousand euro (€2,000) and not more than six thousand euro (€6,000).

Powers of the Minister.

14. The Minister, on the advice of the Council, may make regulations to give better effect to the provisions of this Act, and for the enforcement thereof and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing may by means of regulations, provide for any matter consequential, incidental to or connected with any of the above-mentioned provisions:

Provided that the Minister, in consultation with the Minister responsible for finance, may by such regulations provide for any fee that could be established in respect of the various procedures foreseen under this Act.

Consequential amendment. Cap. 490.

15. In the Second Schedule to the Administrative Justice Act, immediately after the item "Customs Ordinance" there shall be added the following new item:

"Registration and Warranting of Sign Language Interpreters Act	Act No. XXXVIII of 2025	Inferior Competence".

A 848

Passed by the House of Representatives at Sitting No. 406 of the 17th November, 2025.

ANĠLU FARRUGIA
Speaker

ELEANOR SCERRI
Clerk of the House of Representatives

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