



European Network of National Observatories on Childhood

## MALTA

### Form for the compilation of good practises in the post adoption phase for the Seminar on post adoption

Art.9 c) Hague Convention

#### Post-adoption services

1. Do the social services promote the establishment of a trust relation with the prospective adoptive parents before the adoption is pronounced in particular in the meetings that are aimed at their training and preparation? (so that in case of problems in the post adoption phase the adoptive parents are more likely to contact the social services)

During the pre-adoption preparation sessions, Prospective Adoptive Parents are informed about the services available at various Government Departments, and they are given a handout with a list of these services. They are also encouraged to contact the Adoption Unit in case of any difficulties, so that they might be referred to the adequate services provider.

2. Please indicate the possible types of services (counselling, groups of mutual aid, psychotherapy, scholastic support, family mediation, etc...).

Many services are offered to all families (not only to adoptive families), amongst which the services of psychologists (even at school), family therapists, guidance teachers, the Child Development Assessment Unit, Paediatric Unit, Child Guidance Clinic etc.

3. Who is the subject that has the responsibility of the service?

These services are not situated within one department, and thus, every head of department would be responsible for the services offered by his particular unit.

4. Staff employed in the Service (number, professional characteristics, etc..).

As above – it would depend on the Department involved

5. Duration of the Service (until when?, until the minor is 18 years old?)

Service is given as long as it is needed, until the child is 18 years old. There are services such as family therapy, which are given indefinitely.



6. Is there collaboration and integration among the different public subjects involved (services, school, etc..) and between these and the private bodies in the carrying out of the service?

There is collaboration between the Adoption Social Worker and any Department who offers the service needed.

7. Is there an evaluation system of the service? Are data on the use of the service by families available?

Any evaluation would depend on the particular Department, and any data collected might either be compiled for internal use by the service provider, or compiled in a general manner by the National Statistics Office.

8. Who elaborates the reports on the post-adoption phase required by the authorities of States of origin?

A social worker from the Adoption Unit visits the adoptive family and writes a report on the progress of the child, and of the child's integration within the Adoption family and within the community.

9. Are there good practices in the country relating with the beginning of the relation with the adoptive family on the immediately subsequent period after the pronouncement of adoption?

The Adoption Unit, in particular the Social Worker of the particular family, would give support both during the adoption procedure, as well as after the child has arrived in the country.

### **Access to the origins**

10. In the framework of the support services in the post-adoption phase, is there a service to support those who want to collect information about their origins? (Right to the access to the origins recognized also in the art. 7 (1) of the Convention on Rights of the Child).

Once the adopted child reaches the age of 18, he/she can get their birth certificate to the Adoption Unit, and the staff will give them any available information which they might have gathered throughout the adoption procedure

11. Are there limits and conditions for the access to the information about the origins (age, consent of the adoptive parents and/or biological parents)?

Such information is only disclosed to the adopted person, upon attainment of the 18<sup>th</sup> year of age. No consent is required since the child would no longer be subject to parental authority



**12.** Who is the competent subject to address the request (public services, the central authority, an administrative office, etc..)?)

The Adoption Unit / Central Authority

**13.** Are there centres and/or services specialized in the assistance in this sector?

No

**14.** Does a central organ exist which has to collect and preserve the information on the origins?

No. This service is part of the functions of the Adoption Unit/Central Authority

**15.** What are the modalities of functioning and access to the service? What are the professional roles engaged in the support phase in the research on information on the origins?

As already stated above, once a request is received, the adopted person is required to present his/her birth certificate, and thereupon all information about his/her adoption is disclosed to him/her

**16.** How long has the information on the origins to be preserved?

No files have ever been disposed of. Adoption files date back to the 1950's

**17.** Is it possible to check if and how the valorisation and the preservation of the links with the origins is promoted (cultural and social events with other adoptive parents group, travel opportunities to the country of origin with other adoptive family, etc..)?) Is this kind of activity carried out by public or private bodies?

No such monitoring is carried out

**18.** Are there good practices in the country relating to the support to adopted adults who wish to collect information on their origins?

Any adopted person wishing to find out about his origins, is free to contact the Adoption Unit, who will be eager to give him/her all possible help.

### **Adoptive failures**

**19.** Who is responsible of the child in case of an adoption failure?



In such cases, adopted children are treated in the same manner as children born in wedlock. They are given the same services, whether by public departments or NGO's, as would be given to all children

- 20.** Which kinds of support and accompaniment for the child and the adoptive family are realised in these hypothesis?

The adoptive family are informed of services offered, in case of problems following the adoption

- 21.** Are the authorities of the State of origin informed in the case of intercountry adoption?

Since the child would have become a Maltese national, unless the failure happens while post-adoption reports are still being compiled and sent to the State of origin, no notification would be sent of the failure of the adoption, and the child would be cared for by the Maltese Government, in the same manner as all other Maltese children

- 22.** What are the interventions for the minor protection carried out in case of revocation of the adoption? Is an immediate placing in a new family provided or is a first insertion in a welcome structure for children considered?

No such case has ever happened, however, the Maltese Government has a system whereby it may issue care orders in order to take abandoned/neglected/abused children in its care. Alternative arrangements would be provided, eg. Emergency fostering / alternative adoptive family

- 23.** Are there good practices in the country relating to the interventions of support to the adoptive families in difficulty and/or support in cases of removal of the child from the adoptive family?

Such services would be offered by the agency dealing with matters of family and children, since an adopted child is considered to be part of the family, and thus, treated as a normal child born in wedlock.