

# THE MINERAL INDUSTRY OF MALTA

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Malta remained an important transshipment center in the Mediterranean area. The transshipment and reexport of goods continued to be significant to the country's economy in 2003. International trade, and, in particular, export activities, represented Malta's economic lifeline. Exports of manufactured goods, transport-related services (transshipment and ship repairs), financial services, and tourism-related activities drove Malta's economic growth and development. The U.S. trade balance with Malta for 2003 and 2002 is listed in table 2. With virtually no natural resources of its own, except for its golden limestone (globigerina), Malta depended almost completely on imports of raw materials and fuels to sustain both its manufacturing and tourism industries (CountryProfiler, 2003§<sup>1</sup>).

The area of the Maltese archipelago is 316 square kilometers (km<sup>2</sup>) and consists of Malta, 246 km<sup>2</sup>; Gozo, 67 km<sup>2</sup>; and Comino, 3 km<sup>2</sup>. The country had a population of about 400,000. Malta's gross domestic product (GDP) in purchasing power parity was \$6.8 billion (2002 estimate), and GDP per capita was \$17,200 (2002 estimate). The real growth rate was 1.2% (Factmonster, 2003§).

<sup>1</sup>References that include a section mark (§) are found in the Internet References Cited section.

Malta continued to privatize state-controlled firms and liberalize markets to prepare for membership in the European Union in May 2004. The mineral industry, which consisted mainly of limestone and salt production for domestic consumption, was small (table 1). Malta's mineral-related economy depended mainly on trade and the storage of crude oil.

Pancontinental Oil and Gas plc of Australia was continuing with its 250 km<sup>2</sup> seismic survey program to investigate Area 5 in waters south of Malta (Pancontinental Oil and Gas NL, 2003§).

Malta's entrepôt activities in the Mediterranean area are expected to continue. Additional information on the mineral industry of Malta can be found in the 2002 Minerals Yearbook, volume III, Europe and Central Eurasia.

## Internet References Cited

CountryProfiler, 2003, Malta—Maritime, accessed April 15, 2004, at URL <http://www.countryprofiler.com/malta/maritime1p.malta.html>.

Factmonster, 2003, Malta, accessed April 15, 2004, at URL <http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0107763.html>.

Pancontinental Oil and Gas NL, 2003, Malta, accessed April 15, 2004, at URL [http://www.pancon.com.au/files/3\\_proj/3\\_malta.html](http://www.pancon.com.au/files/3_proj/3_malta.html).

TABLE 1  
MALTA: ESTIMATED PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES<sup>1</sup>

(Cubic meters)

Commodity <sup>2</sup>	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Limestone	1,100,000	1,140,000	1,230,000	1,200,000	1,200,000
Salt	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000

<sup>1</sup>Table includes data available through March 2004.

<sup>2</sup>In addition to the commodities listed, small amounts of cement, fertilizer, lime, and plaster are produced, but available information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output levels.

TABLE 2  
MALTA: EXPORT AND IMPORT TRADE WITH THE UNITED STATES<sup>1</sup>

(Million dollars)

Month	2002		2003	
	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports
January	16	24	21	25
February	17	24	16	24
March	19	37	19	33
April	17	21	17	24
May	16	26	18	29
June	14	26	15	33
July	18	22	18	29
August	16	23	14	32
September	17	25	14	33
October	21	27	13	44
November	21	29	20	35
December	20	27	15	32
Total	212	311	202	373

<sup>1</sup>Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Division, April 2004.