

# malta today



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Sunday, 09 September 2007 – issue 409

www.maltatoday.com.mt

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## The heat is on: PN edges closer to MLP as more voters make up their minds

malta today SURVEY

WITH the election approaching and the political temperature rising, more people are making up their minds on who to vote for in the next election. A survey by MaltaToday shows that in the past two months the number of undecided voters fell by a staggering 9 per cent since July.

The drop in undecided respondents was accompanied by

### Electoral Barometer (%)

MLP	31.3
PN	26.0
AD	2.7
Other	0.3
Don't know	15.9
Won't vote	11.8
No reply	12.0

an increase in support for the Nationalist Party, which managed to increase its support by 7.6% and decrease Labour's lead by half: from a 9.6% gap in July to 5.3% in September.

At 26%, the PN managed to score its best result since April, when it scored 29%.

Yet, contrary to secretary-general Joe Saliba's claim that the PN is 1% ahead, the Malta-

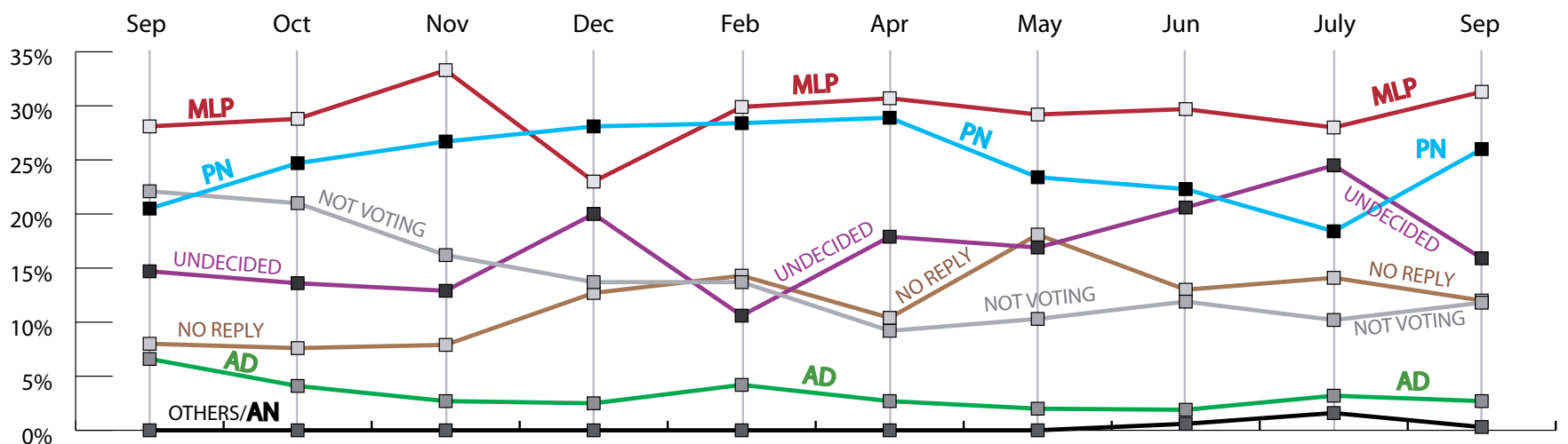
Today survey shows Labour 5% ahead and scoring its best result in the past year of MaltaToday surveys by surpassing the 31% mark.

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### SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Undecided voters fall by 9.1% since July
- PN gains 7.6% while MLP gains 3.3%
- MLP scores 51.9% among decided voters
- PN would be 1% below MLP if it recovers former PN voters threatening not to vote
- MLP deemed to have best policies to govern
- PN deemed to have best people to govern
- MLP beats PN on housing and property prices
- PN beats Labour on job creation policies
- 75% support neither party on immigration

### A YEAR OF SURVEYS



## Minister's appointee to decide state compensation for victims

### JAMES DEBONO

STATE compensation for victims of crime will be decided by a politically-appointed officer, according to a new legal notice published by Home Affairs Minister Tonio Borg.

The legislation passed earlier this summer gives the home affairs minister the power to appoint a claims officer and an assistant to decide whether victims should be compensated or not and how much.

The officer will be able to dish out up to Lm10,000 in compensation to victims, but despite the



Tonio Borg's appointee would theoretically have to decide whether the relatives in the highly politically charged cases of Raymond Caruana and Karen Grech would be eligible for compensation

sensitive position, he will be accountable only to the minister appointing him, unlike other Eu-

ropean countries like Britain and Sweden that have public authorities supervising and enforcing

victim compensation schemes.

The officer will also have the power to deny compensation upon his moral judgement of the victims' character – a highly debatable discretionary power that will also be left out of reach of scrutiny.

In fact, the claims officer will be able to deny compensation when he is not satisfied about the "victim's character and way of life".

An analysis of victim compensation laws abroad reveals that Tonio Borg has not re-invented the wheel and is following in the footsteps of other European countries.

But the introduction of such

an innovative and controversial piece of legislation through a sheer legal notice could raise a number of questions.

An amendment to the criminal code passed in 2006 enables the Minister of Justice and Home Affairs to simply enact regulations to establish a scheme for the compensation of victims of crime without going through Parliament.

And unlike most other European legislation the Maltese law covers all sorts of "criminal injuries" which are defined as "any damage suffered as a consequence of a criminal act."

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