

EU MEMBERSHIP – FIVE YEARS LATER

Only 37.2% think we're better off

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FIVE years after EU membership, and only 37.2% think Malta is faring better than it was before membership. This is what emerges from MaltaToday's latest survey, which also revealed another third of respondents think the country is actually faring worse, while 19% have seen no change at all.

The least satisfied with the way the country is faring after EU membership are respondents with no university or post-secondary education – an indication that working class respondents are the least likely to have seen any improvements due to membership.

Although only 37% have seen the country's situation improve with membership, an absolute majority of respondents (53%) would like Malta to remain in the European Union. But 31% would like to pull out of the European Union.

Yet, a strong eurosceptic element that wants Malta to leave the European Union persists in the Labour party. Despite the PL's acceptance of EU membership, an overwhelming 66.3% of

in the PN, with 12% of those who voted PN in 2008 wanting Malta to leave the EU.

EU funds are considered to be the greatest advantage of EU membership, closely followed by the right to work and study in other EU countries.

On the other hand inflation and the lack of assistance from the EU to help face the challenge of illegal immigration are perceived to be the top liabilities of membership.

While 5.7% consider the EU's stricter environmental rules as the greatest advantage of membership, 5% considered restrictions on hunting and trapping as the main liability of membership.

And despite fears expressed before the EU membership referendum of an invasion of foreign workers from Sicily, only 4.3% expressed concern on foreign workers or businesses operating in Malta.

The introduction of the euro is seen as the major advantage of membership by 4% of respondents and its greatest liability by 7%. But the survey also shows a complete lack of knowledge about the Lisbon Treaty, which if approved by Ireland will in-

How the Maltese feel about the EU

- 37% say we're faring better
- 32% want Malta out of the EU
- 66% of Labour voters in 2008 want Malta out of the EU
- 5% say hunting restrictions were the greatest disadvantage
- 5.7% say better environmental laws are the greatest advantage
- 89% don't know what the Treaty of Lisbon is about
- 21% want Turkey to join the EU
- 31% think MEPs don't make any difference to the country – 52% disagree

respondents who declared they voted Labour in the 2008 election would like to see Malta out of the EU.

A smaller but still significant eurosceptic element also exists

volve the greatest overhaul of the EU's decision-making structure since the Treaty of Rome.

The treaty will introduce more qualified majority voting in the Council of the EU and an increased involvement of the European Parliament in the legislative process is not known to 90% of respondents.

And 38% of respondents said they did not have an opinion on whether Turkey should be accepted as an EU member. And while 41% opposed EU membership for Turkey, only 21% approve of it.

The absolute majority of respondents still consider their MEPs to be useful for their country. Only 31% agreed with the statement that "MEPs make no difference to Malta".



'Malta's MEPs make no difference to the country' – do you agree? (%)

Yes	31
No	52
Don't know	17



Most popular candidates

(as a % of respondents who have decided for which party they will vote for)

Simon Busuttill (PN)	18.2
Edward Scicluna (PL)	7.4
Roberta Metsola Triccas (PN)	4.7
Louis Grech (PL)	4.1
Marlene Mizzi (PL)	4.1
David Casa (PN)	3.4
Arnold Cassola (AD)	3.4
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (PL)	3.4
Joseph Cuschieri (PL)	3.4
John Attard Montalto (PL)	3.4

(Candidates obtaining less than 3% are not included in list due to sample size of survey)

Five years after EU membership, how is the country faring? (%)

	TOTAL	By educational level			
		University	Post-secondary	Secondary	Primary
Better	37.2	46.2	51.4	31	29.9
Worse	35.7	26.9	29.7	40.6	45.5
Same	18.6	13.5	10.8	19.4	15.6
Don't know	8.5	13.5	8.1	9	9

If you had the chance to vote in a referendum on whether Malta should remain an EU member, how would you vote? (%)

	TOTAL	PL voters 2008	PN voters 2008
To remain in the EU	53	20.7	81.3
To leave the EU	30.8	66.3	12.1
Don't know	16.2	12.9	6.6

Greatest advantage of joining the EU (%)

EU funds	17.3
Can find work in EU	11.7
Can study in EU	11
Better rights for citizen	7.7
Better environmental rules	5.7
Euro	4
Liberalisation	1

Greatest disadvantage of joining the EU? (%)

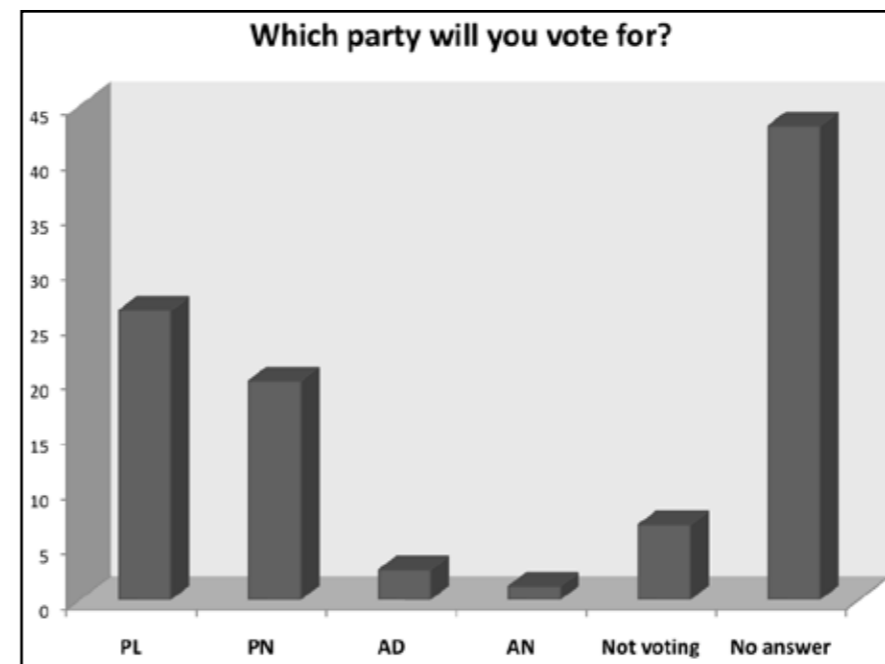
Cost of living increase	25.3
No help on immigration	16.3
Euro	6.7
Hunting restrictions	5
Foreign workers/businesses	4.3
Unemployment	3.3
Too many regulations	2.3
Big countries have greater say	1

Do you know what the Lisbon Treaty is about? (%)

- Yes: it's will change the workings of the EU	9.3
- A treaty which Ireland has not approved	1
- A treaty on the number of seats each country should have	1
- No idea	88.7

Should Turkey be accepted as an EU member state? (%)

	Malta	EU 25 (2005 poll)
Yes	21.3	35
No	40.7	52
Don't know	38	13



Which party will you vote for in the MEP elections? (%)

PL	26.3
PN	19.9
AD	2.7
AN	1.2
Not voting	6.8
No answer	43.1

Excluding non-voters and undecided from sample (%)

PL	52.5
PN	39.7
AD	5.4
AN	2.4

Voting intentions of respondents who would like Malta out of the EU (%)

	PL voters 2008	PN voters 2008
PL	56.7	74.2
PN	1	1.1
AD	-	0
AN	-	0
Not voting	8.2	1.1
No answer	34.1	23.6

MLP frontrunners

(as a % of Labour voters)	
Edward Scicluna	13.6
Louis Grech	7.4
Marlene Mizzi	7.4
Joseph Cuschieri	6.2
John Attard Montalto	6.2

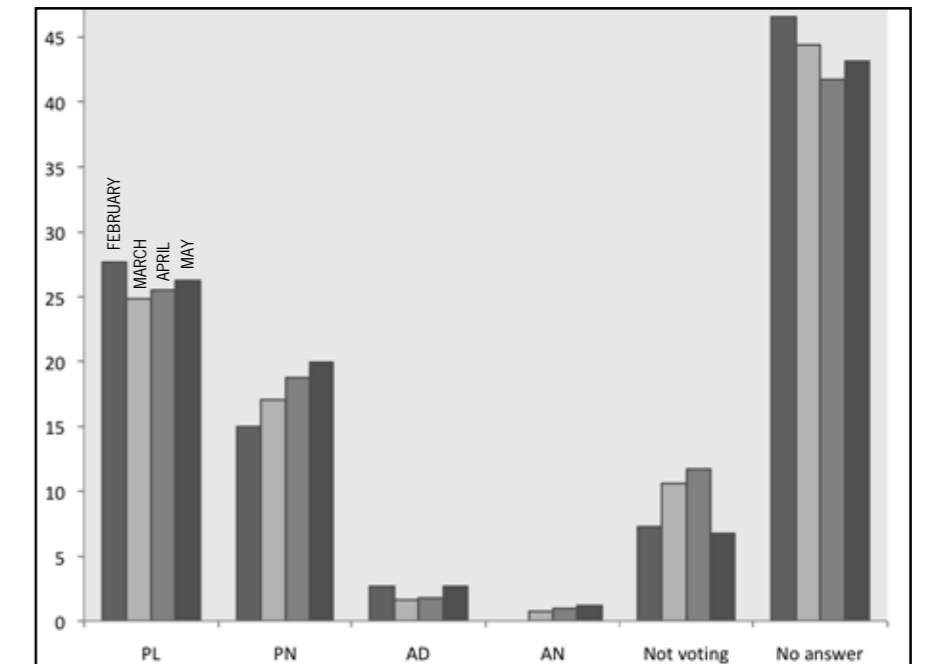
PN frontrunners

(as a % of PN voters)	
Simon Busuttill	45.8
Roberta Tedesco Triccas	11.9
David Casa	8.5
Claudette Abela Baldacchino	6.2



Methodology

The survey was held between Thursday 23 April and Wednesday 29 April. 452 respondents were contacted and 300 accepted to be interviewed. Results are weighed to reflect the age and sex distribution of the population. The survey has a margin of error of +/-5.7%.



PARTY BAROMETER (%)

	February	March	April	May
PL	27.7	24.9	25.5	26.3
PN	15	17	18.7	19.9
AD	2.7	1.7	1.8	2.7
AN	0	0.8	1	1.2
Not voting	7.3	10.6	11.7	6.8
No answer	46.5	44.4	41.7	43.1

Labour leads MEP race

FIVE weeks before d-day, MaltaToday's latest opinion poll on the forthcoming European Parliament elections puts Labour ahead of the PN by six percentage points. At 26.3%, the Labour party has seen its advantage decrease by just 0.4%.

Despite its attempt to attract disgruntled voters by fielding candidates who openly question government policies, the PN has only gained 1.2 percentage points, to reach the 20% mark of support.

The survey now shows Labour heading towards an absolute majority in next June's election.

If we take just those voters who know who they will be voting for, the survey indicates that 52.5% will vote Labour, while 39.7% have chosen the PN.

Still, a staggering 43.1% of overall respondents remain undecided or have refused to reveal their voting intentions, suggesting a lack of enthusiasm for the forthcoming elections among many voters.

The number of those intending not to vote decreased from 11.3% last month to 6.8%. Former Nationalist party voters prevail among those who say they would not be voting. While only 1.1% of the cohort who said they voted Labour in 2008 will not vote in the forthcoming MEP elections, 6.6% of PN voters said they would not vote.

But the survey also shows that 8.2% of Eurosceptic voters who want Malta out of the EU also intend not voting in June. Most of these respondents failed to declare who they had voted for in last March's election. This could be an indication that even Labour faces an abstention problem.

For the second consecutive time the survey shows that 5.5% of those PN voters in the 2008 general election have switched sides and will now vote for the PL in the forthcoming election. On the other hand, only 1% of PL voters in 2008 will be voting PN.

Support for third parties has increased from last month, with 2.7% choosing Altrnattiva Demokratika and 1.2% choosing Azzjoni Nazzjonali.

When the undecided and non-voters are taken out of the sample, AD manages to score a respectable 5.4% and AN garners 2.4%. But this result is still a far cry from the 9% AD scored in June 2004.

Once again Edward Scicluna (PL) and Simon Busuttill (PN) are confirmed as the frontrunners of their respective parties. The survey also shows Roberta Metsola Triccas (PN) and PN incumbent David Casa in a tight race for the PN's second seat.

The race for Labour's second and third seat also remains tight with moderates Louis Grech and Marlene Mizzi enjoying a slight advantage over John Attard Montalto, Claudette Abela Baldacchino and Joseph Cuschieri.