

Gonzi and PN in free fall

Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi has registered his worst trust rating in any MaltaToday survey conducted since 2005, with only 23% placing more faith in him

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HIGHLIGHTS

mt survey

- Only 23% trust Lawrence Gonzi while 36% trust Muscat
- Only 15% would vote PN while 37% would vote PL
- Only 19% judge Gonzi's performance as Prime Minister positively
- 49% judge Muscat's performance as Opposition leader positively

LAWRENCE Gonzi has seen his trust rating dip by eight percentage points since last year, down to 23%. Just a year ago, 38% judged his performance as Prime Minister positively – now only 19% do the same, and nearly a fifth of respondents who voted PN in 2008 judge his performance negatively.

But despite his fall from the electorate's grace, Lawrence Gonzi still fares better than his own party. In the first poll on voting intentions since last June's MEP elections, only 15% of respondents say that they would vote for the PN if an election were held tomorrow.

The PN's record low is partially explained by the fact that 36% of PN voters in the 2008 election are either undecided or intent on not voting.

But the survey also indicates a significant shift of allegiance among respondents who voted for the Nationalist Party in the 2008 general election.

With third parties practically wiped out in this survey, some disgruntled PN voters seem to be directly moving in the Labour fold: 15% now openly claim they would vote Labour, mirroring the same percentage as those who trust Joseph Muscat more than Gonzi.

This confirms that the PN is not just suffering from sheer disgruntlement – as reflected

in high levels of former Nationalist voters who would not vote – but is now losing support to the Labour Party.

Muscat edges ahead

For the third consecutive time in MaltaToday's surveys, Labour leader Joseph Muscat enjoys a better trust rating than Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi.

But in what could be an indication that his honeymoon with the electorate is over, Muscat has seen his rating dip by seven percentage points

since last year's survey: conducted a 100 days after his election as Labour leader.

Nonetheless, Muscat has slightly improved his rating since last January, and has clearly managed to overturn one of his party's major disadvantages when Alfred Sant was leader (Gonzi used to enjoy a better trust rating than Sant in all MaltaToday surveys held since September 2005).

Significantly, only 7% of respondents assess Muscat's performance as Opposition

leader negatively, in what might well be an indication that the new Labour leader does not evoke the strong negative feelings associated with his predecessor.

And despite being subjected to greater scrutiny and attacks from the PN, a sizeable 23% of PN voters in 2008 judge Muscat's performance positively, with only 17% expressing a negative judgement.

But Muscat still faces some scepticism among Labour's electorate. In fact, 8% of Labour voters in 2008 trust neither Gonzi nor Muscat, and 9% judge his performance as opposition leader as 'fair'.

Significantly, when asked who they had voted in the past election, the number of respondents voting for PN and PL was

Who do you trust most between Lawrence Gonzi and Joseph Muscat? (%)

mt survey

	Sep 2009	Jan 2009	Sep 2008
Joseph Muscat	36.3	34.6	43.7
Lawrence Gonzi	23	27.8	30.8
Neither	15.6	13.1	8.5
No reply	25.2	24.5	17

Trust Barometer among PL, PN voters in 2008 General Election (%)

	Voted PN in 2008	Voted PL in 2008
Joseph Muscat	15.1	75.9
Lawrence Gonzi	58.1	1.1
Neither	11.6	8
No reply	15.2	15

How do you assess Lawrence Gonzi's performance as Prime Minister? (%)

	Sep 2008	Sep 2009
Positively	38	18.9
Negatively	29.5	37
Fair	18.1	39.6
No reply	14.3	4.4

How do assess Joseph Muscat's performance as Opposition Leader? (%)

Positively	49.4
Negatively	6.7
Fair	34.5
No reply	9.3

(This was the first time this question was asked about Muscat)

Assessment of Gonzi's performance (%) Assessment of Muscat's performance (%)

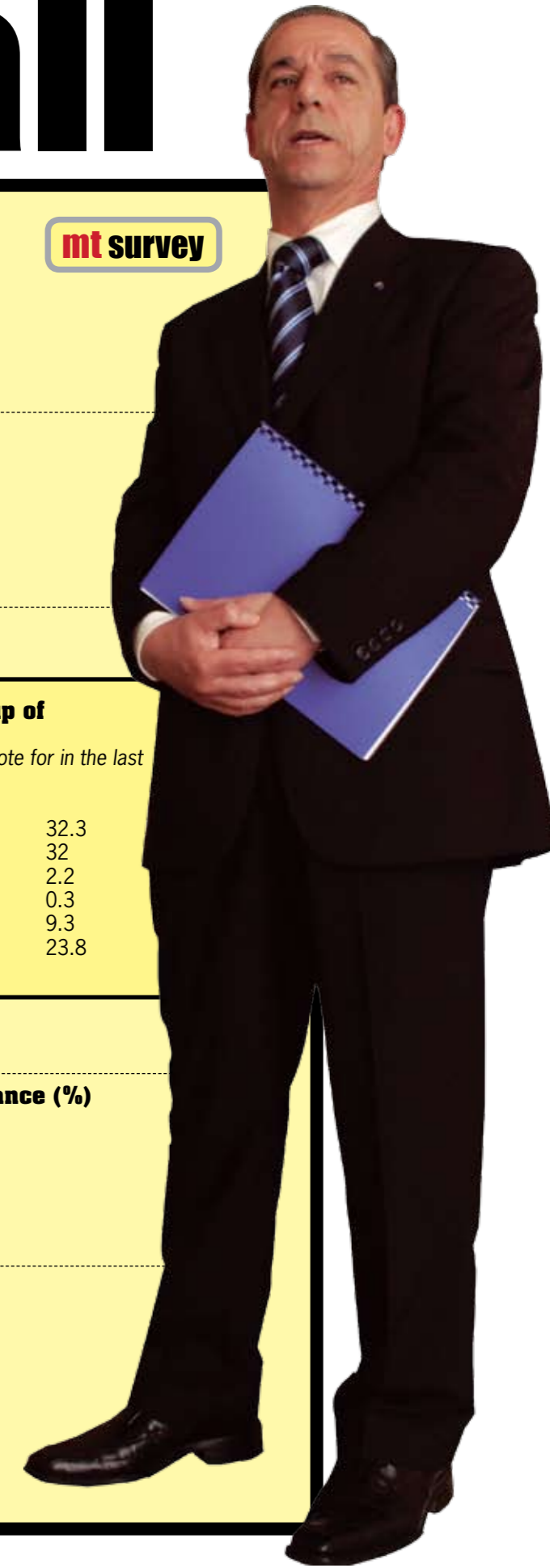
	PN voters	PL voters	PN voters	PL voters
Positively	36	5.7	23.3	85.1
Negatively	18.6	65.5	17.4	1.1
Fair	39.5	25.3	43	9.2
No reply	5.6	3.5	16.3	4.6

Who would you vote for if an election were held tomorrow? (%)

	All	Voted PN in 2008	Voted PL in 2008
PL	36.8	15.1	81.6
PN	14.9	43	0
AD	0.7	0	0
Not voting	12.3	19.8	5.7
Don't know	19	16.3	8
No reply	16.4	5.8	4.6

Methodology

The survey was conducted between Tuesday 29 September and Thursday 1 October. 438 respondents were chosen from the telephone directory. 300 accepted to be interviewed. The survey has a margin of error of +/-5.7%.



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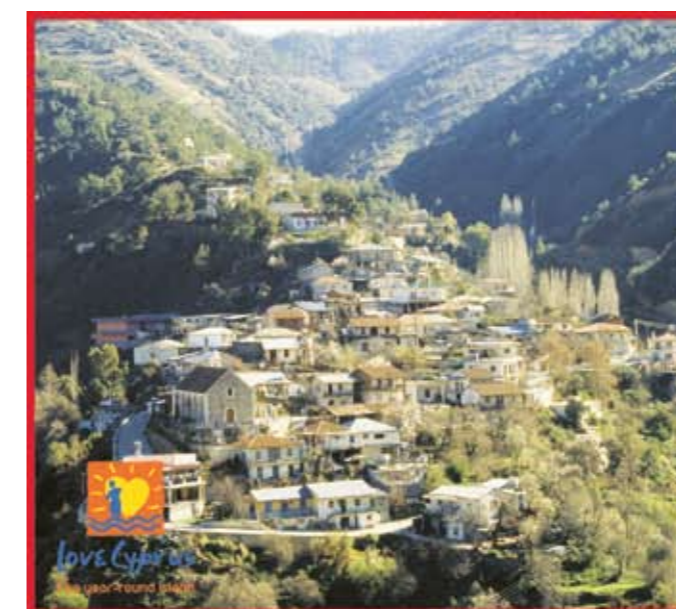
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Athena Beach	4 star	Paphos	€269	€219
Pioneer Beach	4 star	Paphos	€269	€219
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