

EUROBAROMETER 74

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Autumn 2010

NATIONAL REPORT

(MALTA)

Representation of the European Commission to MALTA

□ State of Opinion on the Maltese Economy

- The fieldwork was conducted between 12th and 28th November 2010, few weeks after the Budget 2011 was presented to the Maltese parliament.
- Economic sentiment on the Maltese economy improved by 5 percentage points over the findings of the previous Eurobarometer.
- The latter contrasts sharply with the situation in Ireland, which is considered a model economy for Malta, where 84 per cent of the Irish claimed that their economy is fairing badly.

□ State of Opinion on the Maltese Economy

- One-third of the Maltese respondents are of the opinion that the local economy is performing well.
- Compared to 70 per cent of Europeans, 60 per cent of the Maltese claimed that their local economy is not performing as expected.
- 61 per cent are reported to be satisfied with their personal job situation, compared to the EU27 average (55 per cent).
- Almost a third of Maltese claimed that the local labour market is performing well.
- The recent increases in energy prices namely, electricity, gas and fuel are denting the households' perception of their financial situation, with 56 per cent describing their situation as good.

☐ Expectations for the next 12 months

- In general, the outlook of the Maltese on aspects under review are that present conditions are going to remain unchanged in the next 12 months.

		BETTER	WORSE	SAME	DON'T KNOW
Your life in general	MT	22%	17%	51%	10%
	EU27	26%	15%	56%	3%
The National economic situation	MT	19%	27%	36%	18%
	EU27	24%	31%	41%	4%
The financial situation of the household	MT	11%	19%	63%	7%
	EU27	20%	19%	58%	3%
The National employment situation	MT	20%	26%	37%	17%
	EU27	23%	35%	38%	4%
Personal job situation	MT	17%	12%	57%	14%
	EU27	19%	10%	60%	11%
The economic situation in the European Union	MT	16%	21%	32%	31%
	EU27	21%	27%	40%	12%
The economic situation in the world	MT	14%	23%	33%	30%
	EU27	22%	26%	40%	12%

□ Expectations for the next 12 months

- Infrastructural projects being currently undertaken by Government are used as a tool to stimulate economic activity and the labour market.
- The City Gate Project, the development of a new parliament, the extension of the Cottonera Waterfront and the reconstruction of residential and arterial roads are leaving some relatively desired results.
- Compared to the EU27 average (35 per cent), only 26 per cent expect developments for the worse in the national employment situation. Moreover, the absolute majority of the Maltese (74 per cent) do not expect negative developments in their personal job situation.

□ Country's major issues

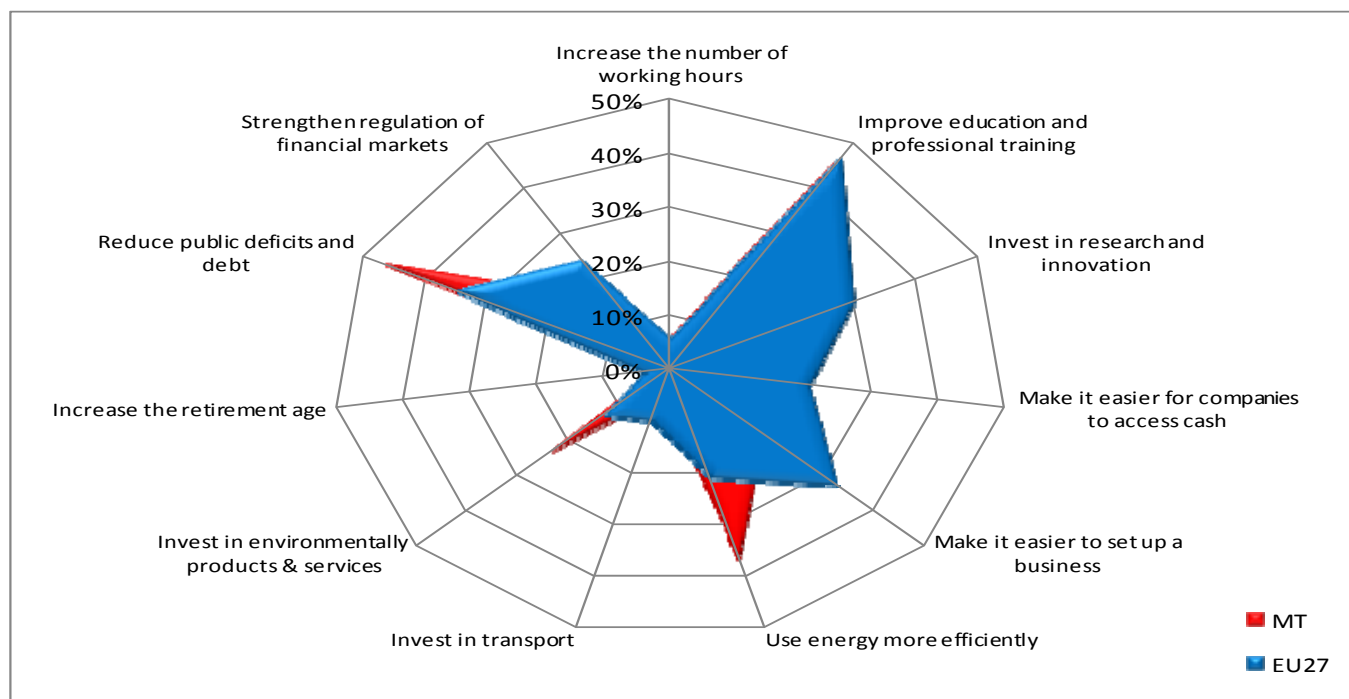
- Inflation (45 per cent), the economic situation (32 per cent) and energy (31 per cent) were of major concern to Maltese citizens.
- The recent increases in utility rates and energy prices, and their associated spill over effects on the headline rate of inflation, explain the reason why these factors prove to be of prime concern.
- The Europeans expressed similar concerns when it comes to rising prices and the economic situation, however the major issue is unemployment, with 46 per cent of the EU27 average flagging this issue.

□ Impact of the financial and economic crisis

- 47 per cent of the Maltese believe that the impact has already reached its peak whilst another 40 per cent feel that the worse is still to come.
- In contrast, 48 per cent of the Europeans are of the opinion that the worse is still to come.
- 56 per cent claimed that the household situation in Malta does not allow them to make any plans for the future.
- The European Union enjoys the highest confidence by the Maltese. It is considered as the best effective institution to take actions against the effects of the financial and economic crisis.
- Respondents were divided in half in terms of opinion that the euro has cushioned the effects of the economic crisis.

□ Overcoming the financial and economic crisis

- The reduction of public deficit and debt (47 per cent), improving the education and professional training (46 per cent) and to use energy more efficiently (37 per cent) featured as the top 3 factors presented by the Maltese.



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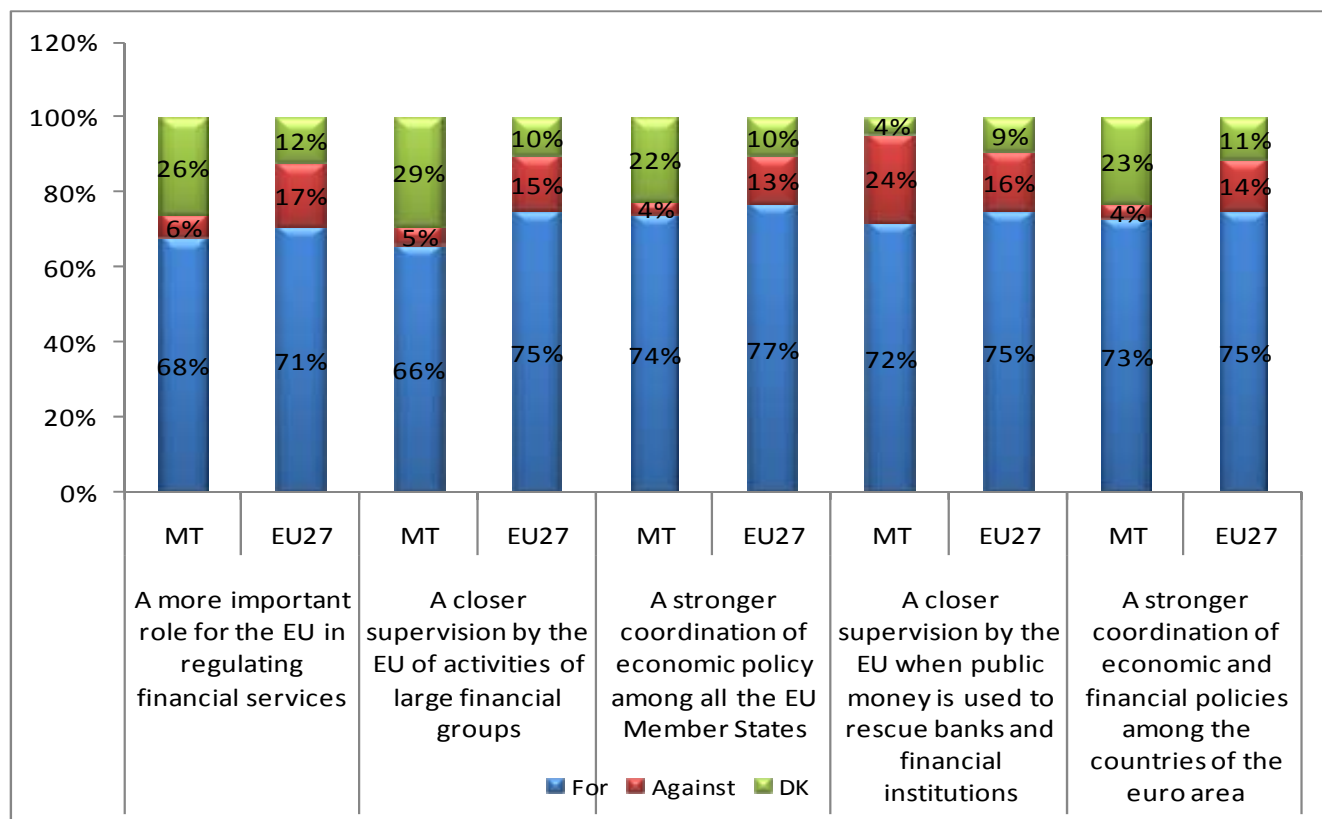
❑ Overcoming the financial and economic crisis

Acceptance of reforms to safeguard the interest of future generations.

		AGREE	DISAGREE	DK
We need to reform to benefit future generations even if that means making some sacrifices now	MT	60%	25%	15%
	EU27	77%	17%	6%
Malta needs reforms to face the future	MT	84%	8%	8%
	EU27	87%	9%	4%
EU Member States should work together more in tackling the financial and economic crisis	MT	89%	2%	9%
	EU27	89%	7%	4%
You are ready to reduce your living standards now in order to guarantee living standards for future generations	MT	30%	59%	11%
	EU27	50%	44%	6%
Measures to reduce the public deficit and debt in Malta cannot be delayed	MT	74%	10%	16%
	EU27	78%	13%	9%
Measures to reduce the public deficit and debt in Malta are not a priority for now	MT	25%	53%	22%
	EU27	36%	53%	11%
The economic crisis means we should increase public deficits to create jobs	MT	35%	37%	28%
	EU27	42%	42%	16%

□ Overcoming the financial and economic crisis

Measures to combat the financial and economic crisis.



☐ Overcoming the financial and economic crisis

Reforming the global financial markets.

		IN FAVOUR	OPPOSED	DK
Tougher rules on tax avoidance and tax havens	MT	74%	12%	14%
	EU27	88%	7%	5%
The introduction of a tax on profits made by banks	MT	51%	26%	23%
	EU27	81%	12%	7%
The introduction of a tax on financial transactions	MT	30%	46%	24%
	EU27	61%	25%	14%
The regulation of wages in the financial sector	MT	47%	11%	42%
	EU27	80%	11%	9%
A closer supervision of so-called "hedge funds"	MT	47%	8%	45%
	EU27	73%	7%	20%
Increasing transparency of financial markets	MT	73%	5%	22%
	EU27	87%	5%	8%

□ Europe 2020 - Perceptions

- The Maltese generally expressed their opinion that the key objectives formulating the strategy are just right and hence they think that these are attainable within the stipulated timeframe.

		AMBITIOUS	RIGHT	MODEST
The quarters of men and women between 20 and 64 years of age should have a job	MT	23%	54%	10%
	EU27	24%	59%	14%
The share of funds invested in research and development should reach 3 per cent of the wealth produced in the EU each year	MT	11%	47%	4%
	EU27	13%	54%	18%
To reduce EU greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20 per cent by 2020 compared to 1990	MT	15%	53%	8%
	EU27	27%	53%	17%
To increase the share of renewable energy in the EU by 20 per cent by 2020	MT	13%	54%	6%
	EU27	19%	57%	16%
To increase the energy efficiency in the EU by 20 per cent by 2020	MT	13%	55%	6%
	EU27	17%	59%	14%
The number of young people leaving school with no qualifications should fall to 10 per cent	MT	24%	53%	10%
	EU27	19%	51%	24%
At least 40 per cent of the younger generation should have a degree or a diploma	MT	31%	51%	5%
	EU27	32%	48%	15%
The number of Europeans living below the poverty line should be reduced by a quarter by 2020	MT	26%	50%	9%
	EU27	24%	48%	23%

□ Europe 2020 – Strategic Priorities

- Research on new challenges such as climate change, energy and resource efficiency is thought to be the way forward by the Maltese (46 per cent) on innovation.
- Getting more young people into employment featured as another local priority (44 per cent), as the human skill is the only available resource on the island.
- Demographic trends, such as ageing population, are putting more importance on ‘lifelong learning’ and to promote education (41 per cent).
- To give financial support to businesses aimed to enhance efficiency in energy (44 per cent) and to restructure industries in difficulty (39 per cent) were flagged to be important strategic priorities for businesses.
- To provide innovative education, training and employment to the most vulnerable are thought by the Maltese (37 per cent) as the best strategy in alleviating poverty.