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NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MALTA

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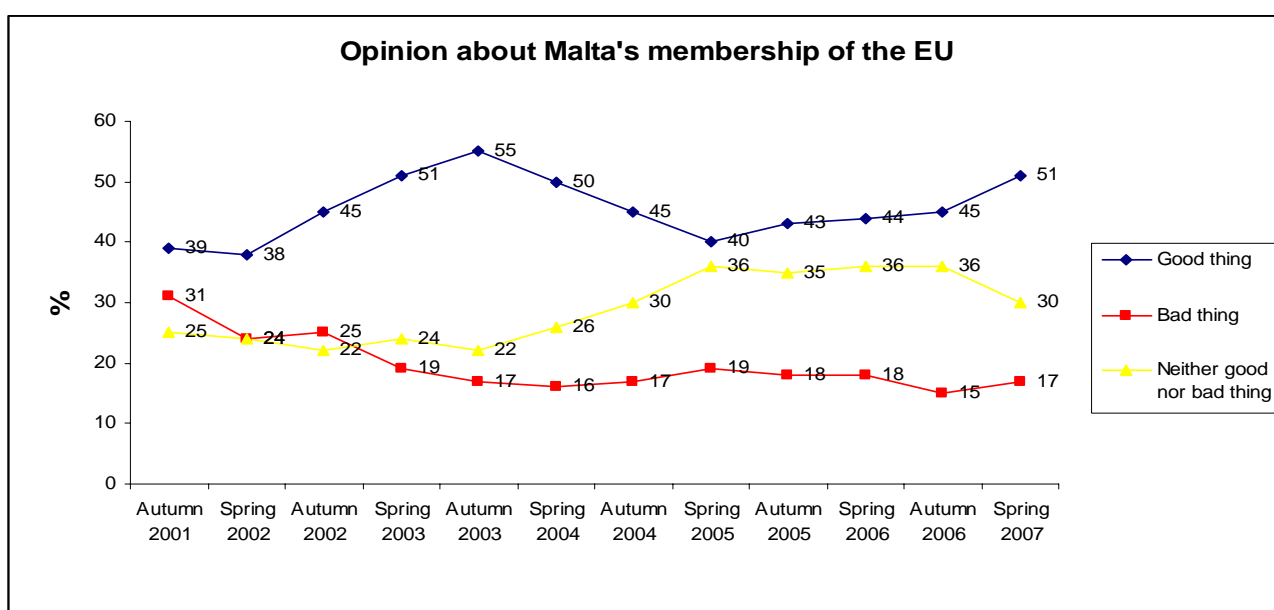
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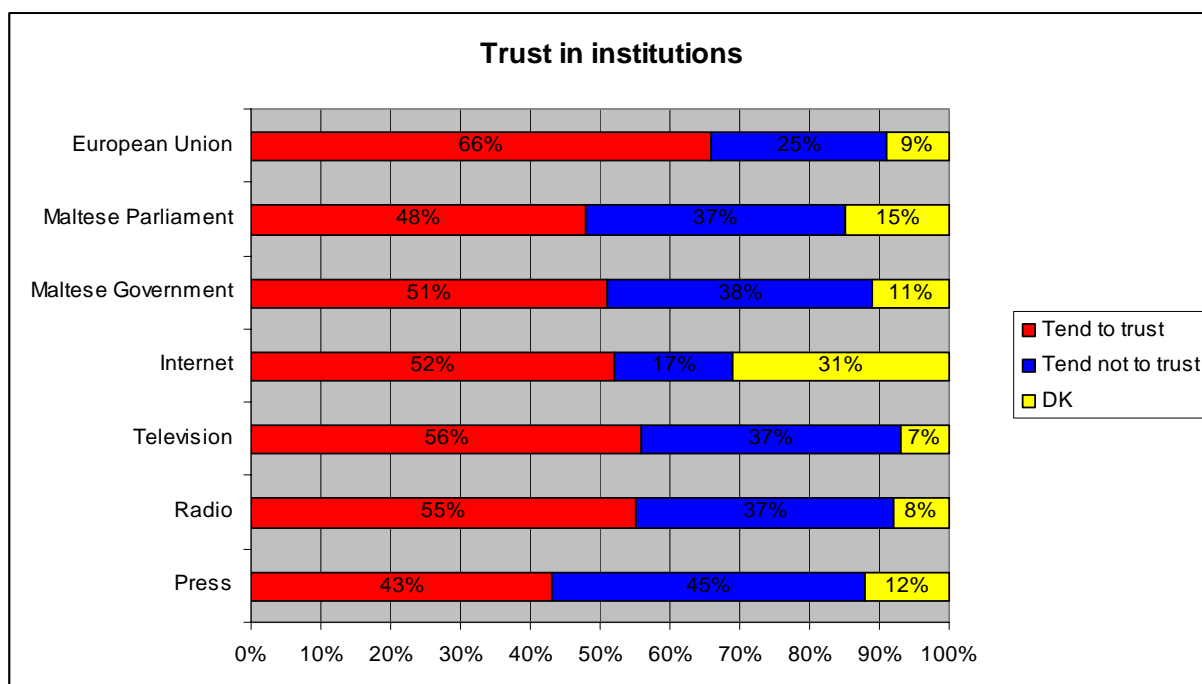
- When asked about their expectations for the next twelve months about life in general, 35 per cent of Maltese respondents said that they expect things to improve while 11 per cent expect their life to get worse in the coming year. 41 per cent of respondents stated they expect their life to remain the same while 13 per cent do not know. When compared to the results of 6 months ago, Maltese respondents have maintained the same level of life expectations.
- When asked about their expectations for the next twelve months in relation to the economic situation in Malta, 30 per cent of respondents stated that they expect the economic situation to improve, an increase of 5 percentage points. On the other hand, 26 per cent expect the Maltese economy to get worse, an increase of 3 percentage points over the previous survey of six months ago.
- Respondents were also asked about their expectation of their personal financial situation over the next twelve months. When compared to six months ago, the percentage of those who said that their financial situation would get better increased from 14 per cent to 18 per cent. A higher increase was recorded for respondents who stated that they are expecting it to get worse, from 9 per cent last autumn to 17 per cent this spring.
- When asked about the economic situation, 61 per cent think that the Maltese situation is worse than in the rest of the EU, 18 per cent think that Malta's situation is better while 8 per cent stated that it is identical. Still, when compared to the previous results, Maltese respondents are now more optimistic with an increase of 10 percentage points.
- In relation to the employment situation, 57 per cent think that the situation in Malta is worse than in the rest of EU, 20 per cent saying that Malta's situation is better and 12 per cent stating that it is identical. The same pessimism is expressed in relation to the cost of living with 69 per cent of Maltese respondents stating that the situation in Malta is worse than in the other EU member states.
- When asked about energy prices, 66 per cent of the Maltese respondents think that the situation in Malta is worse than in the other EU countries, 9 per cent think that the situation is better, 8 per cent say that the situation is identical while 17 per cent were not able to give an answer.
- Public transport and the environment are two areas which Maltese respondents believe to be inferior in comparison to other EU countries. On the other hand, Maltese respondents rated the Maltese educational system and quality of life in Malta more highly than in the rest of the EU member states. Concerning

quality of life, 48 per cent of respondents said that the quality of life in Malta is better than the average of the other EU countries representing an increase of 18 percentage points over the previous survey.

- The question relating to which issues are the most important facing Malta reveals that rising prices/inflation was ranked first in priority with 34 per cent of Maltese respondents putting it as a top priority concern for Malta. This percentage represents an increase of 6 percentage points over the previous survey. The immigration issue received a percentage of 30 and falls into second place in the ranking of Maltese concerns. Immigration as an issue went down by 15 percentage points in comparison to the previous survey although it must be noted that this survey was conducted in Spring and therefore before the increased arrival of illegal immigrants during the summer months.
- When asked about what they think about the image of the European Union, 55 per cent of Maltese respondents stated that the image of the EU is positive. This represents an increase of 9 percentage points over the previous survey. The negative response of 14 per cent remained the same while 27 per cent gave a neutral answer. In the rest of the EU, 52 per cent said that EU has a positive image, 15 per cent attributed a negative image while 31 per cent gave a neutral answer.
- Generally speaking, the Maltese appear to have remained in favour of Malta's membership of the EU with 51 per cent saying it is a good thing. This represents an increase of six percentage points over the previous survey. On the other hand, respondents who think that it is a bad thing increased marginally from 15 per cent to 17 per cent. 30 per cent of Maltese respondents expressed a neutral opinion. When asked whether they think Malta has benefited from being an EU member state, 66 per cent responded positively, 23 per cent answered negatively while 11 per cent said that they do not know.



- ‘Freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU’ is the most popular answer of Maltese respondents who described the European Union with 56 per cent saying that it is the best way to describe the European Union. For 34 per cent of Maltese respondents, the EU represents ‘peace’ while for 33 per cent the EU is associated with the ‘Euro’. Other popular answers that were given by Maltese respondents are connected to a stronger say in the world (30 per cent), democracy (29 per cent) and economic prosperity (27 per cent).
- Maltese levels of knowledge of the workings of the European Union were measured by this survey with respondents being asked about their awareness of EU institutions. The most well known EU institution among the Maltese is the European Parliament with 92 per cent of respondents saying they have heard of it. This percentage is slightly higher than the EU average of 89 per cent.
- The absolute majority of the Maltese people have trust in all four main EU institutions. Trust in the European Parliament and the European Commission stands at a high rate of 68 per cent. When asked about trust in the European Union, 66 per cent of Maltese respondents said they trust the EU while 25 per cent said that they tend not to trust it. This percentage represents an increase of 11 percentage points over the previous survey.
- 48 per cent of Maltese respondents tend to trust the Maltese parliament, an increase of 5 percentage points over the previous survey. 37 per cent tend not to trust the Maltese parliament while 15 per cent said that they do not know. This signifies an increase of 5 percentage points from the survey conducted in autumn 2006.



- When asked whether certain policy areas should have decisions made at national government level or made jointly with the European Union, Maltese respondents expressed a preference for joint decision making in thirteen of sixteen policy areas while in five policy areas namely taxation, education, health/social welfare, pensions and the fight against unemployment, Maltese respondents expressed a preference for policy decisions to be taken at a national government level.
- In the policy domains of immigration (79 per cent for joint decision-making), competition (61 per cent), energy (70 per cent), support for regions facing economic difficulties (84 per cent), scientific and technological research (85 per cent), consumer protection (53 per cent), agriculture and fisheries (52 per cent), protecting the environment (64 per cent), defense and foreign affairs (81 per cent), fighting terrorism (89 per cent) and fighting crime (62 per cent), the majority of Maltese respondents were in favour of joint decision-making at EU level.
- In the policy domains of health and social welfare (61 per cent in favour of national governments making policy decisions), pensions (68 per cent), the educational system (66 per cent), fighting unemployment (50 per cent), taxation (65 per cent), the majority of Maltese respondents were against joint decision-making at EU level.
- Maltese people's experience of the 2004 enlargement has turned out to be generally positive. 34 per cent of Maltese respondents said that enlargement has been positive just like they had expected. 15 per cent stated that, contrary to their expectations, enlargement has been positive.
- According to this survey, the Maltese public looks favourably at the prospects of a more unified European Union. When Maltese respondents were asked about their opinion on a European Monetary Union with one single currency, the euro, 64 per cent said that they support the euro with 26 per cent against. 10 per cent of respondents said that they do not know. When compared to the results of 6 months ago, Maltese respondents who support the euro increased substantially by 10 percentage points while those against went down by 4 points. In the 27 EU Member States support for the euro stands at 63 per cent.
- When asked about their opinion on a common foreign policy for all the EU Member States, 60 per cent of Maltese respondents voiced their approval, recording a 5 percentage points increase on the previous six months. 21 per cent said they are against while 19 per cent of respondents stated that they do not know.
- Support amongst the Maltese public for further enlargement of the EU to include other countries in future years has decreased by 4 points in the last six months and now stands at 62 per cent with 18 per cent against.
- 56 per cent of Maltese respondents support the concept of a constitution for the European Union. However, this is ten percentage points less than the

average support for the concept of a constitution within the 27 EU Member States.

- When asked about the positive aspects of globalization, the highest score was recorded by the respondents in Denmark with 82 per cent. The country with the second highest percentage is Sweden with 72 per cent followed by Netherlands and Malta both with a scored of 57 per cent. The lowest percentages were recorded by respondents in Greece (28 per cent), Hungary (29 per cent), Romania (32 per cent) and Latvia (33 per cent).
- When Maltese respondents were asked about whether they felt safer since Malta became a Member State of the EU, 62 per cent said that they tend to agree while 30 per cent tend to disagree. Maltese respondents were also asked about their perception relating to the level of economic stability in Malta as a consequence of EU accession. In response, 56 per cent said that they tend to agree and 35 per cent tend to disagree.
- Concerning the perception of political stability in Malta, 54 per cent said that they tend to agree with the statement that they feel more politically stable since joining the EU while 35 per cent tend to disagree. About the issue of whether Malta's voice counts in the EU, 66 per cent of Maltese respondents said that it does while 25 per cent tend to disagree. When Maltese respondents were asked whether Malta's interests are well taken into account within the EU, 57 per cent said that they tend to agree while 27 per cent tend to disagree.
- Survey respondents were asked to give their opinion about the positive effects of European integration. When Maltese respondents were asked to mention a positive consequence of European integration, 47 per cent mentioned peace among the Member States of the EU. The same answer was given by 39 per cent of respondents across the EU Member States. The second most popular answer for Maltese respondents was the free movement of people, goods and services within the EU which was mentioned by 23 per cent. This was, in turn, mentioned by 33 per cent of respondents across the EU 27 EU Member States.
- Almost 7 out of 10 (69%) Europeans express optimism with regards to the future of the European Union, with just under a quarter (24%) saying they are pessimistic.
- Optimism is slightly more prevalent in the 12 new Member States, where the average figure is 74% compared to 68% for the EU15 countries. 69 per cent of Maltese respondents are optimistic about the future of the EU, while 22 per cent are pessimistic.
- 68 per cent of Maltese respondents tend to agree that the EU should have its own Foreign Minister who can be the spokesperson for a common EU foreign policy. This represents a positive increase of 5 percentage points when compared to the results of the previous survey.
- Concerning immigration, 73 per cent of Maltese respondents tend to agree that the EU should have a common immigration policy towards the rest of the

world, an increase of 12 percentage points over the previous six months. 75 per cent of respondents across the EU agree with this idea. 7 per cent of Maltese respondents tend to disagree with a common immigration policy for the EU, a decrease of 12 points from the results of six months ago. 20 per cent of Maltese respondents gave a neutral answer.

- Respondents to the survey were asked whether they tend to agree or disagree that the EU flag stands for something good. Respondents across the EU mostly agreed (78%) that the flag ‘stands for something good’, up 7 points from the 71% recorded in spring 2006. 81 per cent of Maltese respondents agree that the flag is a good symbol for Europe, an increase of 5 points over the results recorded six months ago