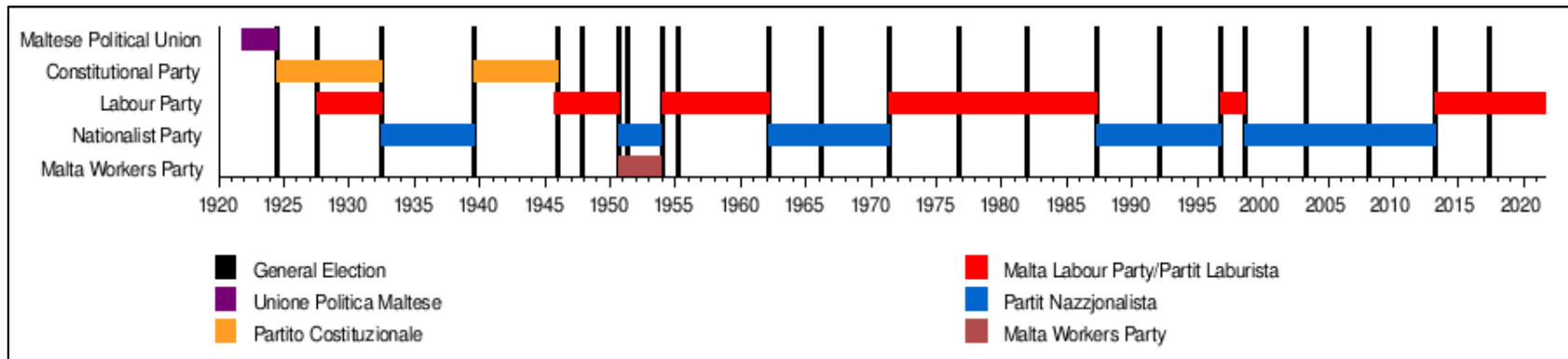


Citizens' Participation

MALTA

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Voting Rights

- Voting right at national level
 - Malta nationals (by naturalisation or by investment)
 - Residence in Malta (but hard to prove)
 - 16+ years old
- Voting right at local level
 - Malta nationals (plus EU nationals, based on reciprocity)
 - Residence in the municipality
 - 16+ years old

Election Right (I)

- National level

- 65 Members of Parliament, with 5 MPs elected from each of 13 districts. Each district (except Gozo) must be numerically within a 5% range of difference.
 - 5-year term (but prerogative of PM to recommend to President to call elections before)
 - Proportional election system, with single transferable vote
 - No party threshold
- Government nominated by Parliament and appointed by the President
 - Small parties never elected to Parliament since 1966 (except for 2 MPs in 2017, following an alliance between NP and a small splinter party)
 - **Just** 10 years of coalition government since self-government in 1921 (1928-33 & 1950-55).

Election Right (II)

- Regional level
 - No regional level in place

(There is a Gozo Regional Development Authority, whose Board is appointed by the Minister for Gozo).

Election Right (III)

- Local level
 - Election of Mayor of the Municipality
 - Candidate with Highest Vote in Local Council Election
 - Election of municipal council
 - Proportional electoral system (single transferable vote)
 - Number of council member (including mayor) varies from 5 to 15 members, depending on the number of registered residents

Election Right (IV)

- Others
 - Election of 6 MEPs to the European Parliament

Voter turnout in national elections

- Consistently above 90%

Hirczy, W. (1995). Explaining near-universal turnout: The case of Malta. *European Journal of Political Research*, 27(2), 255-272.

Direct Democracy (I): Referenda

- SEVEN Referenda since 1870:
- 1870: Eligibility of ecclesiastics for Council of Government (Yes)
- 1956: Proposal for Malta's Integration with United Kingdom (low turnout)
- 1964: Approval of Independence Constitution (Yes)
- 1973: Specificity of Gozo (low turnout)
- 2003: Malta's accession to the European Union (Yes)
- 2011: Divorce (under specific conditions) (Yes)
- 2015: To repeal Derogation that allows Spring Hunting for turtledove and quail (No)

Other forms of citizens' participation

- Consultations in the legal process
 - Government in many cases invites commentary on drafts of legal texts or amendments before finalizing them and forwarding them to Parliament
 - NGOs, stakeholders, institutions, parties, municipalities etc., may be involved
- Ministries are in close contact with stakeholders and voters
- Opinion Surveys are conducted, but can be unreliable
- Demonstrations and protest marches are resorted to, especially with regards to (1) environmental issues; (2) corruption and (3) justice for murdered journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia



Other forms of citizens' participation

- Private Associations, NGOs, etc.
 - Great variety of associations and clubs – including religious (Roman Catholic) organisations at local (parish) level
 - Sports and leisure, culture, social affairs, ecology and nature, etc.
 - Very lively association culture with high acceptance and taken seriously in politics

Media (I)

- Main media

- Print

- Daily newspapers *L-Orizzont* and *In-Nazzjon Taghna* are in MT; *The Times of Malta* and *The Malta Independent* are in EN
 - Sunday Papers: *It-Torca* and *Il-Mument* in MT; *The Sunday Times of Malta* and *The Malta Independent* on Sunday are in EN.
 - *Malta Today* published daily in EN – most investigative and independent.
 - Close relationship between main parties and main trade union and the leading newspapers
 - Some other print media (weekly, monthly) with minor influence

- Radio, TV

- Radio Malta and Public Broadcasting Services owned by the state (since 1973 public)
 - One TV and NET TV are owned by the Labour Party and the Nationalist Party respectively
 - Foreign TV programmes are mainly used

- Online

- Various on-line news services and portals exist; plus online presence of most actors in economy, society, politics, etc – via Facebook posts, Twitter handles, Instagram ...

Media (II)

- Reporters without borders 2021 World Press Freedom Index (<https://rsf.org/en/ranking>)

- Malta ranked on place 81
- Tough Libel Laws (but don't apply to MPs in Parliament)
- Close tie between politics and media
 - Labour Party owns TV Station
 - Nationalist Party owns TV Station, plus daily + weekly paper
 - Main daily/weekly newspaper in MT leans LP
 - Main daily/weekly newspaper in EN leans NP

Ranking	Country
15	Estonia
16	Iceland
20	Luxembourg
23	Liechtenstein
26	Cyprus
39	Andorra
81	Malta
104	Montenegro
-	San Marino

Conclusion: Lessons and Prospects

- In spite of Proportional Representation, Single Parties have often secured Majorities in Parliament.
- Limited separation between Legislative and Executive.
(Recommendations of Greco and Venice Commissions to reduce power of Prime Minister – e.g. in appointing judges and magistrates)
- High voter turnout
- High media diversity in format; but dominated by political interests.