

## **Synthesis of "Nifs Gdid, Nifs Nadif" : AD's manifesto**

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### **Introduction**

Alternattiva Demokratika - The Green Party is for sustainable development, democracy, social justice and civil rights. Malta is the only country in all Europe with less than three political parties in parliament. AD's presence in Parliament will reduce the partisan divide that is suffocating the development of democracy in Malta.

AD forms part of the family of Green Parties in Europe. Together with all Green Parties around the world, we are for the strengthening of democracy and justice. As internationalists, we support the process of European integration within which Malta would be protagonist.

The Green Party is for improved quality of life of Maltese and Gozitans. Quality of life is not only measurable through financial comfort, but also through factors such as peoples' health. Therefore the quality of air, water and food, occupational health and safety, free time and the right to express and recreate oneself are very important for high quality of life.

As Greens we believe that everyone - women, men, children, youth, the elderly, people with different beliefs, people from different social classes, people with different sexual orientations and race, the disabled - should fully participate in a democratic society. Social inclusion is a key for better quality of life. Therefore, economic, social and educational policy should promote social inclusion.

Democracy should not only be equated with one's right to vote every five years. Democracy should be an everyday experience. This could be enhanced through the participation of civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in different aspects of life.

People should be given the opportunity to develop and contribute, and development should be brought about through meritocracy not favouritism. Professionalism and efficiency should be the rule not the exception, and for this reason continuous education and training should be ensured.

Transparency and accountability should be the guiding light of all those in power. This implies the fundamental right of information to all citizens.

Alternattiva Demokratika's manifesto Nifs Gdid Nifs Nadif is made up of 445 concrete proposals.

***The following is a synthesis of the major points.***

### **For a stable, transparent and responsible Government**

Once elected in parliament, Alternattiva Demokratika will bring about a breath of fresh air, reducing partisan pique and ensuring that the rights of Maltese and Gozitans will be guaranteed through meritocracy and not through favouritism or political patronage.

AD - The Green Party is ready to act as the backbone of a coalition government which will not only secure EU membership for Malta but will also ensure the full implementation and enforcement of EU directives.

Alternattiva Demokratika is committed to act as a catalyst of democratic reforms in the country while

being loyal to the government in which it will form part.

We will work to ensure that after the election Malta will no longer be divided between winners and losers but would become a country where everyone's contribution is recognised in Malta's best interests.

### **For a Government with a backbone**

Alternattiva Demokratika believes in equal rights. In parliament, AD will ensure that no Government will succumb to the pressure of arrogant lobby groups such as hunters and trappers, illegal boathouse owners and certain contractors who act as if they are above the law.

### **For Malta's membership with the European Union, for Malta's neutrality**

Alternattiva Demokratika believes that EU membership is in Malta's best interests for an effective guarantee of a high quality of life while enhancing Malta's neutral status.

Through EU membership Malta will have a more credible economy – thus attracting more investment, increasing exports and creating more job opportunities. Through adaptive upgrading and EU incoming funds, improvements in the quality of life will be brought about through higher economic, environmental and social standards.

Consumers will stand to gain from products and services of higher quality and cheaper prices for various - though not all - products. Workers will stand to gain from more rights such as occupational health and safety. Maltese and Gozitans will also gain through a better environment, especially in areas such as waste management, quality of air and water and sewage treatment. Maltese and Gozitans shall have more voice within Maltese and European institutions by means of which we can enjoy the same benefits as our European counterparts. Malta should embrace active neutrality and serve as an active agent for world peace through commercial, cultural and social ties that safeguard human rights and the environment.

AD agrees with Malta's active participation in all levels of co-operation with the exclusion of military co-operation. Such a policy can only be achieved through active neutrality within the context of Malta's constitutional neutrality. Malta's constitution should reflect the present situation and declare Malta as a nuclear-free zone. States that send warships to visit Malta should declare whether such ships are carrying nuclear armaments. Ships that are powered by nuclear reactors should also be denied from entering Maltese waters. Malta should remain free from military bases.

### **For development that protects today's and tomorrow's economy**

Alternattiva Demokratika is for sustainable development, giving priority to the quality of life of Maltese and Gozitans and protecting local communities, agriculture and the coast.

AD's economic vision is based on the initiative and creativity of all Maltese and Gozitans, resulting in fair distribution of wealth. Malta's economy should act as an export-oriented hub with high environmental, social and economic standards.

The state's role in the economy should be that of regulator, ensuring that environmental, social and economic standards are maintained and that fair competition exists, ensuring consumer rights and employment opportunities. The state should ensure that basic services such as health, education, telecommunications, public transport and energy are guaranteed to all citizens, are of highest quality and are affordable to all.

Environmental protection should act as a motor of Malta's economy through new initiatives in areas

such as waste management.

Agriculture and fisheries should be considered integral parts of a modern and efficient economy. Restructuring in line with EU regulations and co-financed by EU funds should be brought about. Malta's rural development plan should ensure high standards, and should also focus on areas such as agro-tourism. Farmers should be given the opportunity to own their land in order to enhance agricultural investment.

### **For Civil Society participation**

Alternattiva Demokratika believes that civil society organisations such as environmental NGOs, local councils and consumers' organisations should be represented in the decision making processes of public entities.

The Malta Environment and Planning Authority should have a more representative board which also includes environmental NGOs and local councils, replacing political party representatives.

The Malta Council for Economic and Social Development should further increase representation and include civil society representatives from the environmental, gender-related, pensioners and consumer rights areas among others.

Further participation of civil society organisations will ensure that the expertise, energies and dedication of the members of these organisations will be beneficial to the whole country.

Local Councils should promote further democracy and civil society participation, while meeting the aspirations and needs of local communities to ensure a high quality of life.

### **For equality and social inclusion**

Alternattiva Demokratika is against all forms of discrimination. Social exclusion results in a great waste of human potential. The role of a progressive state is to ensure that nobody suffers discrimination because of class, gender, sexual orientation, ability or ethnicity and that everyone has an equal chance of fulfilling their potential.

Adult and lifelong education is one of our priorities. Within the educational system, mixed ability classes at primary level and the gradual and well-planned introduction of comprehensive schooling at secondary level should be introduced.

To address gender inequality, affirmative action in those areas where women are still under-represented is needed. The Green Party is also making proposals to ensure that the participation of women in economic and social life is facilitated. These include an investment in day care centres for children, through public-private partnerships.

All efforts should be made to ensure the inclusion of the disabled. Public areas should be accessible to the disabled.

Refugees who are recognised according to criteria established by the United Nations, should not depend on charity and should be given an automatic right to work.

Gays and lesbians should be protected from sexual harassment and discrimination at the place of work and in the educational system.

Discrimination against popular culture and the artistic expression of sub cultures, ethnic minorities and expressions of counter culture should be done away with. Access to the media and cultural venues should be more democratic and less elitist.

Further Ombudsmen should be in place in institutions where power may be exercised in an arbitrary manner.

Pension reform should be brought about. AD is proposing setting up of a pension fund, administered by the social partners represented in the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development, the Auditor General and a private and professional management to guarantee efficiency.

### **For fair tax**

Alternattiva Demokratika is proposing that the tax burden on income and the economic initiative of the Maltese and Gozitan people should be lightened. On the other hand the tax burden should be shifted on activities harming the environment and wasting our limited resources.

Companies and Businesses involved in sustainable economic activities like recycling, the sale and importation of eco friendly products, the provision of eco friendly transport services and those companies whose premises use alternative energy, should benefit from tax incentives. VAT on products which harm the environment should be higher than 15% while VAT on eco-friendly products should be lower than the present rate.

The non-taxable tax ceiling should increase to Lm 4,000 for single persons and Lm 5,000 for married couples. The limit on part time work which is taxed at the fixed rate of 15% should be increased to Lm 4,000.

Efforts to control tax evasion should be strengthened.

### **For effective measures against hunting**

Alternattiva Demokratika strives for the end of massacres of birds, and is therefore for the abolition of hunting in spring, in line with the Berne Convention and the EU Birds Directive. All Maltese and Gozitans should have the right to enjoy Malta's countryside.

Nature reserves and more hunting-free areas should be introduced progressively.

Animal welfare should be protected by law. Animals should be protected from all forms of cruelty and ill-treatment.

### **For sustainable tourism**

Alternattiva Demokratika is for serious planning in the tourist industry, through which more jobs can be created, within the context of environmental sustainability, the rights of local communities and civil society participation and consultation.

Increased efforts to encourage more quality tourism should be embarked on, in order that less harm is done to the environment and that tourist inflows are spread more evenly throughout the year. This includes increased efforts and incentives in order that Malta would attract more tourism related to sports, culture, concerts related to various forms of music and youth culture, cinema festivals, Mediterranean activities, museum circuits and others. Gozo and various areas in Malta should be promoted as centres of eco-tourism, cultural tourism agro-tourism and other forms of tourism which promote its unique features.

### **For public transport reform**

Alternattiva Demokratika believes that public transport should be improved. At the same time private companies should be allowed to operate in this sector.

The state should provide a decent, disciplined and punctual service which caters for better times and for more routes than the present one.

Liberalisation would bring about more choice for users, catering for more local and more specific needs such as panoramic routes, transport to entertainment venues and shuttle transport services on a local or district level

### **For rent law reform**

Alternattiva Demokratika is for fair and just rent laws and incentives to encourage property rent.

The liberalisation of the rent sector would increase the supply of rented dwellings. The liberalisation of this sector might also result in greater choice and a wider range of prices for the consumer.

In order to ensure a greater supply of rented properties and discourage land hoarding, fiscal incentives should also be offered to those land owners who introduce new properties in the rent market within development zones. Fiscal disincentives could be introduced on those land owners who keep properties vacant.

Government should ensure that no-one is left behind and should intervene to help those in need.

### **For better quality of life**

Alternattiva Demokratika will bring about responsible policies on monitoring and enforcement in order that air, sea, noise and food pollution may be curtailed and people's health would be safeguarded.

Alternattiva Demokratika will ensure that Malta abides the EU directives through which a better environment will be brought about especially in areas such as waste management, quality of air and water and sewage treatment.

Consumers should be protected through legislation and should always be fully informed on products and services.

*The full text of 'Nifs Gdid, Nifs Nadif' may be read at <http://alternattiva.cjb.net> or <http://www.alternattiva.org.mt>*