



Electoral Manifesto

Partit Nazzjonalista

GENERAL ELECTION 2013





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Introduction

This is the Nationalist Party's electoral manifesto for 2013. It outlines the gist, spirit, political principles and commitment of the full electoral programme, which will be published separately.

We have called it A SAFE AND SECURE FUTURE – WORK, HEALTH AND EDUCATION, reflecting the responsible choices and considered decisions which the Nationalist Party has made in changing Malta for the better, and which we hope to continue to do with the permission of the electorate, in the five crucial years ahead.

The people who govern a country take hundreds of decisions every day, some of them small and others of major significance, but all of them, individually, collectively or incrementally, shaping the nature of life in that country. When you choose a political party to govern Malta, you do so because you trust it to take the right decisions on your behalf, to maintain or improve your quality of life and to keep Malta safe, stable and secure.

Five years are long enough to make or break education, business, work opportunities and healthcare. Just as a lot of positive changes can be made in five years, so a lot of negative change can

happen, the consequence of the poor decision-making skills which, had the electorate permitted them to come to fruition, would have seen Malta locked out of the European Union and in dire straits today.

Foresight is of the essence, because in these situations, the wisdom of hindsight is useless. Hindsight will not undo the damage done by bad or irresponsible decisions taken by those who see politics as a game, with the lives of individuals as chess-pieces and an 'all is fair in love and war' attitude to the catastrophic results of their experimentation.

The Nationalist Party respects your right to know what it stands for. We do not ask you to vote for us without telling you what we plan to do and how we plan to do it. We do not say 'trust us and then you'll see'. Those who ask for your vote must be clear and unequivocal in telling you what they plan to do with your trust, the economic and social policy choices they have made and the candidates they are putting forward for your vote – and this even before publication of the formal electoral programme.

This is who we are. This is what we stand for.

Last November, the Nationalist Party's Executive Committee approved a document called '**This is what we stand for. This is how we make it happen**' (mychoice.pn/docs/gheruq.pdf). It lays out the thinking which underpins the Nationalist Party's policy-development and decision-making, built around the guiding principles of the individual and the family, personal liberty, responsibility, solidarity, the devolution and dispersal of power away from central government, open dialogue, trust, a sense of direction and a positive, clear identity. Unfortunately, the Labour Party does not have a similar document or recorded public statement of what it stands for, despite asking people for their vote.

These are the core beliefs of the Nationalist Party, the founding principles of all our policy-development and our decisions.

1. The government should not interfere in people's lives or believe that it has some kind of monopoly on the truth.
2. The government is not the master who controls your life. It is there to create a fertile

ground in which opportunities multiply and people are able to thrive by using their own initiative to develop their full potential.

3. Power should be devolved and dispersed away from central government in a process of constant and ceaseless dialogue with civil society, electors, employers and representatives of employees, and non-governmental organisations, and through their inclusion in decision-making which affects them and those around them.
4. Tolerance of differences, respect for the individual, and solidarity with all those who need support are fundamental to the political philosophy of the Nationalist Party. We do not practise these beliefs selectively in the name of opportunism. They inform all our choices and decisions.
5. Personal relationships are precious, and it is a given that people should be free to choose their own way of life. The function of the state is to legislate only where necessary, so as to make clear the rights, obligations

and interests of those involved. It was the Nationalist Party in government which legislated, in the early 1990s, to make the status of women equal to that of men in marriage.

Prior to that, husbands had sole control and decision-making rights over communal property, children, the family finances, the marital home and even to a certain extent matters which pertained to their wives.

During the 16 years the Labour Party was in government, between 1971 and 1987, it did nothing to change this unfortunate state of extreme discrimination against women in marriage, despite changing social circumstances in a greatly changed world.

Similarly, it is the duty of the state, in these different times, to provide a legal framework for cohabitation outside marriage in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships.

6. We consider the family to be the essential building-block of society, and we will continue to develop policies aimed at giving families the strength, support and structures they need to thrive and survive in an ever-changing world. People are now marrying later than they would have done a generation ago, because of the life-enhancing benefits of work or a career and other goals which

improve their situation. Other people choose not to marry at all, and might instead live with somebody or choose to raise another family after divorce. Maltese men and women now continue to live in Malta after marrying non-Maltese, something they were not always able to do before. The social and psychological barriers against same-sex couples living together are gone.

The Nationalist Party wants the best for all these families, all these couples. Where there are children or other vulnerable persons, we are particularly concerned to see that the best is done for them, that they get the best care possible within the home and that there is no abuse.

7. To this end, the Nationalist Party will work to strengthen children's rights, with special attention given to children at risk, those who are the victims of a difficult family situation. Children have the right to be heard in society, to participate in decisions and situations which affect their lives, to make their views known. They have a right to proper schooling and opportunities which will help them make something of their lives.

The Nationalist Party is committed to the civil liberties of all, whatever the nature of their relationships. It will seek to ensure that those



liberties are safeguarded, and that where a couple wishes to enter into a relationship recognised at law, with attendant rights and obligations, they are able to do so by mutual consent.

8. The Nationalist Party remains committed to policies which strengthen the family unit in an ever-changing social environment. Widely varying personal choices have made for a great diversity of experience and for a society that is nowhere near as homogenous as it was a generation ago. The sole, but crucial, role of the state in this situation is to ensure that the vulnerable are protected from abuse or exploitation.

We are Maltese and European

Nine years after Malta joined the European Union, the people of Malta feel themselves to be an integral part of Europe, as though this has always been the case.

And yet, just 10 years ago, Joseph Muscat and the Labour Party were doing all they could to ensure that we would stay out of Europe, and that you would be denied European Union citizenship and all the benefits and privileges that come with it. Joseph Muscat builds his credentials as a European liberal on his vote against EU membership, on his campaign to keep Malta out of the European Union. Now, he is accompanied by a new deputy leader

who does exactly the same thing, who has been put to the electorate as the liberal and European face of the Labour Party but who, by his own admission in a recent interview, voted No to EU membership for Malta. This is the inherent contradiction in the Labour Party and its politicians: they are at war with their own beliefs.

In the last nine years, Malta has made a huge success of EU membership and every citizen has reaped the benefits in one way or another, directly or indirectly, whether they voted for EU membership or, like Joseph Muscat and Louis Grech, voted against. We have joined the Eurozone and adapted easily to the use of the euro. We have joined Schengen and move about freely. Malta has every interest in remaining at the heart of Europe and not isolated on the fringes.

Europe itself has reached the crossroads of whether to have more or less integration among member states. The Nationalist Party considers Malta to be best off in an increasingly united and stronger Europe. The years that lie immediately ahead will bring important decisions in Europe, on fiscal and political integration. In this scenario, the Nationalist Party will:

- work to keep Malta at the heart of Europe and participating fully in all decision-making that affects the future of the European Union;
- work to maintain and build upon the great respect that Malta has won among European institutions,

by ensuring that our country's representation in those institutions is the best possible;

- ensure that Malta's presidency of the European Union in 2017 is carried out with gravitas, competence and dignity;
- continue to conduct all negotiations with reason, logic and civilised discourse and not threats, false shows of strength or dog-in-the-manger displays such as those which dragged Malta's name through the international mud and isolated us, in the years 1971 to 1987, and then caused the country further embarrassment in 1996 with the withdrawal of our application to join the European Union;
- negotiate the best possible financial deal for Malta under the upcoming EU budget for 2014 to 2020;
- allocate, once again, 10 per cent of the total funds to Gozo;
- continue to contribute actively to the development of EU policy in those sectors which are of specific interest to Malta, like tourism, immigration and the Mediterranean;
- work towards an improved relationship between the European Union and the states which underwent tumultuous change during the Arab Spring of 2011 - Libya, Egypt and Tunisia - with a view to helping them achieve social and economic prosperity as soon as possible.

In the field of domestic policy, the Nationalist Party commits itself as follows.

- We shall continue to make responsible choices and carefully considered decisions which keep **Malta's finances** on a sound footing. That is the basis on which work opportunities can continue to grow, while more investment is made in health and education, and people's lives continue to improve overall.
- We shall continue to place at the forefront of our policy-making the objective of **more and better work for all**, with improved earnings, job satisfaction and opportunities for advancement.
- We shall continue to invest heavily in **free healthcare**, medicines and hospital facilities, the 'pharmacy of your choice' system, a new hospital dedicated to the care and treatment of cancer patients, and the training of doctors and nurses.
- We shall move towards a **reduction in taxes** year on year and towards more fiscal incentives which encourage and reward work by leaving people with more of what they earn.
- We shall maintain and improve the Nationalist Party's reputation for giving **the highest priority to learning**, with free education for all at every level, investment in new schools, classroom equipment, teacher-training, university facilities and courses, and scholarships for overseas study. Training and a sound education system are the spurs to Malta's growth, and make that growth possible.

- We will **not take decisions which are environmentally irresponsible** for the sake of political convenience or opportunism, the consequences of which decisions generations of Maltese will have to face for many years afterwards. We will respect your right to live in a clean and pleasant environment, free from the factors which can cause illness and discomfort.

There are many different sectors in society, many different stakeholders. A responsible government must plan for them all, not by promising everything to everyone when delivering on those promises would be unwise, irresponsible, damaging or impossible, but by developing and implementing holistic policies built on a sound financial footing. The Nationalist Party will not promise the moon

to all and sundry, leaving you to clean up the mess with new taxes. With the Nationalist Party, you know where you are, because it is tried and tested. We have made the right and responsible choices that have led to job creation and better income.

We remain committed to the individual as the centre and pivot of all of our policy-making, which is why we prize democracy, social justice and solidarity. That we see the state as being there for the benefit of the people, rather than the people for the benefit of the state, is the chief distinguishing factor between the Nationalist Party and the Labour Party. This has enabled us to consistently take the right decisions for the positive development of the country, and which will ensure that we continue, with the permission of the electorate, to build a safe and secure future for you and for the society which we share.



Sound finances are the basis of sustainable policy

When you choose a political party to govern the country, you do so because that party is the one you trust to take the right decisions to improve your standard of living. Every day, the people in government take many decisions which affect your work, your healthcare, your income, and your education. If one or more of those decisions is the wrong one, then you will be affected to a lesser or greater extent. If the decision is a major or significant one, and it is wrong, then there are grave consequences for the entire country.

That is why choosing a government is not a matter to be taken lightly, why your vote should be based not on peripheral issues but on the main, fundamental consideration of which party has the better track record in decision-making on major issues like EU membership, VAT and introduction of the euro, on which party has the better policies.

So far we do not know what the Labour Party's current policies on health, education, work and well-being are. We know what those policies *were*.

The Nationalist Party commits itself to growing the economy further so that more jobs are created

through increased investment and a buoyant internal and external market for products and services.

We are committed to continued investment in education, for the growth and development of Malta's skills base and for the fulfilment of individual potential.

We shall carry on investing in healthcare, which will remain free of charge.

We shall further develop support systems and networks for vulnerable and at-risk members of society through the considered provision of social services. One example is the way in which thousands of households within the right income eligibility criteria have their water and electricity bills subsidised, while thousands of others have benefited from financial incentives to invest in alternative energy generation, with the attendant environmental and economic positives which this brings.

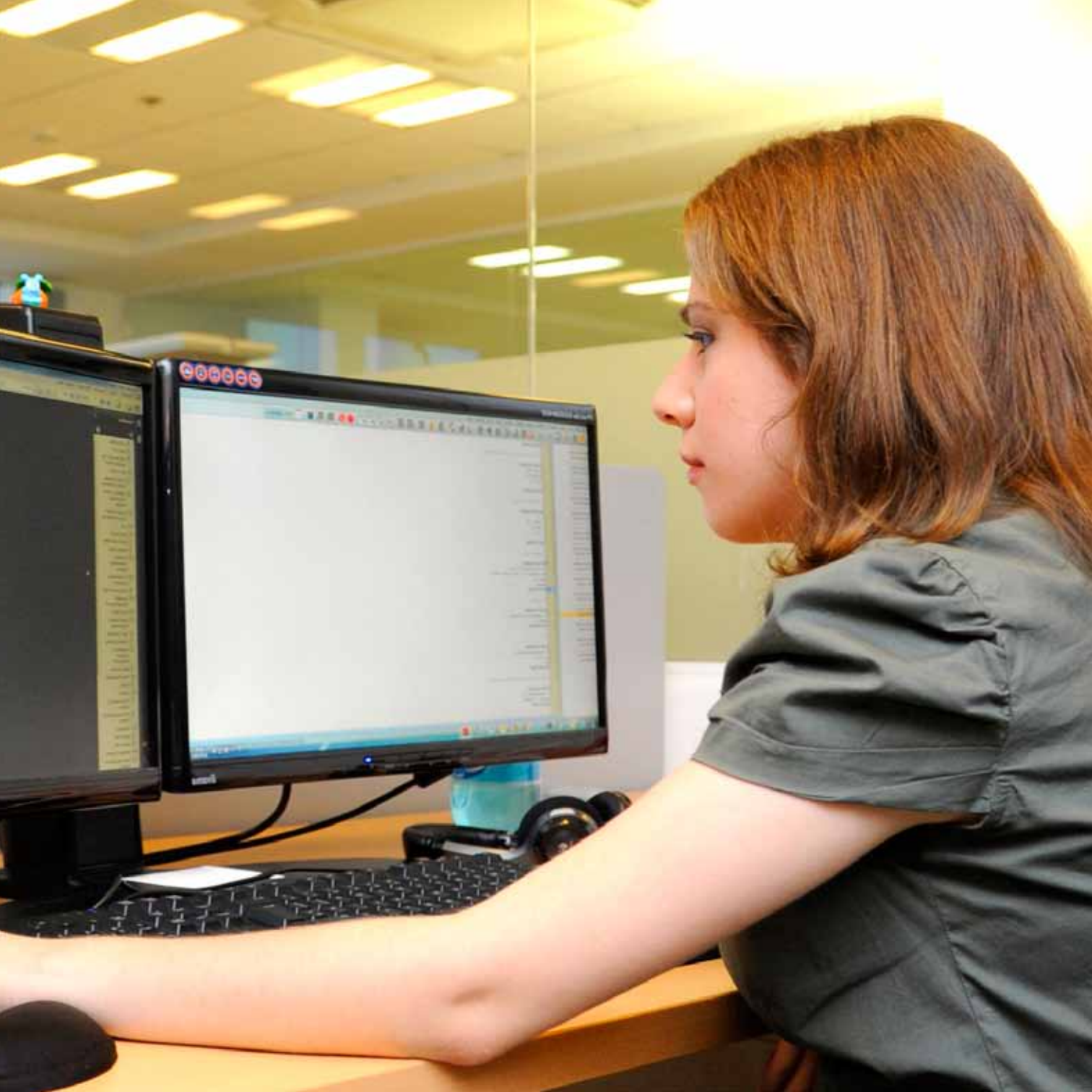
Over the last five years, the Nationalist Party in government, through a series of sound decisions taken at the right time, has set the scene for

the creation of 20,000 jobs. More people are in gainful employment now than at any other point in the history of Malta. This would not have been possible were the country's finances not in good order, a factor which also allowed us to continue cutting down on taxes. Sound finances are also what allowed us to invest so much in education and healthcare, at a time when governments throughout Europe and beyond have been slashing spending on these very crucial sectors.

All of this can be lost or imperilled through deterioration in Malta's finances, brought about by clumsy decision-making or irresponsible and opportunistic short-termism. Just one or two bad decisions in key areas can destroy within a matter of months much that has been built over years

through careful work and effort, shifting the country from a sound financial footing to record debt, unemployment, economic stagnation and rafts of new taxes.

The Nationalist Party has a strong, positive association with work, health and education. The Labour Party's association with these three key sectors is negative. This makes choosing Labour to improve those very sectors a high-risk strategy. With the Nationalist Party, it's no risk at all, because you know where you stand and you know the party's track record, competence and commitment.



Work

The Nationalist Party declares its commitment to developing the right environment for the creation of more work opportunities, with better pay and more potential for individual growth

These last five years have tested the world economy in a way that has not happened since World War II. The world has experienced the greatest and most far-reaching economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. States have gone bankrupt, powerful banks and financial corporations have collapsed, and major companies have made thousands of people redundant. It is in this context that the Nationalist Party in government has had to keep Malta stable and secure, even as more problems grew with the turbulence in North Africa. There were serious challenges within the country itself, too, and within the government in the form of difficulties created by some individuals. But

sound economic and policy decisions won the day by keeping Malta's economy stable and employment high – making Malta something of an exception among EU member states that have been subjected to austerity measures and which are crippled by escalating unemployment and slashed health and education budgets.

In the last five years, the Nationalist Party in government has enabled the creation of 20,000 jobs, made it possible for 5,000 existing jobs, threatened by fall-out from the international crisis, to be saved, increased the minimum wage by €1,000 a year, and cut taxes. In the last five years, 20,000 people graduated from the University of Malta, from MCAST and from other training colleges. More women have entered the workforce, and more people have chosen to carry on working while still collecting their pension. All this is possible because of increasingly varied and numerous work opportunities, the result of sound policy decisions.

The Nationalist Party thinks in terms of work to serve the needs of people, rather than of people to serve the needs of industries. Again, this is a

fundamental difference between the Nationalist Party and the Labour Party. We see work as being the means to self-improvement and financial independence. We see jobs as being for people, rather than people being for jobs. We will continue to encourage more and better work by reducing income tax for medium to low earners, for women returning to work after raising children, and for those whose children are in childcare centres, sports schools and private schools.

Labour sees improvement through freezing wages and has not learned through experience. The Nationalist Party knows through experience that the best way to generate income for the individual and for the country is by developing and implementing sound policies and then literally letting people get on with it.

We commit ourselves to economic policies based on the following principles:

- more and better work with improved pay;
- improved wages, including the minimum wage, through economic growth;
- reduced taxes whenever and wherever possible, and increased commitment in the fight against tax evasion;
- improved conditions of work with concomitant engagement against unstable work;
- retraining opportunities for those who wish to seek work in another sector;
- incentive schemes for entrepreneurs in manufacturing, tourism and services, and for small business operators;
- practical assistance to parents of young children, allowing them to work, with more childcare centres near home and in the workplace;
- cutting down on red tape and bureaucracy which hinders business operations.

We aim to ensure that:

- at the end of the week, month or year you keep more of what you earn;
- at the end of your working life, you will have a good pension on which you can live comfortably;
- care facilities for elderly people are modern, personal and respect the dignity of the individual;
- social services are made available to those most in need, while the fight against abuse goes on;
- the development of policies for the integration of disabled people into society and the workplace will continue with renewed vigour, creating life-enhancing opportunities and real inclusion.

Health

Healthcare is an absolute priority for the Nationalist Party, with €1 million spent on healthcare *every day* in the last five years. The fight against cancer continues, with anti-cancer medicines like Herceptin now included in the list of drugs given free to patients. A new hospital for cancer patients is being built

Prevention is better than cure, and over the last five years, we have worked on campaigns against smoking, for better eating habits, more exercise and general fitness. We have created spaces where people can relax outdoors, and have invested heavily in cleaner seas through sewage treatment and other anti-pollution measures.

We commit ourselves to building healthcare policy based on the following:

- the best possible healthcare, free of charge to patients;
- the addition of more medicines to the growing list of those already provided free of charge;
- the implementation of the Pharmacy of Your Choice system;
- measures to keep down the price of medicines to the consumer;
- a new cancer treatment centre;
- a new rehabilitation hospital;
- ongoing training for healthcare professionals, post graduation;
- prevention and primary care are our priorities;
- more healthcare services in the community;
- financial incentives for those look after elderly relatives at home;
- assistance to voluntary organisations to set up and run 'care in the community' programmes for elderly people;

- new residential homes for the elderly, built by the state, bought from the private sector, or operated through public-private partnership;
- improved 'care in the community' for mental health patients, and better investment in mental healthcare in public hospitals;
- improved availability of healthcare to the disabled and the chronically ill;
- continued investment in disease prevention programmes, including early screening for cancer in high-risk categories like breast cancer and colon cancer;
- extended vaccination programmes;
- continued information campaigns on behavioural and dietary changes to avoid illness and disease.



Education

Education is at the root of personal development. It is the best tool for the creation of work opportunities. With improved education, people make decisions that have a positive effect on their quality of life and their health. This makes for a more mature and responsible society, with greater social justice

Education is an integral part of the Nationalist Party's vision for society. This has always been the party that promotes education, invests heavily in it, and opens up educational opportunities to all. The Nationalist Party in government has, over the years, brought about a silent revolution in the field of education.

Today, 83 per cent of school-leavers go on to further education or training. The Nationalist Party in government has built one new school every

year, created the Junior College, Higher Secondary and MCAST, developed the catering-and-tourism college, ITS, and opened up the university campus to thousands of students every year.

We commit ourselves to building education policies based on the following:

- the best possible education, at all levels, with priority given to this sector when planning the country's budget;
- education will remain free of charge;
- more childcare centres and kindergartens will be opened and staffed by trained carers and assistants;
- holistic and formative education at primary and secondary level;
- a new school building every year;
- more investment in MCAST, with the completion of the second phase of the new campus;
- more investment in ITS, with the building of a new campus;
- more investment in the University of Malta, strengthening it for increased student intake;

- maintenance of the stipend system, with a particular focus on students with special needs;
- more investment in scholarships, especially at postgraduate level;
- financial help for those parents whose children are in childcare centres while they work;
- the improved inclusion of children with special needs into mainstream schooling, through the provision of more learning support assistants;
- cooperation with the Malta Union of Teachers, with educators and with teachers themselves, to ensure that training is constant and that they are equipped with the best possible tools for doing their job well;
- better access to lifelong learning, so that anyone, no matter what age, can take courses which improve quality of life;
- the cultivation of creativity, research and innovation.





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XOGHOL ★ SAHHA ★ EDUKAZZJONI

With the Nationalist Party, your future is stable.

Our lives develop through a series of choices, our own and those made by others, which affect us. Those choices can change our lives for the better or change them for the worse.

It is no different with the life of a country. Malta has gone through major changes which have made it a better place to be. Different choices made by Labour in government would not have had the same positive results. You want a safe and secure future and peace of mind, and it is the Nationalist Party which can guarantee you get that.

We have a consistent track record in making the sort of choices which change Malta exponentially for the better, not least our policies on Malta in the European Union, which have developed from a firm political conviction that Malta's place is in the EU and not outside it. This is significantly different from the Labour Party's default position of 'now we are in the European Union we might as well accept it even though we fought against it', a negative position that can only make for a negative and half-hearted policy approach.

The Nationalist Party's policies have consistently been rooted in a commitment to liberty, democracy and free speech, while those of the Labour Party have been rooted in the desire for more control and a belief that the state should not allow the people too much freedom because you never know what they might do with it.

The Nationalist Party views politics as a service to the people, built on dialogue and interaction. The extensive and positive changes which the government has brought about over the last five years have been the result of that dialogue and interaction, and did not come about by coincidence.

We have long understood that policies for the common good cannot be built on populism and on populist measures. Policy cannot be built on a 'make do and mend' approach of keeping different special-interest groups happy with promises that cannot be met without causing damage to the social or economic fabric.

Policy has to be built within the framework of a holistic vision, with an over-riding plan and a clear

set of goals. The former approach – which is the Labour Party's – cannot but make for chaos, with no clear vision or set of goals. The latter approach, which is ours, ensures that policy-making is a vast jigsaw puzzle where all the disparate pieces fit together to form a clear picture.

We do not claim to have a monopoly on the truth and have never done so. We have always looked for how best to attain the common good in changing circumstances. The history of the Nationalist Party, and the experience of successive Nationalist governments, show that the party has been ever ready to move with the times, but always in the interest of the common good and through firm conviction, and never in the name of shallow opportunism.

Malta is now a free and democratic country; the Maltese are EU citizens. Maltese society is increasingly European in outlook, cherishing civil liberties, championing the vulnerable, encouraging

the exchange of ideas especially through contemporary technology, and clearly separating church and state.

With these major development milestones behind it, the Nationalist Party remains committed to further life-enhancing changes, with better work, education and healthcare, and more opportunities for people of all generations.

It is the Nationalist Party which can offer you a safe and secure future with the change you want: managed change, planned change, the kind of change that makes your life better, and not the sort of change that comes through shocks, surprises, management by crisis and poor decisions. Over the last five years we have worked to bring about the change that you want. If you choose to place your trust in us again, we are determined to continue changing Malta for the better, so that you and yours are able to lead the lives you want to, if you are not doing so already.

The choice is yours.



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Verżjoni bil-Malti



English version