

ELECTORAL PROGRAMME OF THE NATIONALIST PARTY 2013

# Another Quality Leap

WORK HEALTH EDUCATION



ELECTORAL PROGRAMME OF THE NATIONALIST PARTY 2013

# Another Quality Leap

W O R K   H E A L T H   E D U C A T I O N



125 proposals  
for another quality leap  
in the coming 5 years



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Verżjoni bil-Malti  
English version

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# Another quality leap

**On 9 March you will be choosing between a clear direction that created wealth or a change to a direction that is unknown. The choice will be between policies that have been tried and tested in difficult times and which created more and better jobs and policies that promise everything to everyone but that, in practice, drive the economy into the wall and lose jobs.**

With the right choice, you will benefit, others will benefit and the country will move forward. With the wrong choice, you will suffer, others will suffer and the country will grind to a halt.

The choice is clear. It is a crucial choice. And it is a choice that is now in your hands.

Our country has made great strides forward.

Next year we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of our independence. We have come a long way since then! From a colony we became an independent country. From a country where democracy was at risk we are now a free and democratic country. From an isolated country we are now respected European partners. The Nationalist Party is proud to have been at the forefront of these developments side by side with the Maltese people.

The time has now come for another quality leap.

This is our programme for a stronger Malta, a country that offers more opportunities for everyone, a nation proud of its history, that is capable of taking the next step so that

together we can shape our future on a sound and stable footing for our children and our children's children.

Our programme for another quality leap is unique because it is inspired from your ideas, your wishes and your aspirations. This programme is the result of a wide consultation process we had with you.

You sent us ideas and we would like to thank you. We have analysed them. And we have merged a number of them with our own ideas and produced a programme with which our country can make another quality leap.

There are two reasons why we have chosen to face the electorate with this kind of programme:

- Firstly, because with the Nationalist Party you know where you stand and you know where you are going. You do not need to read our electoral programme to know who we are and where we come from. With us you know that you can expect more job opportunities and the highest standards in health and education. So this programme gave us the possibility of coming up with new, innovative and exciting proposals, not a repetition of what you already know.
- Secondly, because we wanted to reflect your aspirations better. These are YOUR ideas which YOU believe YOUR government should deliver. Thanks to the contact we have had with civil society organisations and with social partners and thanks to other initiatives which gave us the opportunity to meet a





significant number of people, we received a substantial number of proposals. We chose those the best ideas which, at the same time, reflect our principles and policies.

So this programme is truly yours because you made it happen. We gave you the opportunity to come up with ideas and you seized the opportunity to submit proposal for a SOUND AND STABLE FUTURE with open arms.

The Partit Nazzjonalista knows that it does not have a monopoly on the truth. Even though we welcomed your ideas we have

done our utmost to recommend the best proposals. We have no doubt that in time other proposals, which are just as good, will come. This is the beauty of a country built on diversity. The Partit Nazzjonalista is committed to consider and take on these proposals as its own, so long as they conform to its principles and are in the true interest of the country.

If you vote PN, YOU will be making sure that YOUR ideas are realised.

YOU will be making another quality leap for a stable future.



Lawrence Gonzi  
Leader of the Nationalist Party



# Your party Your values, our values

A short while ago the PN adopted a document entitled *Our Roots* in which we clearly state our beliefs and how we put them into practice. This document is our passport because in it you get a good idea of our roots, what we stand for and our vision for the 21st century. *Our Roots* can be view in its entirety on the site <http://mychoice.pn/docs/gheruq.pdf>

Our roots can be explained through 10 core values and principles which are the party's fingerprints and you can recognise the party in each and every one of them.

1. **Our inspiration** from Christian values
2. **The individual and the family** at centre of our work
3. **Freedom** which is indispensable
4. **Responsibility** in the decisions we all take
5. **Solidarity** always and everywhere
6. **Subsidiarity** as the State should not interfere in every aspect of our lives.
7. **Dialogue** is intrinsic to who we are
8. **Trust** in yourself and in the country
9. **Direction**, because we have a vision and we know where we are going
10. **Our identity** which makes us proud of our country because we believe in it

A government lead by PN reflects these values in every political sphere.

## A party of change, a change that you want

PN is the party of change. The change that you want. PN has brought change for the better.

PN has the experience to continue fostering this change as it has already overcome significant challenges in running of our country. PN has a vision to lead because it has direction. With us you know where you are going. PN has the energy to continue bringing change because it is a dynamic party with a team of candidates that is always evolving.

## The economy

Keeping the country's finances on sound and stable footing will be the biggest challenge that we will face in the coming 5 years in the economic sphere. We will continue to strengthen our competitive edge so that our economy may continue to grow in a sustainable manner. We shall also continue taking responsible decisions.

Our vision is of an economy which is dynamic and open to competition and overcomes the challenges of globalisation. A competitive economy that gives space to the private sector, that always seeks to diversify, that keeps taxation levels low and that generates investment, work and wealth from which everyone can benefit.

This way of doing politics has already yielded economic stability, peace of mind and has opened new economic opportunities in areas such as pharmaceuticals, aviation, the digital economy, creativity and financial services.



This political approach has enabled us to keep sound public finances, as a foundation for building an equally sound and stable future.

Without economic stability and sound finances we would not have been able to reach this point. We would have suffered the same fate as other countries.

Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and even Cyprus, have all asked for a bailout, meaning emergency financial aid to help them out of the precarious financial situation in which they found themselves. However financial aid granted in emergency situations comes with very strict and tough conditions. The cost is the imposition of austerity measures that create huge social difficulties because of significant increase in taxes, such as VAT and fuel, widespread redundancies, reduction in salaries and wages, reduction in pensions, reduction in social services and benefits and less investment in education, health and the environment.

All these countries have faced these tough conditions. But Malta has been spared.

Malta was spared thanks to its decisive leadership and responsible decisions. While we did make some sacrifices, we did not have to suffer the same difficulties that other countries are going through. This did not happen by chance. It happened because the PN led the country in a responsible manner..

If we maintain our public finances on a sound footing we can continue to strengthen the economy, attract new investment, increase job opportunities, reduce the burden of taxes and create more wealth. If we leave it in the hands of those who promise everything to everyone, our financial stability will collapse, bringing widespread social problems, especially for those who can least afford it. If we follow the Cyprus model, as Joseph Muscat proposed, we would run ourselves to the ground and end up seeking a bailout.

Having managed to maintain sound financial stability with one of the lowest public deficits in the euro zone, our next target is to put our public finances in surplus. In the coming 5 years we also aim to reduce the national debt so that we can also reduce the interest on debt. The obligation to have a balanced budget will be entrenched in the Constitution and an independent Fiscal Council will be established with the task of overseeing that the Government sticks to its fiscal limits. Moreover a Parliamentary Committee on Economic and Financial affairs will also be set up.

Sound finances will also allow us to continue reducing the tax burden. Malta already has the lowest tax rate on income tax in the European Union. Whilst the average tax and national insurance rate in the EU is of €33 for each €100 earned, in Malta the tax and national insurance does not exceed €21.3 for each €100. This is the case because the Government continued to reduce the income tax burden in 3 consecutive budgets from 2007 to 2009 and reduced it again for parents in 2012.

## **Social justice**

In the social sector the PN safeguards social justice by means of policy inspired from the belief in the dignity of each and every person, in equality and in solidarity, so that no one is left behind. This means that the State should provide the best educational and health services and also provide them for free. This means that we provide assistance to the most vulnerable, including children and women in difficulty, people at risk of poverty or exclusion, people who lost their job as well as the elderly. In our country we have a social model that we should continue preserve and strengthen. A PN Government is committed to strengthening our social model.



We shall continue to work in favour of a more inclusive society. We shall increase the representation of women in society, especially in public posts, and shall continue to integrate minority groups as integral and equal members of society. Belonging to a minority or majority group is secondary to the dignity of each and every person.

## Politics

In the political sphere, the PN is proud of Malta and wants to continue pursuing policies that make you prouder still to be Maltese. Malta is a country with a long and glorious history. But Malta as a State is still young as it was only created in 1964. No doubt you must have family members who personally witnessed that memorable day when we achieved our Independence.

In 2014 we need to work harder than ever before for us to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our country as an independent nation. This will be an historical year for us and we need to pay special attention to our identity and to what binds us together, whether Maltese living in Malta and Maltese living abroad. More trust in our country and in its identity means that young people will believe more in themselves. With this commitment, which should be boosted in the coming year, we will guarantee new generations of people who are more happy as individuals and as citizens.

2014 is not only about celebrating our identity. We should also use this occasion to review the Constitution of Malta and make a quality leap by updating it to reflect the realities of today, based on our experience. We need to revise the working practices of organs of the State. We need to recognise, acknowledge, and strengthen the role of civil society organisations, as well as the social partners. We need to revise and update electoral laws so that Maltese people

living abroad who are entitled to vote, can exercise their right to do so without having to come to Malta, as well as ensuring that people with a disability can also exercise their right to vote, taking into account their individual needs. Above all, we need to strengthen the democratic process with a greater participation of people, using today's technologies.

Parliament should not solely be about having a new building. Parliament needs to be closer to the people and it is therefore going to be more open so that your political representatives can be closer to you. There is also a need to strengthen Parliament's powers so that the Government is always kept under scrutiny. All parliamentary debates should be broadcast.

When we delve deeply into the Constitution, we are dealing with the heart and soul of our country. A meaningful review of our Constitution should be subject to a referendum. The PN believes that the decision on constitutional changes should be made by the Maltese people.

## Public Sector

An effective and efficient public sector has always been a priority for PN. This is necessary not only because of the economic and social development of the country but also because every citizen has the right to receive quality service from the Public Sector. We are proud of our Public Sector because it has successfully overcome the obstacles our country had to enter the European Union, as well as in dealing with the pressures thrust upon us by the financial crisis. We know that the positive results we achieved were made possible thanks to the dedication of people who work in the Public Sector.

Nevertheless, challenges are a constant factor in the public sector. As one challenge



is overcome, another one comes to the fore. It is for this reason that a good and efficient Public Service remains a priority for us.

We believe that each person and every business that require a service from the public administration deserve simple and effective procedures as far as the public sector is concerned. It is for this reason that we want to make the public sector even more efficient and we want to continue to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy. We shall do so by building on the recommendations which are already operative through the exercise known as *Better Regulation Exercise*. We shall achieve this by seeing that services are amalgamated into one single body wherever possible so that you will only need to deal with one entity and thus be served more efficiently and easily. A PN Government will also continue to evaluate the expenditure in the Public Service with the aim of eliminating waste, so that each and every cent is used efficiently. This will be an on-going exercise.

## **European Policy and Foreign Policy**

With our European and foreign policies we want you to be proud to be Maltese.

Malta is now a respected member of the European Union and a new PN Government will ensure that our respect is strengthened and not weakened in any way. The PN will negotiate with the EU through the power of persuasion and reason. Results are achieved by respect and not by threats. So much so, that in the first eight years of membership, a PN Government obtained one thousand three hundred million euro in funding from the European Union. That's right -€1,300,000,000. We are now negotiating the financial package for the years 2014 to 2020. A PN Government is better-placed to negotiate the best possible financial package on your behalf, which would translate in a better infrastructure, a stronger

economy and more investment in your skills and abilities. How can we afford to let these negotiations be conducted by those who said that we would only obtain one and half million in EU-funding?

On the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 Malta will preside over the Presidency of the European Union for the first time and it will be at the centre of Europe's work. Our country will be presiding over thousands of meetings in Malta and abroad and we will also determine the EU agenda. This is going to be an unprecedented occasion where Malta will be expected to excel. In this regard the role and involvement of the Maltese Government will be paramount for Malta to make the most of the EU Presidency. To fail is simply not an option. How can we leave the Presidency of Malta in the hands of people who did their best to keep us out of the EU?

On foreign policy, the PN will continue to take the decisions that make you proud to be Maltese, as it did during the Libyan civil war when a PN Government stuck its neck out for the Libyan people instead of waiting Gaddafi was eliminated to take a political position. Can you trust our foreign policy in the hands of people who cannot take a clear stand?

The PN is committed to make you proud to be Maltese and proud to be European.

## **Identity and Culture**

In the last five years we have shown that the potential we have in the cultural sector can create positive spill-over effects in other areas such as education, the economy, the social sector and the environment.

Valletta is a gem not just for Malta, but for the whole world. In 2012, it is going to be the European Capital of Culture. This is a unique opportunity and we will give it the importance



that it requires by continuing to enhance the city to attain the state that it merits and that you deserve too as a Maltese citizen – a city which is alive, with a historical and artistic soul, and with modern functionality.

The measures we have taken already provide the foundation to ensure that Valletta will be a successful European Capital of Culture. Thanks to Valletta 2012, the cultural sector is not only generating new opportunities in the creative sector, but also leading to an embellishment and greater appreciation of the cultural infrastructure of our Capital city. It will also give a broader perspective to Maltese society and lead to a better quality of life.

The Malta Presidency of the European Union and Valletta 2018 are unique opportunities which will continue to emphasise our cultural potential and they will leave a legacy from which we can all benefit in the years to follow.

What we are facing are five years of challenges and opportunities. The ability to overcome these challenges and seizing these opportunities to make that quality leap forwards, depends entirely on your vote.

The PN was, and still is, the party of change. Change for the better, not for the worse. The change that you want.







# Another quality leap in jobs

**The PN has created an economic environment which is conducive to creating jobs with better salaries. This was made possible as a result of our accession to the European Union, as we opened the doors to new economic markets and new opportunities; because we invested in new sectors; because we invested in the competitiveness of business and industry; because we invested in human resources; because we made work pay; because we managed to keep taxes low and because we maintained a sound and stable economy. To make another quality leap in creating more jobs we are proposing the following new measures for the coming five years.**

## **Incentives for work, because work gives you dignity**

### **1. We are there for you when you are looking for work**

Workers of all ages are a precious resource for us. For this reason we are continuing and widening various schemes so that when you find yourself out of a job or on unemployment benefits, you will find the necessary help to train and you will be able to work for a number of hours per week without losing your benefits. In particular:

- i. The Work Trial Scheme, which enables an unemployed person to gain work experience for up to 20 hours per week for 12 weeks without losing any benefit or right, will be strengthened by extending it to a maximum of one year, to ensure that the unemployed person will acquire the necessary skills to re-integrate into the workforce.
- ii. The “Bridging the Gap” scheme which gives work experience to the most disadvantaged (former prisoners, former drug or alcohol users, persons with disability, persons with mental illness and others), whilst earning an income amounting to 80% of the minimum national wage. This scheme will be strengthened as follows:
  - In the case of persons with a disability and persons with mental health problems, extending the period to three years, whilst providing a job coach where necessary;
  - For other persons, extending the limit to one year.
- iii. The “Community Work Scheme” where currently a person registering for work for more than six months and receiving unemployment benefits and is working for 30 hours in the community with a local council or NGO, will be strengthened by extending the period of this scheme.
- iv. After the success of the “Employment Aid Programme” which has helped Maltese companies train and employ people out of a job, whilst having half their pay subsidised through the European Social Fund, this programme will be re-launched to allow Maltese companies to receive 50% subsidy on the wage and national insurance of one year, or 75% of the wage and the national insurance of 2 years, for anyone who has been out of work for more than 2 years. In the case of persons with a disability this is increased to 75% of the wage and national insurance without any time limit. These amounts are the maximum allowed under State Aid regulations.



## **2. Jobs+**

The PN signed the JOBS+ Declaration launched by the Union Haddiema Maghqudin (UHM) on 22 January 2013 on the concept of the Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP). As a result of this declaration, we have committed ourselves to working collectively towards implementing this policy in the interest of all concerned by:

- i. kick-starting the set-up of an Active Labour Market Policy Counselling and Action Committee during the year 2013. by involving the social partners, this committee will ensure that the plan to implement the ALMP will be ready within 3 months from the set-up of the Action Committee. fostering collective participation so that, through this policy, more wealth can be generated to benefit everybody, by means of an increase in the productivity of our country. This will be achieved by:
  - Increasing the workforce.
  - Continuing to enhance workers' skills
  - Increasing the investment allocated to the ALMP.
  - Increasing the participation in the workforce of people who are long-term dependents on social benefits, especially those under the age of 40.

## **3. Free childcare facilities for all children**

- i. In order to help women enter or remain in employment, the Government will take another step forward by financing

your children's childcare services through a voucher system that may be used in any childcare centre of your choice. €5 million will be allocated annually for this scheme and it will not just be open to full-time workers, but also too part-time workers and workers on flexible hours.

- ii. This measure will also cover the cost of childcare for children raised in single-parent families even when the parent is the father.

## **4. Sick leave when children are unwell**

Sick leave may be taken not only when you are sick, but even when your children are sick. This will give you the peace of mind of knowing that if your children are sick you can be there for them. At the same time the use of irregular sick leave will decrease and job loyalty will increase.

## **5. Individuals who provide a service to the public sector**

Today, the public sector engages employees who are directly employed but also other workers who are contracted from the private sector, such as in the case of security, cleaning and others services. To ensure that workers who give a service to the public sector have better work conditions, contracts for services bought from the private sector will be subject to the following conditions:

- i. Contracts will be awarded for a longer period of time so that the workers will have more job stability.



- ii. Contractors will be bound by a code of practice to ensure adequate conditions of work for their contracted workers.
- iii. Employment of full-timers will be required as standard practice but the engagement of part-time workers working full-time hours will not be allowed.
- iv. A National Standard Order will apply to these particular sectors.
- v. Workers' wages will be separated from the contractor's fees for the services rendered so that the competitive process of the tender will be based on the best offer of the contractor's service fees rather than on the workers' wages.

## **6. National insurance and part-time work**

Part-time work is increasing and more workers are choosing to work part-time out of choice or to earn something extra over and above their main employment. National insurance for these workers will be adjusted so that:

- i. Workers who have more than one part-time job, instead of a full-time job, may, if they wish, pay national insurance on more than one job so that they can contribute towards a higher pension.
- ii. Workers in full-time employment having a low wage and who have a part-time job, can, if they wish, also pay national insurance on their part-time work in order to contribute to a higher pension.
- iii. Self-employed workers on a part-time basis will start to pay pro-rata national insurance based on their earnings with no minimum amount set. So far this benefit was only available to self-employed women on a part-time basis.

## **7. Encouraging more pensioners to continue working**

Currently, a pensioner who continues to work up to 65 pays the same national insurance as anyone else. In order to encourage more pensioners to keep working and therefore have an increased income, the rate of national insurance for pensioners between retirement age and the age of 65 will be halved, both for the employer as well as for the employee.

For the self-employed the rate of national insurance between retirement age and the age of 65 shall be reduced from 15% to 10%.

## **8. To encourage more persons with a disability to enter the workforce**

A Nationalist government has already ensured that educational services are inclusive for persons with disability. The next step is for these people to find their place in the working world where they can contribute and where they can further develop their skills. To this end we shall:

- i. Strengthen Incentives for employers to employ people with a disability through the ETC, amongst others, by removing the employer's national insurance contribution.
- ii. In its role as employer the Government will lead by example and raise the minimum rate of people with a disability working with the public sector from 2% to 4%.
- iii. People with a disability who can work in a sheltered environment will have suitable work opportunities through the setting-up of sheltered workshops and enclaves which will also be provided in partnership with the private sector.



- iv. Cooperatives where persons with disability constitute more than 50% of its members, will be given preference in the granting of public tenders.
- v. Five day centres will be opened for people with severe disability who cannot work in an unprotected environment or in a protected one.

## **Incentives for business to create more work**

### **9. We encourage you to start your own business**

- i. If you are under the age of 25 or have been registering for work for 5 years, or if you are over 45 years old and have lost your job, we will encourage you to open your own business by exempting you from paying income tax in the first two years. We will also credit your national insurance contributions and exempt you from registration fees and administrative expenses such as license fees when forming a new company. You will only start paying from the third year.
- ii. If the business is set up by a woman, this incentive will be extended to 3 years instead of 2.
- iii. For businesses set-up in Gozo, this incentive will also be valid for 3 years instead of 2.
- iv. We will also provide start-up grants to assist newly formed businesses.

### **10. Assistance to businesses and the self-employed**

After setting up “Business First”, which is the first complete one-stop-shop for businesses in Malta, as well as “Gateway to Export”, we will continue to assist businesses to expand outside Malta, including through online sales, by:

- i. Allocating more funds from the European Union to assist businesses to invest further in the international market, innovation, e-business, research and development, the environment and start-ups.
- ii. The setting-up of a fund for patents so that Maltese innovators, particularly young ones may register their patents in each country within the European Union. We will also continue to exempt earnings on patents from tax, along with copyright on books, film scripts, songs and art.
- iii. The Government will commit to purchasing part of its public procurement from small businesses.

### **11. Setting up a Development Bank**

A Development Bank will be set up on the basis of the modern model of development banks found in European countries such as Germany, with the aim of assisting with the launch and growth of Maltese enterprise, and providing the space for innovation and creativity in products and industrial processes which are new to Malta. The bank will provide seed capital to those who wish to start a new enterprise and are short of capital. The bank will also pay particular attention to enterprises in the environmental sector, alternative energy, agro-industry, agro-tourism and sustainable industry.



## **12. Facilitating the set-up of a cooperative bank**

The law that regulates banking will be amended to make it possible to set up a Cooperative Bank which will be beneficial to cooperatives as well as small business. There are thousands of cooperative banks world-wide that have hundreds of thousands of members. Not one of these banks has gone bankrupt or required assistance or made any employees redundant during the global banking crisis. This is because the priorities of a cooperative bank are its cooperative spirit and solidarity. Cooperative banks in Europe provide the absolute majority of financing to small businesses and help them to increase employment.

## **13. E-innovation**

We will facilitate e-innovation to enable the private sector, academia, NGOs and the public to take up work and that they can do better than the Government. For this purpose the Government will give access to non-personalised data so that whoever wishes to develop innovative ideas through the use and application of this information will be able to do so. This will give the opportunity to anyone who is not part of the Government to do work which previously could only be done by the Government. This will create more work opportunities and generate additional and innovative investment. At the same time the public will benefit from new software, applications and new services.

## **14. Online gaming sector**

Over the past 10 years we set up the online gaming sector from scratch. This sector now employs 7,000 people, directly or indirectly.

In the coming 5 years we shall establish an entity dedicated to this sector in partnership with the private sector, to market our country as the best possible place to launch an online gaming business. We will work with the educational sector to have high level specialised courses that can attract students in this sector even from abroad. We will regulate the new market of “Games of Skill with Prize” and be amongst the first on a global level in this new area. We shall also increase the incentives to attract more companies in mobile gaming.

## **15. The creative sector**

- i. A fund will be set up to provide start-up grants and capital ranging between €25,000 to €50,000 for start-ups in the digital gaming industry.
- ii. Creative clusters will be developed in Malta and Gozo for games, media, design, crafts and the performing arts to promote the launching of start-ups and entrepreneurship in the creative and innovation sectors.
- iii. Fiscal incentives will be granted to the creative sectors in particular those launched in Valletta or artists who live there.
- iv. We will continue to attract international companies in the area of digital games by offering new incentives.
- v. A Cultural Heritage Fund will be set up
- vi. We will increase the Digital Games Fund.
- vii. We will launch an apprentice scheme that will allow for training or work placements in the creative sector.



## 16. More records in tourism

After years of record arrivals in the tourism sector we will continue to implement our plan in this sector by investing more than €215 million in the sector and implement the following initiatives:

- i. Increasing more air routes to and from Malta and push to attract new markets
- ii. Working with various airlines, tour operators and hoteliers to further increase tourism in the winter months by developing the concept of a city break destination and by increasing advertising in the winter months through joint marketing schemes.
- iii. More initiatives to bring large conferences to Malta and offer public places to be used for such conferences.
- iv. Improving port facilities in the Grand Harbour to attract more cruise liners, whilst encouraging other cruise companies to use Malta for home porting.
- v. Continuing to organise, assist and promote popular cultural activities such as carnival, the Malta Jazz festival, the Malta Arts Festival, Isle of MTV, Notte Bianca and activities organised by local councils so that we may continue attracting cultural tourism to our shores.
- vi. Continuing to advertise our country as one of the best diving destinations with Malta having the cleanest sea in the Mediterranean. We will invest in infrastructure to assist the diving industry by improving accessibility from land to popular diving sites and by increasing the number of wrecks that have become so popular with divers who visit our country.
- vii. We will help English Language Schools attract students from new markets such as Brazil, China, Japan and Turkey.
- viii. Implementing new schemes for operators within the sector to improve the competitive nature of the industry.
- ix. Working to have more Blue Flag beaches.
- x. Attracting tourism to all our towns and villages by promoting the unique characteristics of these localities.
- xi. Assisting the owners of old abandoned buildings in the historical centres so that they may be rehabilitated and used for tourism purposes.
- xii. Advertising Malta further on the internet.
- xiii. Gozo will benefit from these measures in addition to the ones which are found in the section of this programme related to Gozo.

## 17. Measures in favour of industry

- i. We will allocate €100 million over a period of 5 years to continue strengthening industry in our country through incentives that assist in the development of new technologies, the sustainability of the energy sector, the identification of new markets as well as research and development.
- ii. In the last 4 years we granted over €200 million in tax credits and triggered an investment of over €500 million in industry. A PN Government will use the system of tax credit conversion into grants for industry so that we will continue incentivising established industries to invest in new technologies with which new and better jobs are created.
- iii. We will start a programme to continue helping businesses to compete





internationally in innovation, in e-business, in research and development, environment and start-ups. The programme will be called “40 Million for Industry” and will be financed using EU funds.

- iv. We will continue assisting industry to counter the challenges of rising energy costs by extending the high energy user scheme for all factories that consume up to 1 GwH per annum and, later, to all those that use up to 0.5 GwH per annum.
- v. We shall grant research and innovation grants of up to 25% of the required investment on condition that the participating researchers are Maltese. Preference will be given to those who carry out this research in collaboration with the University of Malta or MCAST. The Government will allocate a fund of €10 million to attract €40 million worth of research projects.
- vi. We will continue investing in the BioMalta Campus with an investment of €38 million that will create the necessary infrastructure for the development of life sciences in our country.
- vii. We will grant seed funding and incentives to attract private investment in research.
- viii. Malta Enterprise and MEPA will jointly develop a master plan for each industrial zone to establish the parameters of development with the required studies, so that each development project in factories that abide by these established parameters would not go through the normal planning process, but would use the system of DNO in order to speed up the time of the development of the new factory or of the approved extension from Malta Enterprise,. At the same time this system will also speed up the time in which this factory starts operating.

ix. We will create a common infrastructure, in conjunction with industry through a private-public partnership, for the product design and prototyping of new products that are being considered for commercialisation.

- x. We will establish new schemes focused on the needs of industry to identify new markets, by granting a 50% tax credit on the expenses incurred on internationalisation efforts,.

## **18. Farmers, breeders and fishermen**

- i. Farmers, breeders and fishermen will be recognised as an enterprise so that they can benefit from national financial incentives or European funds for which they are currently not entitled.
- ii. We will keep up negotiations with the European Union to acquire additional financial assistance to continue helping farmers and breeders to serve their function as guardians of the countryside.
- iii. After the pilot project co-financed by the European Union, we will conclude the reforms at the Pitkalija, in a way where the farmer, middleman and the retailer will have the best quality fresh product to pass on to the consumer. An informative and promotional campaign will be launched to promote the Maltese product and the necessary investment will be made to enable all workers to work in a more comfortable and hygienic environment.
- iv. After the success of the Farmers’ Market at Ta’ Qali, new markets will be launched in Malta and Gozo In collaboration with Local Councils. This will create more opportunities for farmers and more choice for you as a consumer.
- v. The national standard *Naturalment Malti*





- will come into force on a number of local products such as fruit and vegetables, milk, pork, local cheese and an extensive informative campaign will be launched. An inspectorate will also be set-up to ensure that standards are maintained.
- vi. An insurance scheme will be introduced for farmers and breeders so that risks related to adverse weather conditions or disease affecting animals or the produce are covered by an insurance policy. The scheme will be financed jointly between the farmers and breeders as well as national and EU funds.
  - vii. We will implement a policy of reallocation of animal farms from urban areas to other areas where the necessary permits will soon be issued.
  - viii. We will grant financial aid to farmers and breeders to improve lanes and alleyways that lead to their fields.
  - ix. We will grant financial aid and training to farmers and breeders for the purposes of maintaining rubble walls surrounding their fields.
  - x. A scheme will be launched to help farmers and breeders to invest in their enterprise and their farms to enable them to host visits from tourists and the Maltese public. The scheme will promote initiatives such as the information and experience of agricultural processes, tastings, direct sales and walks in the countryside.
  - xi. We will launch a project to construct a breakwater in Marsaxlokk which will offer protection and additional berthing facilities to fishermen who use this harbour.
  - xii. Along with Fish Cooperatives the Government will launch schemes to enable fishermen to diversify by getting involved in the aquaculture industry.
  - xiii. An insurance scheme will be introduced for all fishermen to cover risks related to their fishing vessels.
  - xiv. A scheme will also be introduced so that self-employed fishermen will be financially assisted outside the fishing season.
  - xv. We will continue project of the new Fish Market and start work on a new aquaculture hatchery. A strategy for aquaculture will also be implemented.

## 19. Tax Reductions

- i. Anyone whose sole income is the minimum wage and the statutory bonus will not pay income tax.
- ii. We will widen the tax bands so that income tax will be further reduced across the board.
- iii. We will eliminate stamp duty on the transfer of all property from parents to their children whether it occurs by donation or through inheritance on the death of the parents.
- iv. In 2012 we introduced a scheme whereby income from rent of properties scheduled in Grade I and II as well as property which is restored in an urban conservation zone was taxed through a final withholding tax. This scheme will now be extended by reducing the income tax from 35% to a final withholding tax of 15%. Through this scheme you will be able to lease your property knowing in advance how much tax you will be required to pay.



## **20. Tough measures against tax evasion**

- i. The fight against tax evasion is in the interest of those who pay their due taxes. Following the amalgamation of the main tax collecting departments in our country, we will invest more resources to eliminate tax evasion so that the Government's revenue will increase without the need of raising taxes.
- ii. In order to eliminate the abuse of social benefits which cost so much and which are crucial to those who truly need them, harsher penalties and disqualifications will be enforced on those who abuse of the system.
- iii. We will carry out a revision of the fines and interest calculated by the tax department. While ensuring that these remain a deterrent for whoever delays in paying taxes which are due, we will make it easier for people to regularise their position without exaggerated fines and interest and without having to end up in jail.
- iv. We will introduce the possibility of mediation and arbitration in the fiscal sector to find quicker and fairer solutions between the tax authorities and the tax payer.
- v. We will implement a system which will offset tax due by an individual from tax refunds due by the Government to the same individual. This will eliminate once and for all the anomaly whereby an individual is pressured to pay tax dues to the Government, when that same individual is owed a tax refund from the Government.

**The following budget measures, which the Labour Party voted against, shall be introduced with immediate effect:**

## **21. Reduction of income tax**

As was done in the previous 5 years, a PN Government will once again reduce income tax. Over a period of 3 years, income not exceeding €60,000 will be taxed at a rate of 25% instead of 35%. Income tax will be reduced from 35% to 32% in 2013, from 32% to 29% in 2014 and from 29% to 25% in 2015.

## **22. Reduction of tax on property**

- i. We will eliminate stamp duty on the transfer of residential property from parents to their children, whether it occurs by donation or through inheritance, on the death of the parents.
- ii. For property buyers the valuation made by the bank's architect will be accepted as the market value of the property. As a result the Government will no longer assign its own architect to value the property. This will eliminate once and for all the concern that one may be asked to pay additional tax on the property you have purchased. .
- iii. In the case of properties with a value exceeding €250,000 we will initiate a trial process wherein prior to the signing of a contract at the point of promise of sale the buyer and the seller can ask the Department's architect to issue a valuation of the price of the property on



which tax will be paid. This valuation will be valid for 6 months from the date of issue.

- iv. We will extend the period during which immovable property may be sold with a final withholding tax of 12% from the current 7 years to 12 years.
- v. Currently, anyone buying residential property pays 5% stamp duty on property values exceeding €116,500 euro. In the tax deductions announced in the budget the limit for which one pays 3.5% will now be increased to €150,000 euro. This benefit will also apply to whoever buys a second house and sells his first one.

### **23. Reduction of tax on cars and motorbikes**

- i. We will reduce registration tax on Euro V cars by a maximum of 30%, while on Euro IV cars the tax will be increased by an average of 10%
- ii. A grant of €500 will be granted to those who buy a new private or commercial N1 car and scrap the old one.
- iii. Registration tax on classic cars older than 50 years will be removed completely. The definition of classic cars will be changed from 35 to 30 years. The annual license fee on classic cars will also be removed.
- iv. A refund of €200 will be given to those who switch their car to auto gas. Charging points for electric cars will also be set-up.
- v. We will encourage the purchase of scooters and motorbikes of low cylinder capacity to alleviate traffic congestion in our roads by completely eliminating registration tax on motorbikes not exceeding 250cc and by reducing registration tax on other motorbikes by 25%.

### **24. Making work pay more**

- i. If you are on minimum wage we would like you to start earning more and not freeze your pay. We will extend the scheme by which you can get a weekly allowance of €25 if you participate in training for 4 hours per week. This scheme will be extended to those earning up to €300 per week. You will therefore be in a better position to find a job that is better paid.
- ii. We will improve the scheme that promotes an innovative programme for apprentices and that gives financial incentives to employers and students. We shall open it up to other sectors and the Government will pay national insurance instead of the employer. We will increase the apprentice stipend from €86 to €95 and to other sectors, where the Government together with industry feel that further investment is required, we shall increase the stipend by another €20 over and above the increase announced in the last budget.
- iii. The programme “Youth Inc” is aimed at young people between the age of 16 and 21, who are in the educational system or in the workforce, with the aim of giving them another chance for specialised training. This programme will now be extended to the age of 24 to create an educational system that offers basic training and experience at the workplace.
- iv. We will launch the B.START scheme whereby an established business will be given a tax deduction not exceeding €30,000 for any capital investment in a new business venture which is approved by Malta Enterprise. This scheme will create opportunities for what is known as crowd funding.



## **25. Other business incentives**

- i. We will continue to help shop-keepers and small businesses by extending the Micro Invest scheme for businesses that employ up to 30 people, instead of 10 people as it stands today. This will encourage businesses to grow further. 40% of the investment will result in a tax deduction of up to €25,000. For businesses in Gozo this will go up to 60%.
- ii. We will establish a Tech Hub Incubation facility for the digital gaming industry and a twinning scheme that pairs the University of Malta with other universities that offer the best courses in this sector.
- iii. We will continue assisting the necessary investment in hotels by enabling them to benefit from an investment aid of 15% of their capital expenditure in the form of tax credits. This means that for every €100 invested, they will be able to deduct €15 from their tax bill. There will be no capping from this amount.
- iv. We will launch an incentive scheme to increase the number of boutique hotels

in Valletta, Mdina and the Three Cities. These include a reduction on tax on the investment in relation to the purchasing and the development of sites, as well as a reduction in fees related to permits in particular those of MEPA and the Malta Tourism Authority. These same measures will be extended to all localities in Gozo.

## **26. A year of work in the voluntary sector**

If you always wanted to do voluntary work but never found the opportunity to do so, we will be introducing a scheme for a year of work in the voluntary sector for young people in Malta or abroad, in which you can benefit from training related to civic duties, discipline, physical education, sport, humanitarian work and peace-keeping. This scheme will be open to young people up to the age of 25 and for students graduating from any Maltese tertiary educational institutions for up to three years after graduating. They will be able to spend a year in voluntary work either in Malta or abroad and during this year, they will be given a stipend and will be accredited with social security contributions.



# Another leap in quality in the health sector

**Health comes first for the PN. We recognise that health is paramount for all of us. We have invested in a top quality free health service. Under PN the health service will remain free because we want to be there in your most difficult moments. We want to give you peace of mind that there are people there to take care of you, without you having to worry on whether you can afford your medical treatment. We would like to give you a service that is always closer to you. We cherish the contribution that is made by all medical professionals and workers in the health service and we want to continue working with them to strengthen further the sector. To make another quality leap in the health sector we are proposing these new measures for the coming 5 years.**

## **27. Primary care will be our priority**

The next stage in the health sector is primary care. We shall build 2 new regional centres that offer the widest range of health services possible. We will carry out a refurbishment and upgrading of all health centres. We will increase accessibility of primary care on a 24 hour basis. Human resources will be increased together with investment in the most recent information systems, using appropriate social network platforms and portals, which offer required assistance to individuals through electronic means.

## **28. Rehabilitation Centre**

We will open a rehabilitation centre that will incorporate all the services that a patient

requires during the period of rehabilitation. These will include specialised areas, including services and programmes of cardiac, respiratory and orthopaedic rehabilitation.

## **29. The fight against diabetes**

Malta will become a centre of excellence in the fight against diabetes, a condition that affects 10% of our population. We will increase our efforts in the prevention of this illness, by extending screening initiatives and education related to this illness, as well as initiatives to reduce obesity. This will help reduce the number of people who develop this illness, while we will be better placed to help those who suffer from diabetes. We will continue providing free medicine to those who suffer from diabetes and provide other necessary equipment such as for testing one's sugar levels. Diabetes will also be a priority in the research sector. Therefore if you are suffering from diabetes we will be doing our best to help you take care of yourself, live a better quality of life and experience less financial difficulties.

## **30. The fight against cancer**

If you know one of the 150 women whose life has been saved thanks to the breast cancer screening programme, then you know just how important it is to strengthen the fight against this terrible illness. We will extend cancer screening to a wider section of our population so that more people can benefit from free screening. Apart from this we shall also open the new Oncology Centre, which will provide a quality leap over Boffa Hospital and it will also accommodate many



more patients. We will also extend the health service to the cure of different cancers in order to reduce the cases where patients need to be referred abroad.

### **31. More medicines when you need them**

- i. We will increase and strengthen the free distribution of medicines, services and equipment.
- ii. If it happens that a particular medicine that you are entitled to is out of stock and you need it urgently, the Government will compensate you for having bought it privately on the basis of established prices.
- iii. In exceptional cases of very serious illness, where the prescribed medicine is not found on the Government list of free-medicines, we will pay you for the medicine that is normally prescribed to contribute towards your expenses for the medicine you require.

### **32. Private medical services**

- i. To reduce the pressure on the public hospital, we will create more space for the private sector in health services. This will further reduce waiting times and increase the number of surgical operations, medical interventions, services and investigations. These will be done privately but will be paid for by the Government.
- ii. Furthermore anyone who has a private health insurance will be able to deduct the premium from his taxable income.

### **33. Widening and improving mental health services**

We will set up a new entity for mental health services which will include services specifically

aimed at children and adolescents, as well as a unit that treats eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia.

### **34. Early care facilities so that people can remain at home**

A system of census and monitoring will be developed to enable the identification and timely checking of vulnerable people at all times. The primary aim is to delay the moment when a person needs to enter residential care as much as possible. The secondary aim is for carers to have all types of required support, in conjunction with Local Councils, the Church and NGOs in any particular region. This will also enable preparations to be made in a coordinated fashion should the need for a person to enter residential care arise. Moreover a new entity will be opened in partnership with an NGO with the aim of welcoming patients who need palliative care in an adequate and appropriate environment as they reach the end of their lives.

### **35. For people with fertility problems**

Now that the law on IVF has been passed we shall introduce the procedure as part of the public health service so that you can access it for free without having to travel abroad.

### **36. Services for people who require support and assistance in their development**

We will strengthen the educational, therapeutic and health services for those children who need professional support for their development. We will also offer services of assessment, support, therapy and guidance under one body. The services will bring together the medical, educational and social aspect. In so doing the family will be better served and waiting times will be reduced. Furthermore, the service will be provided for as long as the family needs it, not least during the adolescent phase and during the transition to adult life.





# Another quality leap in education

PN is synonymous with education. As the person is at the centre of our political action we have recognised that education is key to the potential of each and every person. This is why we invest more and more in education and also in higher levels of education. Education from its earliest stages to tertiary levels. An education that reaches more and more young people so much so that 83% of students continue to study beyond secondary level. Education throughout life. Education with stipends and scholarships. Never ending investment in new schools and new infrastructure at the University, MCAST and other educational institutions. We cherish the contribution of all our teachers and all our workers in this sector and we wish to continue to work with them to continue to build on this success. To make another quality leap in education we are proposing the following measures for the coming 5 years.

## **37. Tablets for all school children**

After having revolutionised the educational sector with the latest technology, we are now going to give a personal tablet to all students and teachers for use in the classroom and at home. We shall set up a fund so that local publishing houses convert their books to an electronic format, and for the IT industry to develop educational applications which facilitate one-to-one learning. The tablets will be given to all students in Government schools, as well as independent schools and church schools.

## **38. Discover another European country when you turn 21**

When you reach the age of 21, you will be get a grant of up to €500 to visit another country in the European Union and widen your cultural knowledge on the basis of an approved programme. If you study a foreign language during this visit, the grant will go up to a maximum of €1,000.

## **39. Childcare facilities for parents who are studying**

The voucher system for childcare services will also apply for parents who opt to pursue their studies at University, MCAST or at any other educational institution or who are going through recognised training.

## **40. More Club 3-16 Centres**

We will increase the number of Club 3-16 centres, where children between the ages of 3 and 16 can attend, over and above the 15 that are already open. The educational, sport, developmental and recreational programmes that are held in these centres will be extended to 6:00pm. Students from public, church and independent schools can attend.

## **41. We will strengthen stipends and not remove them**

We shall strengthen the stipend system and not remove it. We shall strengthen it as follows:

- i. Each year students will get the cost of living adjustment on a pro-rata basis added to their stipend.





- ii. We will credit the social security contributions to students in favour of their pension.
- iii. We will increase stipends for students with a disability owing to the additional expenses that they have as a result of their situation.
- iv. We will continue to give preferential stipends for those courses that are deemed most important in relation to new economic sectors for our country or where there is a deficit in the number of graduate workers.
- v. We will continue to give supplementary stipends to students from low income families.

#### **42. Setting-up of an Arts Academy**

- i. An Arts Academy that will incorporate the School of Music, of Arts, Drama and Dance on will be set-up on a purposely built campus. The academy will provide the space and resources of the best quality. In collaboration with the private sector we shall provide more courses and create new opportunities for those interested in a career in this area. These courses will lead to qualifications that are recognised locally as well as abroad.
- ii. We will assist young people with musical talents that form part of musical bands, such as rock, pop bands, etc., by establishing a direct link with the principle of the Malta Academy of Arts who will provide guidelines regarding premises and financial aid schemes available from the Government. In this manner band members will have the opportunity to develop their talents and form part of the creative economy of our country.

#### **43. Enabling more students to continue their post-secondary education**

After the work that was carried out in the transition from primary to secondary, we shall now focus our efforts on the transition from secondary to higher education. Our aim is to continue increasing the number of students who continue to study after the secondary level. This we will be carried out as follows:

- i. We will increase opportunities in different levels and subjects
- ii. We will give more opportunities to young people to achieve a certificate for their capabilities.
- iii. We will increase the number of vocational subjects.
- iv. We will launch new programmes to address students who need individual study programmes.
- v. We will widen the apprenticeship scheme.
- vi. We will recognise informal teaching.

#### **44. More scholarships at tertiary levels**

Year after year there will be more investment in scholarships at every level so that more Maltese students will have a wider choice of educational courses in tertiary, public and private institutions, in Malta as well as in other countries of the European Union. In the last few years, over 2,000 scholarships were granted. In the coming 5 years we shall be granting 3,000.

#### **45. Students in independent schools**

- i. If you are a parent who sends your child to an independent school, we will continue to increase the amount of the school fee that is tax deductible.



- ii. The Government has already announced a €1 million annual fund for a period of 3 years, to help independent schools invest in resources in areas of software and IT licenses, science facilities, sporting facilities and services connected to the individual needs of the students, as well as the development of teachers in private schools. This fund is allocated for private schools based on the number of registered students. This fund will now be extended to €2 million per annum for a period of 5 years.
- ix. As soon as the new schools in Rahal Gdid and Hamrun are built, a new Resource Centre will also be built for students with a disability for them to have the best resources for a full inclusive programme.
- x. During these years we shall continue the embellishment programmes of the Girls' Secondary Schools in Imriehel, Gozo, Zejtun, Mosta and Blata l-Bajda, as well as the Boys' Schools in Hamrun.

#### **46. For the students of today and tomorrow**

We will enlarge the University campus, complete the new campus at MCAST and the new building at ITS. By 2020 a PN Government would have completed the building programme of tomorrow's schools, with a new school every year,, in the following manner:

- i. 2013: Girls' Secondary School Tal-Handaq – St Ignatius College
- ii. 2014: Girls' Secondary School Hal-Kirkop – St Benedict College
- iii. 2015: Boys' Secondary School Rahal Gdid – St Thomas Moore College
- iv. 2016: Girls' Secondary School Hamrun – St Nicholas College
- v. 2017: Boys' Secondary School Hamrun – St Theresa College
- vi. 2018: Boys' Secondary School Pembroke – St Claire College
- vii. 2019: Primary School Marsaskala – St Thomas Moore college
- viii. 2020: Boys' Secondary School Hamrun – St Nicholas College

#### **47. A Culture Card for all students**

The Culture Card, which at the moment is only given to Form One and Form Two students, will now be given to all students in Primary and Secondary levels, so that they can visit our historical sites and join cultural activities.

#### **48. Investing further in University**

University is the source of what enables our country to move towards a more knowledge-based society which aspires to develop an economy founded on innovation. The PN will translate its commitment to this unique institution with the following initiatives to support it:

- i. We will propose a financial model for University that reflects the needs of this institution for the coming 5 years in order to safeguard its sustainability. This will allow the University to plan and implement its vision in a stable manner.
- ii. We will give a property title to the University on the land that it is already using, or that it may need in the future, to carry out its public mission.
- iii. We recognise the need for sustainable change at the Msida campus and therefore we will invest in the required infrastructure for research, teaching,



sport and recreational facilities. We will develop a community centre on campus so that Maltese and foreign students and academics evolve into a community of teaching, research, innovation, creativity and recreation.

- iv. The campus in Valletta will continue to be embellished to reflect the identity of the University in light of Valletta becoming the European Cultural Capital in 2018.
- v. We will continue to foster an academic community that focuses on the development of political sustainability and management of the land, water, energy and waste. University will offer consultancy to the Government on strategic matters such as climate change, sustainable life, the development of a green economy and the introduction of a blue economy.
- vi. We will boost the role of University which combines a diversity of innovative sectors with scientific concepts, amongst them Eco-Gozo, by converting the Gozo Farmhouse into a research centre, the Marsaxlokk complex into a Centre for Research on Sustainable Energy, Water and Waste Management, whereas Argotti Gardens and the surroundings gardens transformed into a botanical garden.
- vii. We will see to it that the University will continue to widen its function in nurturing of small and medium enterprises in innovative areas; in collaborating even more closely with the Malta Council for Arts, Science and Technology and with Malta Enterprise to spur the transition of Malta towards an economy based on knowledge and innovation.
- viii. We will continue building on the success of various schemes of the study

bursaries, such as STEPS and MGSS, by launching a programme of funds for students interested in carrying out post-doctoral research at University. We will create opportunities so that Maltese researchers may return to Malta to carry out their research. We shall also invest EU funds so that together with the private sector we will develop a research infrastructure in order to get closer to our aims of research and innovation.

#### **49. Further investment MCAST**

Together with the University of Malta we will introduce evening courses at Bachelor Degree level so that people who wish to achieve tertiary level qualification, can do so whilst still remaining in the workforce.

Our country has made significant progress in higher and tertiary education in the last few years. We are committed to continue to build on this success as follows:

- i. We will continue to invest in MCAST and ITS so that more students are adequately trained for the requirements of the opportunities that industry offers today. As a result, anyone wishing to continue training will increase their prospects of finding work. We shall also complete the construction of the new MCAST campus.
- ii. We will improve the collaboration between the University and other educational institutions in order to facilitate the movement of students between institutions, so that everyone will be able to continue developing their career.
- iii. We will work to improve the collaboration between Junior College and private Sixth Forms whilst stimulating the development of higher educational institutions, particularly those that bring foreign



students to Malta; we will focus our efforts on North Africa, the Persian Gulf, America, India and China. This means that Malta will develop into a centre of higher educational excellence in the Mediterranean.

#### **50. Schools for the benefit of the community**

Public schools will share their resources and continue opening their doors for the benefit of the community. In this manner schools and the facilities they have will be of greater use for the community and of support to sport organisations and other groups that need a location to meet to practice, rehearse or train.



# Another leap in your quality of life

Malta is sought after for the quality of life that it offers and for a very good reason. In these past few years we invested heavily in your quality of life. We allocated a significant amount of EU funds in various sectors; the environment, renewable energy and in the infrastructure of our ports and roads. We modernised the entire fleet of public transport and invested in sports facilities. We also looked out for the quality of life of the elderly, of people with disability and other vulnerable categories. In order to make another leap in your quality of life, we are proposing the following new measures for the coming five years.

## **51. National Environmental policy**

The measures in favour of the environment as stipulated in the national environment policy which was adopted in 2012 after a wide-ranging public consultation process, will be implemented.

## **52. The creation of national parks for the enjoyment of all families**

- i. We will create natural recreation parks for families, which will include walking paths in the countryside. At the same time, we will clarify the laws of right of passage in rural areas.
- ii. We will draw up an integrated policy that establishes guidelines for the management of our valleys.

## **53. Natura Agency**

A new agency Natura, will be set up which will be responsible for safeguarding biodiversity, as well as the running and conservation of protected sites, parks and nature reserves. Apart from taking care of their environmental value, the agency will also strengthen their socio-economic value, so that they can be enjoyed by the public now and in the future. The agency will work hand in hand with environmental groups.

## **54. A National Water Management plan**

A National Water Management plan, integrating the various existing plans on water, namely the Storm Water Master Plan, the Sewerage Master Plan and the Water Catchment Management plan, will be implemented. Among other measures we will also do the following:

- i. Water will be regarded by law as a public resource, while new incentives will be initiated for the conservation of water in households, which will include the use of wells as well as the agricultural sector.
- ii. Our country is the first to treat all its sewerage. We will now invest further so that the water which is treated in liquid waste treatment plants will be used in agriculture.
- iii. The national project for water catchment, which is co-financed by the EU, and which will solve the flooding problems in Birkirkara, Msida, Qormi and Marsa, Zabbar and Marsaskala will be completed. This project will increase the potential storage of water in Malta by at least 4 times the current levels.



## **55. Reducing dust levels in the air**

A system of environmental permitting will be fully introduced. With this in place each industrial sector, including quarries, will be bound by environmental standards, including on the pollution of our air with dust, so that we will finally solve the problem of dust emanating from quarries and construction sites.

## **56. Better control of noise pollution**

We will strengthen the law controlling noise pollution and establish a help-line service for public complaints related to noise. Complaints will be forwarded directly to the authority concerned for it to take the necessary legal action whereas a mediation service will be set up when the disturbance concerns residents living next to each other. Enforcement will be carried out with the cooperation of the Police. Other measures will be introduced to reduce traffic noise in arterial roads.

## **57. Energy Policy**

In the energy sector a PN Government is committed to:

- i. Provide clean, cheap and safe energy.
- ii. Help consumers use energy in an efficient, responsible and sustainable way.

The long-term plan of the Government is to make our energy as cheap, clean, safe and sustainable as possible, meaning that:

- i. We have built an extension of 150 MW at the Delimara power station which started operating towards the end of 2012 and is a clean and more efficient plant reducing the level of emissions and the cost of fuel.
- ii. We shall complete the interconnector, which is an electrical under-sea cable of

200 MW connecting Malta to Sicily, by the beginning of 2014. This will provide up to 70% of the electrical needs of our country without producing any emissions.

- iii. Thanks to EU funding, we will build a gas pipeline which will connect Malta to Sicily. This will provide the cheapest gas possible and our aim is for this project to be completed by 2018.
- iv. We will complete the installation of Smart Meters all over Malta by the end of this year, which will assist families and businesses to consume energy in a more responsible and efficient manner.
- v. We will continue increasing energy from renewable sources in order to have cleaner energy and to have households and businesses reduce the consumption and ensure that Malta contributes in a holistic manner in the fight against climate change.

## **58. Introduction of night tariffs**

- i. From 2014, the interconnector with Sicily, together with Smart meters, will open up the possibility for the introduction of a night tariff during the night. We will be able to buy electricity at a cheaper price directly from Sicily. This will encourage the consumption of electricity in households, businesses and industry at times when it can be bought at a cheaper rate from Europe.
- ii. The night tariff will reduce the current rates by between 7% and 26% from 10:00pm to 6:00am, depending on the time of night when it is consumed. This tariff will come into force once the interconnector with Sicily is completed at the beginning of 2014 and depend on the realities of the international market which can alter the price of energy.



## 59. The Empower Programme

By the end of this year all Maltese households and businesses will have a Smart Meter which will allow for more flexible and efficient bills. With Smart Meters, you can check how much energy you are consuming on a day to day basis and make the necessary changes. With these meters in place there will no longer be the need for bills to be issued with estimated readings.

We shall introduce a number of schemes that will enable families and businesses to be more efficient in the use of energy and give more opportunities to produce more energy through photovoltaic panels as follows:

### *i. Empower Green Home*

- The Government provides each household with a verification of its energy consumption. You will know how to reduce consumption and consequently reduce your bill. You will also know what type of systems can help you most, whether it is photovoltaic panels on the roof, apparatus to save water, collection and storage of rain water, means of insulation or LED lights. Families that use this verification method will be able to invest in these systems and receive a grant of 15% along with an interest free loan on the outstanding cost.
- Families that invest directly in photovoltaic panels can receive a grant of 50% of the capital expenditure up to a maximum of not more than €3,000 paid for by the Government and from EU funds.
- Families that opt to buy photovoltaic panels without financial aid will be eligible to a more favourable feed-in tariff of 17c or 18c as announced in the 2013 budget for a period of 20 years.
- For those families who do not have space on their roof to install photovoltaic panels, the Government will increase communal space which

will be used for solar farms on public buildings and roofs in industrial areas. This is a process has already begun.

### *ii. Empower Green Business*

- This scheme applies to all small businesses that employ up to 30 people and is similar to the Empower Green Home scheme, with the sole difference being that you can take out a loan of up to €20,000 at very low interest rates and a tax credit of 50% of the amount invested in these measures.

### *iii. Empower Green Schools*

- This scheme applies to Church and Independent schools and is similar to Empower Green Home with the difference that schools receive a grant of 33% on the amount invested up to a maximum of €20,000 and a loan of up to €20,000 with very low interest rates.

### *iv. Empower Green Industry*

- We will extend the current scheme of High Energy Users even for those factories and hotels that consume 1 GwH or more annually.
- We will allocate €20 million of EU funding for renewable energy schemes in industry

## 60. Strengthening sports associations

Schemes will be launched so that sports associations that benefit from public land can pair up with the private sector to develop the land with modern and sustainable facilities which can attract sports tourism and make use of alternative energy.

## 61. More sports facilities in our schools

- i. In partnership with the private sector we will increase the number of sports programmes for everyone, ensuring that





all the State educational colleges are equipped with high level sports facilities which include an indoor hall and other outdoor facilities that can be used by the students during school time and by the local community and by sports associations at other times.

- ii. More sports scholarships will be awarded in the same manner in which scholarships are awarded in other academic areas.

## **62. Infrastructure in sport**

- i. We will allocate EU funds and seek private sector partnerships to build new sports facilities to accommodate certain sports disciplines which currently do not benefit from adequate infrastructure.
- ii. We will start a project to build outdoor gym in each locality and to upgrade playing fields.

## **63. Road safety and Motor Sports**

We will allocate land for the construction of a multi-purpose track to serve as a space for motor sports, for training on road safety and for other activities for learner drivers and the granting of licenses. As a result we will be able to give a boost to motor sport in Malta, we will have adequate facilities to train and educate new drivers and increase road safety. The plan is for the Government to allocated land for the track to be developed with the private sector, with the involvement of the Malta Federation of Motor Sport, driving schools and other interested bodies.

## **64. Encouraging the use of bicycles**

We will encourage the use of bicycles by creating bicycle parking bays which will promote the use of an alternative means of transport and therefore reduce traffic. These parking bays will be placed in prime locations,

as well as at University and MCAST, in order to encourage students to use this means of transport. We will also increase bicycle lanes in our main roads.

## **65. More incentives for the use of electric cars**

Vehicles charged from clean energy sources will help to improve the quality of our air as well as ensuring that Malta fulfils its obligations on the use of alternative energy in transport. When considering the distances in our country, one can easily recognise the advantages of this means of transport. A PN Government will follow the National Strategy on the Introduction of Electric Vehicles, with the aim that by 2020, Malta will have 5,000 electric vehicles. Consequently the Government will introduce the following schemes:

- i. Fiscal aid for the purchase of electric cars.
- ii. Fiscal aid for the purchase of electric motor bikes.
- iii. Removal of all license payments of electric cars currently on the road.
- iv. A reduction of tax for companies that change their vehicles that run on fuel with others that are electric.
- v. Financial aid to whoever scraps an old vehicle to have it exchanged with an electric one.

## **66. Traffic and parking management**

- i. A traffic monitoring centre will be established, with the aim of monitoring traffic electronically, especially in areas of high congestion. The centre will be in contact with Traffic Police and the Mobile Squad. Electronic road signs that warn drivers of traffic congestion and offering alternative routes will be introduced as part of a new national network system,



together with a system of broadcasting of traffic announcements.

- ii. In order to manage the traffic situation better, we will enter in partnership with the private sector to build car parks in order to reduce the current parking problem.

## **67. Good quality roads**

- i. We will continue rebuilding arterial and connecting roads. We are projecting an outlay of €100 million for the coming 5 years, co-financed by the EU.
- ii. We will continue building new residential roads after having built 460 roads in the last 5 years. There are still 120 residential roads which need to be built and we commit to build them within 2 years, after which we will invest not less than €5 million each year on the building of residential roads.
- iii. We will continue the patching of major roads and to this end will invest not less than €2 million per year and €500,000 for road signs and road markings.
- iv. We will reactivate the public private partnership scheme with Local Councils so that they will be in a position to improve the roads for which they are responsible. We will allocate not less than €1 million per year for this purpose.

## **68. Funds for the paving of town and village centres**

We want you to be proud of the locality in which you live. It is always pleasant to see the historical centre of one's locality paved and adorned with flowers and street furniture. We shall therefore create a fund for the paving of the historical centre of your locality. In those cases where the square is already paved, the scheme will cover surrounding roads.

## **69. More efficiency in your locality**

In order for you to benefit more from your Local Council, we will introduce a scheme by which the budget of the Local Council may be increased for those Councils that are more efficient, based on clear and transparent criteria that will be established beforehand. In so doing the Council will be more accountable towards its electorate and will become more efficient.

## **70. Valletta European Capital of Culture**

In 2018 Valletta will be the European Capital of Culture. This is an occasion that deserves to be given its due importance. We will therefore:

- i. Convert the Palace in Valletta to a tourist attraction of a standard that compares to the best attractions in the world. We will open the finest collections of works of art to the public, which up till now have been gathering dust in storage.
- ii. Make Fort St Angelo and St Elmo two unique attractions in the Mediterranean, complementing each other and strengthening the sea link between them. This will give a boost to tourism, the arts, culture and our national identity. St Elmo will become a historical fortress that hosts cultural and tourist activities that befit such a place, The restoration which is currently underway will be concluded and the doors of these gems will be open to the public, after they were closed down and left derelict for a very long time.
- iii. Set-up a museum for contemporary art as a prime attraction for Valletta 2018.
- iv. Complete the national aquarium in Qawra, the Visitors' Centres in Ggantija and the project of Dock 1.
- v. Complete the restoration of the bastions of Valletta, Cottonera, Mdina and the



Citadel, which are being carried out thanks to EU Structural Funds.

- vi. Grant access to local artists to mount exhibitions in public buildings.
- vii. Establish a Maltese cultural road-show which will visit different countries with the participation of various Maltese artists. Furthermore Maltese embassies will open their doors to host exhibitions promoting Maltese culture. This will serve as a means of encouragement to local artists to exhibit their works in foreign countries. We will therefore be contributing to eliminate the restrictions and limitations that our artists encounter.

## **71. A child's pension account**

In order to strengthen the legacy for our future generations we will open a child's pension account with €1,000 in it, for each child that is born or adopted. The account will be in the name of the child but parents and relatives may contribute to it. The Government will work with financial institutions to invest the money in this account in the most advantageous manner.

## **72. Long-term planning for persons with severe disability and their families**

Families worry that in their absence a severely disabled family member will not be guaranteed the same quality of life, once the family is no longer there to provide. The PN is fully aware of this concern and this is what led to the creation of Agenzija Sapport. However, as is the case with any complex problem, the solutions are not straight forward. There is no single good solution which is appropriate for each and every person. Moreover, the PN is also aware that the family is not only in the best position to help a disabled family member, but that the family actually wishes to carry on providing care itself for as long

as possible. This challenge remains a priority for which the PN will adopt the following measures:

- i. The creation of a legal structure within Agenzija Sapport to facilitate the development a Plan for Life by means of which a family can, if it so wishes, come to an agreement with the Government on what they wish for the disabled family member, once the family will not be in a position to provide care. This Plan for Life, which can also include the setting-up of trusts, will be a contract which once established can be updated. It will define the participation of the family and that of the Government in all aspects of the life of the person with a disability. The family can therefore have peace of mind that when they can no longer provide care, the transition will be smooth and planned.
- ii. Adults who do not have a severe disability will be given the opportunity to rent or buy residential property with the assistance of the Housing Authority while still having access to support services if and when the need arises.
- iii. Community services will be significantly increased so that people with disability can be supported through this service. The Independent Community Living Fund within the Agenzija Sapport, which was set-up a year ago to provide support so that a disabled person can live in the community, will increase by at least €500,000 per year for the coming 5 years. Direct payments to the disabled person and their families will be made so that they will be able to buy the services they need. This fund will also consist of a personal assistance service for people with a disability.
- iv. Every year for the next five years, as a minimum, a community residential home for persons with a severe disability will be opened.



- v. A tax credit will be given on services which are provided to disabled persons and their families, enabling the family to remain together.
- vi. By means of the law on guardianship, people who require support to make their own decisions will not only have this support, but will also have the necessary legal protection for the purposes of transparency and accountability. In the first year of the new legislature the necessary structures will be created so that the law on guardianship comes into force.

### **73. Solidarity between generations**

We owe the country we live in today to our elderly. The elderly made us who we are, built our identity and everything else that we are benefitting from today. A PN Government will increase its commitment to ensure that all the elderly may continue participating fully in all aspects of society. Solidarity between generations strengthens the identity and values of our country on which we build a stable future. For this to continue a PN Government:

- i. Will create programmes in conjunction with Local Councils to provide work opportunities for the elderly within the community, such as work in schools, sports, cultural sectors and others.
- ii. Will increase the opportunities of training and education for the elderly who wish to continue studying after retirement as well as opportunities for sport activities.
- iii. Will increase the number of day centres in more localities with the elderly themselves having a say in how they are run.

### **74. Services for the elderly**

- i. In partnership with the private sector, we will increase and strengthen home care services provided for the elderly and new tax incentives will be introduced for those who have a carer, including for those persons who are on unpaid leave in order to care for their elderly parents. The *Pensjoni tal-Wens* will be revised with the intention of helping more people who wish to take care of the elderly or other dependent adults, to remain living at home.
- ii. When elderly or other dependent adults need special equipment (such as special beds, special mattresses, breathing apparatus etc.) that are normally provided in hospital, they will be made available for home use and provided for by the health service.
- iii. We will increase the number of residential beds and respite care in homes for the elderly and the disabled who can no longer live at home. This will be done by means of additional partnerships with the private sector and NGOs, whilst also introducing new geriatric centres and intermediary care services within the community, as well as outreach support services to adults, aimed primarily at assisting the ever increasing number of elderly people who suffer from chronic conditions.

### **75. Increasing the allowance for elderly persons who remain at home**

- i. To further encourage the elderly to remain living at home and in their community, the allowance of €300 to each elderly person who lives at home, once they have reached the age of 75, will be increased to €500 with effect from



1 January 2014. In the case of a couple remaining at home the allowance will be given to both husband and wife.

- ii. The cost of living allowance will be added in full to pensions.

## **76. Private Pensions**

Pensioners who paid for a private pension apart from national insurance will no longer have their private pension deducted for the purposes of the social security pension and therefore the social security pension will be paid in full.

## **77. Foreign Services Pension**

Persons who receive or will receive a foreign services pension will no longer have this pension deducted for the purposes of the social security pension and therefore the social security pension will be paid in full.

## **78. Treasury pension**

Persons who receive or will receive a treasury pension will no longer have this pension deducted for the purposes of the social security pension and therefore the social security pension will be paid in full..

## **79. Disability pension**

A complete revision of disability pensions will be carried out so that:

- i. We will have at least two levels: the current level which will continue to be given to persons with severe disability and a new, higher, level which will be paid to people with an even more severe disability. The higher pension level of persons with a disability will be at least equal to the national minimum wage.

- ii. The pension will be granted on the basis of the needs determined by a socio-medical board and not on the basis of the cause of one's disability.

- iii. The pension will not be deducted if the person earns other income, especially if this income is earned from a job.

## **80. Invalidity pension**

Now that the system of invalidity pensions has been strengthened and abuses have been curbed, the invalidity pension will be of greater support to those families where a person cannot continue working for a period of time because of illness or a medical condition. Therefore:

The invalidity pension rate will be increased depending on the number of persons supported by this pension.

The invalidity pension will reflect the salary insured with the social security.

Persons receiving an invalidity pension will be given permission to study or work voluntarily if this will be of benefit to their rehabilitation or to be trained in other types of work if their condition allows it. While participating in voluntary work or approved programmes of study or training, they will be able to earn a stipend to improve their financial situation. The maximum period of time for which an invalidity pension can be granted will increase from 3 to 5 years.

## **81. Widows' pension**

Following the implementation of changes to the widows' pension, so that widows with children and those who remarry will not lose their widows' pension, two final changes are required to complete this reform:



Should a widow or widower opt to work, that person will not lose the widows' pension regardless of how much they earn.

All widows who lost their pension when they remarried, will once again be entitled to that pension.

## **82. Services for vulnerable families**

We shall ensure that personal services of social work and counselling that have served vulnerable families so well, will be strengthened and consolidated. Therefore a strategic revision of the services granted will be made with the aim of strengthening the structure, increasing research, improving collaboration between public and non-government sectors, as well as ensuring that the services reflect the needs of Maltese society today. Access Centres will increase by four in Malta and by one in Gozo.

## **83. Office for Social Innovation**

We shall set up an Office for Social Innovation where you can seek assistance if you have an innovative proposal of a social nature, even if at an experimental stage. The Office will help you source funds (national, European or private) and the people who can assist you to implement it. This means that the benefits of such socially innovative projects will be reaped by both the sector they are aimed at as well as by the persons who came up with them.

## **The following budget measures which the labour party voted against will be introduced immediately**

### **84. An increase in Children's Allowance**

The minimum rate of children's allowance will be raised from €350 to €450 for every child, while for those earning a minimum wage, the rate of children's allowance will be increased by €177 for each child instead of €100.

### **85. An increase in the allowance for the elderly who live at home**

To encourage the elderly to remain in their homes and in their community, the €300 allowance that is granted to the elderly who remain at home once they reach 80 years of age, will be extended to the elderly who are 78 years old as of this year, and will apply in the following year to those who are 75 years old and are living on their own or with their family. In the case of a couple the allowance will be paid to both the husband and the wife.





# A quality leap in your rights

The PN has brought freedom, fundamental rights and civil rights. These rights were strengthened by our accession to the European Union. Your rights are now not only limited to Malta but have been extended to all the 27 countries of the EU. We believe in safeguarding the law, and that the law is the same for everyone. We want just and effective remedies for anyone who feels that justice has not been served. We will continue our fight against discrimination and in strengthening equality. We have invested further in law enforcement for your protection. To make another quality leap for your rights we are now proposing the following new measures for the coming five years.

## **86. Revision of the Constitution**

On the 50th anniversary of independence which will occur in 2014, we will review the Maltese Constitution and update it accordingly. The revision will focus on:

- i. The way the structures of the state function.
- ii. The recognition of the role of civil society organisations and social partners in public life.
- iii. Strengthening democracy through the more direct participation of people with the assistance of modern technology..

## **87. A Parliament that scrutinises the Government and is close to the people**

The new Parliament will be closer to the people. Your political representatives will be closer to you. We will strengthen parliamentary powers so that the Government is continuously kept under scrutiny whilst all parliamentary debates will be broadcast.

## **88. Guaranteed Human Rights for everyone**

Twenty five years ago the PN made the European Convention of Human Rights and its protocols part of Maltese law. These served us well. We now believe that it is time for the next step. These should now become part of the Maltese Constitution so that they will be guaranteed by default. When a law is declared anti-Constitutional by the Courts, it will be declared null and void for everyone and not just for the parties to the case. You will therefore no longer need to go to Court to enforce the rights granted by that Court judgement.

## **89. Revision of the concept of Neutrality**

The time has come to revise the concept of neutrality. Malta needs to remain neutral but not become neutralised in the face of wrongdoing. During the Libyan crisis we courageously took the right side, rather than sit on the fence or hide behind our neutrality as others did. This showed that we need to revise the concept of neutrality in the Maltese Constitution by updating it.





## **90. Malta in the European Union**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 Malta will hold the Presidency of the European Union for the first time. Malta will be at the centre of Europe's work, and will be presiding over thousands of meetings in Malta and abroad. It will also be determining the agenda of the EU. This will be an unprecedented event where Malta will be expected to excel. The role and involvement of the Maltese Government is paramount for Malta to make the Presidency a success. To fail is simply not an option. A PN Government commits itself to make the Maltese Presidency of the European Union a memorable and successful one.

In the first eight years of membership, a PN Government managed to obtain one thousand three hundred million euro in funds from the European Union. That's right, €1,300,000,000. It is now time to start negotiating the financial package for the years 2014 to 2020. A PN Government is best-placed to negotiate the best possible financial package on your behalf which would translate into a better infrastructure, a stronger economy and more investment in your skills and abilities.

## **91. No one will shut you up on the internet**

The internet will be recognised in the Constitution as an important tool to exercise one's fundamental rights, including the right of the citizen for informational self-determination and for online digital privacy. This will guarantee the unencumbered and free development of the individual's personality through this technology. We will also strengthen other rights, such as the right to access of information that is held by public authorities, the elimination of excessive surveillance and the freedom of access to networks of information such as the internet. Specific laws to this effect will be established and these rights and their enforcement will be guaranteed.

## **92. Open Government**

You will have the right for electronic access to any information that the Government has stored about you. As a result you will be able to access, understand and use the data that the Government keeps about you. Where the data is already accessible we will increase its accessibility by making it more user-friendly. This process will be carried out with respect to your privacy and confidentiality and through a secure electronic system. This will increase transparency, trust and democracy.

## **93. Voting made easier**

- i. Persons who happen to be living abroad or are on holiday in any country of the European Union on election day, will be able to vote in a Maltese embassy.
- ii. With the introduction of new facilities, persons with a disability will be able to vote, in privacy and with dignity, according to their particular needs.

## **94. More Women with positions of responsibility**

We commit to increasing female representation in the boards of public companies and entities to at least 40% and we will encourage the private sector to do the same by 2020.

## **95. The right to vote at the age of 16**

Young people will have the right to vote and contest Local Council elections from the age of 16.

## **96. Sign language interpretation in Maltese**

A relatively small group of persons with a hearing impairment depend heavily on Maltese sign language. A PN Government



has already started to finance a limited service of sign language interpretation in Maltese. As a result such persons now have greater access to communication for their educational needs. It is important that this service continues to be developed. A PN Government will therefore ensure that this service will continue to flourish not only in the educational sector but also in relation to other essential services such as the medical, social and recreational sectors.

### **97. Guide dogs for the visually impaired**

A number of persons who are visually impaired have a guide dog for assistance. The training of dogs and maintaining this service is costly. A PN Government will allocate financial assistance for the training of guide dogs so that anyone with a visual impairment who wishes to benefit from this service will have their own guide dog.

### **98. Solidarity Fund**

A Solidarity Fund will be set-up in which 0.5% of your income tax will be paid and you will be able to choose yourself who will benefit from it. The beneficiaries may be organisations of civil society that work in the social, philanthropic, religious, artistic and cultural sectors as well as animal welfare organisations and others.

### **99. LGBT rights**

- i. A clause will be inserted in the Constitution protecting you from any discrimination on the basis of your sexual orientation. This means that if any law or administrative practice allows for this type of discrimination, it will be declared null and void.

- ii. We will enact the law of civil partnerships for gay couples. This law will give gay persons the right to have their relationship recognised and legalised.

### **100. A Children's Lawyer to safeguard the interests of the child**

We will appoint a lawyer within the Office of the Commissioner for Children to safeguard the interests of the child. This lawyer will be empowered to represent children in court in cases where children's rights are at concerned. This will ensure that children will always have adequate representation and a voice in Court. Children who appear in Court will be made aware of their right to use the services of this lawyer.

### **101. Legal aid for victims of crime**

Legal aid is already offered to the accused who do not have the financial means to defend themselves.. This aid will now also be formally extended to the victims of crime that appear *parte civile*. This means that victims will also be able to protect their interests even when they do not have the means to do so.

### **102. The Law Courts**

- i. After a consultation process, we will carry out a thorough reform of the Commission for the Administration of Justice and we will introduce effective measures to empower the Chief Justice to ensure the highest ethical behaviour and efficiency of the members of the judiciary.
- ii. The system of court cases by appointment will be introduced in all the Courts and the time allocated will be made clear for each and every sitting.



- iii. We will increase human resources to give members of the judiciary more time to listen to a case and deliver a sentence within the shortest time possible.
- iv. A new system will be introduced so that all legal documents of a particular case can be accessed electronically.
- v. An intensive programme, including training, will be introduced so that the number of cases which can be dealt with by arbitration or mediation will increase.
- vi. The conditions and ongoing training of the members of the judiciary will improve, and the mandatory retirement age will increase from 65 to 68 years of age, in order for the judiciary's experience to be utilised to the full. Members of the judiciary will not be able to carry out any legal related work after retirement.
- v. The work of the Armed Forces will be supported by the most up to date technological systems because we believe that a modern and efficient Force is not necessarily about quantity, but also about quality.

#### **104. A Police Force that is closer to you**

- i. By the end of 2013 we will propose a law which will enable Members of the Police Force to form their own union.
- ii. An additional 200 Police Officers will be assigned on the beat in Malta and Gozo.
- iii. Without creating an atmosphere of a Police state, Police presence in areas of entertainment will be increased.
- iv. The number of traffic Police will be doubled so that traffic management at peak times will be facilitated.
- v. Policemen on the beat and traffic Police will be given modern equipment to keep in constant contact with the control centre.
- vi. We are fast reaching the completion of the Police Academy in Ta' Kandja. This complex will develop into a campus for the Academy in which all the specialised squads will continue their professional training.
- vii. We will provide additional training for Police Officers to engage with the public, in particular with victims of crime, so that they can appreciate the difficulties of the community and take it upon themselves to offer protection when necessary.
- viii. We will set up support structures for members of the Police Force who may be facing personal or work difficulties, with
- i. We will make the Armed Forces of Malta more professional by engaging qualified persons in specialised areas. We will continue to enrol new soldiers and officers to ensure constant regeneration.
- ii. We will continue to provide training opportunities for Members of the Armed Forces.
- iii. We will invest further in the capabilities of the Armed Forces of Malta to develop the Air Squadron and the Maritime Forces further by means of new equipment and infrastructure and by means of EU funding.
- iv. We will ensure that the Armed Forces will continue making a valid contribution to maintain stability in the region. We will also consider participation in crisis interventions, in a responsible manner and on a case by case basis, keeping in mind the interests of our country.



particular attention to members who are seeking a better work-life balance.

- ix. Police Officers protect all citizens whether they are the victims or the perpetrators of crime. We will revise the laws concerning persons under arrest to ascertain that at all stages of the investigation and criminal procedures, the rights of the accused are safeguarded.
- x. We will appoint an Ombudsman with specialisation in complaints received in relation to the Police Force.

### **105. Civil Protection which takes care of you**

- i. By the end of 2013 we will propose a law so that members of the Civil Protection can form their own union.
- ii. New vehicles and equipment will be purchased. By 2018 all vehicles and equipment would have been changed.
- iii. We will invest in new equipment which the Civil Protection needs to improve the services it offers in particular equipment to control chemical and oil spills in our waters.
- iv. We will provide regular training to all members of the Civil Protection. We will collaborate with similar foreign entities to further widen our knowledge and skills to be better prepared to deal with situations in our country and contribute overseas.
- v. We will sustain the Department's resources to strengthen its role in educating people on how to protect themselves.
- vi. In collaboration with MCAST we will create a course in relation to Civil Protection which will be open to the general public. This training will provide skills that can be used privately.

- vii. The right for a pension after 25 years' service will be extended to all members of the Department of Civil Protection.

### **106. Harsher penalties for the most serious crimes**

In order to ensure your peace of mind, we will increase the penalties for the more serious crimes, particularly in those cases where justice may not have been served, amongst them, violent theft, in particular hold-ups, sexual crimes against children, violent crimes against the elderly, corruption, and for offences related to human trafficking. In these cases probation and suspended sentences will be excluded.

### **107. Confiscation of goods and assets acquired through criminal activity**

A law will be introduced so that all goods and assets deriving from criminal activity, including corruption, will be confiscated and placed in a special fund, which will be used to finance social projects. In this way the perpetrators of the crime can start to pay for the damage caused to society.

### **108. Life after a prison sentence**

We will help individuals who leave prison to start a better life by drawing up a plan that caters for their individual needs. This will include professional help and guidance regarding social aspects, such as social benefits, housing, training and work. Prisoners will be given the opportunity to be trained in a skill or achieve academic qualification, so that everyone is truly given a realistic opportunity to start a new life in society.



## 109. Consumer rights

The PN remains determined and committed to foster a culture of respect and a quality service to all consumers and will take the following measures, amongst others:

- i. Launch of a Charter on the Rights of the Consumer, based on European laws, which covers the most important areas of this sector.
- ii. Increase the number of departments and public services that have a Quality Service Charter so that by 2015 every public service will abide by these obligations towards the consumer.
- iii. Every entity that provides a public service, including private entities that provide a public service, such as public transport and telecommunications, will have a Quality Service Charter by 2016.
- iv. Launch an information campaign for businesses and enterprises which explains consumer rights. The Malta Authority for Competition and Consumer Affairs will also provides assistance to businesses to ensure these rights are properly safeguarded.
- v. We will significantly reinforce the complaints handling office of the Authority in such a way that the consumer will continue to find a fast and effective solution. Alternative dispute resolution will remain a central instrument in the protection of consumer rights, as it offers another solution with minimum expense and within a relatively short time without the need to go to court.

## 110. Full rights on your home ownership

There are about 1,100 plots in home ownership schemes where the land has not been paid for by the Government and where the contract remains on Promise of Sale.

In the last five years the Lands Department paid more than €7.6 million to buy more than 500 plots on which these properties are built. In the coming five years we will commit €10 million to continue with this process of regularising their position. We will therefore have rendered justice with the families living there today, as well as with the original owners, while allowing current families to be owners of their own home.

There are around 3,200 residences affected by possession and use between 1947 and 1952. These are nearly all found in Cottonera, Valletta, Marsa and Floriana. In all these cases the original owners of the land get paid a small annual amount while those residing in these buildings cannot become owners because the land on which the properties are built does not belong to the Government. In the last five years we paid more than €2.7 million in order for the Government to acquire 505 residences which were passed on to the Housing Authority. In turn tenants were offered the possibility of buying their house at a subsidised rate. In the coming five years we will commit another €5 million to continue this process so that this chapter, which finds its roots at the times when the war was over will be closed once and for all. This will enable thousands of families, if they so wish, to become owners of their residence.



### **111. Revision of public entities for more efficiency**

- i. In order to reduce public expenditure and increase efficiency, we will appoint independent experts to review public boards and authorities and establish whether any of them may be amalgamated, or possibly eliminated, so that resources are better used. This process has already commenced, for example with the amalgamation of a number of entities in the new Authority for Competition and Consumer Affairs, as well as in the transport sector.
- ii. We often complain that the law is not properly enforced, for example in the areas of environment, noise, air pollution, transport and even tax evasion, and that to get it enforced one is often passed on from one Government department to the other. This must change. Those responsible for enforcement in different Government departments or public authorities must work together so that resources are rationalised and enforcement becomes more effective. We will therefore amalgamate the enforcement powers that are currently spread among different agencies into one body, so that there will be one collective and coordinated effort in the enforcement of laws, as well as greater respect for the law and increased discipline.
- iii. By the end of this year a PN Government will carry out a review of the recurrent expenditure of the Government. Without reducing the workforce or the services that are provided by the public sector, this process will identify up to 2% in savings in Government expenditure which will arise from increased efficiency and rigorous cost control.

### **112. The MEPA reform will continue**

- i. The revision of the Structure Plan with the formulation of the Strategic Plan for the Environment and Planning will be completed.
- ii. A business unit will be set up at MEPA to assist business and investors in the processing of applications for development connected with commercial activity.
- iii. We will extend the list of small developments that can be carried out without a permit by simple notification.
- iv. Compliance certificates will be issued by the applicants' architect who will shoulder professional responsibility for them.
- v. The role of MEPA in relation to buildings which are not scheduled, historic or of particular architectural value, will be limited to external appearance, and MEPA will no longer interfere as to how the building will be divided and used internally.
- vi. One of the biggest challenges in this area is the irregular development that took place over a number of years, when the laws and people's expectations were not what they are today. MEPA has thousands of cases on its books, many of which were created prior to the formation of the Authority. Some have been inherited or passed on to other people. The PN recognises that the Government has an obligation to ensure that this situation is addressed in a responsible and realistic manner. Therefore a PN Government will build on a scheme introduced in August 2012 concerning courtyards and the height of rooms, and another scheme presented to the Parliamentary Committee on the Environment and Planning and a scheme will be developed to regularise the cases that occurred prior to the MEPA reform and that are not of





a grave nature, under certain conditions, ensuring that:

- The owners', neighbours' and third parties' rights are safeguarded;
- The action to regularise the position does not extend to the future. Thus, should the building be demolished and rebuilt, it will need to be built in line with current development policies; and
- A proportionate fine is paid to the Local Council to be used for the benefit of the locality.
- At the same time any new illegal development will be addressed immediately in line with the relevant legislation that was introduced recently.

### **113. Controlling of construction in residential areas**

- i. We will introduce measures so that property development in residential streets is completed within a stipulated period of time and does not extend for an exaggerated or indefinite period.
- ii. We will extend the powers of the Building Regulations Office in such a way that the inspectors of this Office will have the power to issue fines in cases where the laws of construction are being breached in particular the 2007 Regulations on Environmental Management of Construction Sites.
- iii. We will also introduce restrictions on the size of construction vehicles that can be used in narrow roads.
- iv. From 1st January 2015 the authorisation of construction of buildings in residential areas will include conditions whereby cranes must be erected in the construction site and not in the road, except where it is technically impossible to do so.

### **114. Immigration**

Today we all appreciate that the Government needs have a fair policy on immigration and not one that is populist and that fosters fear and hatred towards immigrants. With a PN Government you have the peace of mind that the surveillance of our territorial waters is strengthened through the Armed Forces of Malta. The Armed Forces will be supported through more training and more sophisticated equipment, including patrol boats, helicopters and new aeroplanes; that people whose lives are at risk will be saved and not left to fend for themselves in dire circumstances; that migrants are treated with dignity; that shelter will be given to whoever deserve it, whilst those who do not are sent back to their country of origin. At the same time we will continue our efforts so that more migrants arriving in Malta are relocated abroad, as has already happened with over 1,700 migrants. In particular a PN Government:

- i. Will implement a report that has been drafted with all those concerned with this sector, including NGOs, concerning the strategic revision of detention services
- ii. Will develop a policy of integration that takes into consideration immigrants who have been granted asylum. The necessary training and services will be given so that immigrants will integrate well in European culture, according to the country where they will start a new life.
- iii. Will set up one Agency to incorporate all the services currently available in this sector, such as the Detention Services, AWAIS and other services.
- iv. Will provide training opportunities for anyone wishing to have a career in this sector.
- v. Will ensure that no person working in law enforcement, is assigned to this sector for an indefinite period of time.





- vi. Will strengthen the protection of the Maltese borders through significant investment in sophisticated equipment and related training, through financing provided by the European Fund for External Frontiers.
- vii. At European Union level we will continue to work to develop a common asylum policy, together with the help of the European Asylum Support Office that operates in Malta.
- viii. We will ensure that this sector becomes a model of good practice at European level where Malta remains recognised and acknowledged for its hospitality and solidarity, while ensuring that this burden is carried in an equal and fair manner by all countries in the European Union.

## **115. Animal rights**

- i. We will increase penalties for persons found guilty of cruelty towards animals.
- ii. We will introduce new regulations to protect the health and safety of animals.
- iii. After the success of the dog park in Ta' Qali we will open other dog parks.
- iv. We will earmark swimming areas for animals.
- v. A campaign to neuter stray dogs and cats will be launched.
- vi. More help will be given to organisations and sanctuaries that work within in the animal sector.



# A quality leap for Gozo

**Gozo was and remains Malta's precious gem. It has a special place in the PN's political action. We have recognised the particular challenges of Gozo and over the years we have paid special attention to it, in particular with measures and preferential schemes for Gozo. We have invested heavily in Gozo in particular in its environment and infrastructure. We have allocated 10% of EU funds to Gozo. We have strengthened the particular characteristics of Gozo whilst respecting the principle of subsidiarity. To make another quality leap in Gozo we are proposing the following measures for the coming five years:**

## **116. Incentives for new businesses in Gozo**

An exemption from income tax of up to a maximum of €200,000 over a period of 3 years will be given to every business that opens in Gozo, in whichever sector, that employs at least two people in Gozo. A drastic reduction in licence fees for businesses that operate in or from Gozo. These businesses will pay an equivalent of just 10% of what is paid in Malta for the same licence.

## **117. Tourism plan for Gozo**

To encourage tourism in Gozo and to increase and sustain it throughout the whole year, we are proposing that in the first six months of the coming legislature, the Government will

approve a tourism plan for Gozo that will be founded on the following points:

- i. We will grant incentives to the cruise-liner industry so that passengers that arrive in Malta also visit Gozo. There will also be an incentive for a transport service between Grand Harbour and Gozo.
- ii. We will work with the private sector to open more five star hotels that provide new jobs in Gozo, and to this end the Government commits to accelerate all necessary procedures, including MEPA applications.
- iii. We will introduce advantageous schemes so that existing hotels can improve their services and to this end we will offer incentive schemes valued at €300,000 with the aim of increasing the number of jobs in this sector.
- iv. We will incentivise the development of boutique hotels in Gozo, so that accommodation on the island is further diversified.
- v. As Gozo is famous for its farmhouses, we will introduce a scheme to the value of 300,000 Euro for the upgrading of this sector and we will eliminate any administrative costs.
- vi. We will open a health tourism niche market by modernising Gozo's general hospital, by building an indoor public pool, by creating more public spaces for walks in the country side and through investment schemes to enable private



health clinics and bed and breakfast establishments to install the necessary facilities.

- vii. We will give incentives so that the agricultural and fishing sectors can partner with the tourism sector to provide the tourist with an authentic experience of rural Gozitan life, whilst increasing earnings for farmers and fishermen.

In order to further boost tourism in Gozo, we intend – in the context of our policy on Eco-Gozo – to incentivise visits to Gozo by:

- i. Introducing a scheme to support cultural activities, such as carnival, operas, religious tourism, and other leisure activities that may attract tourists. Preference will be given to activities held in Winter.
- ii. We will develop a programme aimed at the cleaning and continual maintenance of the valleys and fields in Gozo, as well as at the creation of more natural parks. This initiative, for which we are allocating €400,000 per year, should employ approximately 100 workers.
- iii. Special rates will be introduced on the Gozo Channel for group visits of more than 25 persons to encourage more tourism in Gozo. Maltese citizens and other tourists who spend at least one night in Gozo will pay the same tariff as Gozo residents for the ferry crossing.
- iv. A fund of €500,000 will be reserved for advertising Gozo in Malta as well as internationally.
- v. We will implement a policy of rural tourism in Gozo with an emphasis on agro-tourism, agri-tourism, cultural tourism and religious tourism. This framework will launch a Made in Gozo label.

## **118. Small industries in Gozo**

We will convert the Industrial Estate in Xewkija into a Business Park which can be used by small Gozitan business ventures such as carpenters, panel beaters, mechanics, stone masons, etc. – who are willing to relocate in order to expand and employ Gozitans. Except for environmental reasons, there will not be any restrictions on who can relocate to the business park. Whoever sets up shop in the business park will not pay rent for the first five years, on condition that they increase the number of employees to a reasonable amount in relation to the space they occupy. After these five years, they will pay a subsidised rent for a number of years.

## **119. A permanent link between Malta and Gozo**

We will support and finance –with the assistance of the European Union – the construction of a permanent link between Malta and Gozo in accordance with the results of studies made, and as long as the project is proven to be environmentally viable. We believe that this permanent link is essential for Gozo to increase its tourism and commerce and above all to increase job opportunities for Gozitans in Gozo.

## **120. Infrastructure in Gozo**

- i. We will invest in infrastructure in Gozo, in particular on roads. To this end we are reserving no less than €1 million per year for the construction of new roads or the reconstruction of secondary and residential roads in Gozo.
- ii. We will build a new extension to the Sixth Form in Gozo and carry out a complete refurbishment to the current Sixth Form building.



### **121. Eco-Gozo**

- i. In this next phase of Eco-Gozo we shall focus on renewable energy and the storage of water. In the sector of clean energy, especially solar, we will work towards having all Gozo's energy needs generated entirely from alternative sources. Within three months from the beginning of the legislature, a regional conference will be held to draw up a list of all that has been achieved so far. A plan of action with detailed measures to be taken in the coming years will then be adopted.
- ii. In the context of Eco-Gozo we will work in order to:
  - Start using water generated from drainage purification;
  - Offer incentives so that Gozitan families and businesses will continue investing in efficient and alternative energy;
  - Increase the number of orchards and rain storage facilities;
  - Launch the second phase of the renovation of the Centre for Research for Agriculture and the Environment in Xewkija;
  - Open a child development centre which will incorporate a regional child care centre and all services related to health, development and education given to children;
  - Give incentives to open small childcare facilities in the community.

### **122. Business Centre in Rabat, Gozo**

In partnership with the private sector we will launch a Business Centre which will serve to provide space for IT companies, financial services, gaming companies and other companies operating in the services sector that wish to operate from Gozo and employ Gozitans.

### **123. Gozo General Hospital**

The Gozo General Hospital will continue to extend the services it provides and help reduce waiting lists in Malta. Amongst others we will set-up a clinic for diabetes, heart and respiratory problems. We will open a Dementia Ward, a department for physiotherapy and a new dental clinic. We will extend the service of chemotherapy and strengthen Health Promotion and primary care.

### **124. The establishment of a Regional Council for Gozo**

On the 50th anniversary of the launching of the Civic Council, Gozo will be legally recognised as an island region. The current Regional Committee will be turned into a Regional Council which will be set-up by law and will be responsible to monitor the implementation of the Government's policy in Gozo and be consulted on this policy. It will also have the power to pass bye-laws applicable to Gozo. The Council will be composed of the Minister for Gozo, the Members of Parliament for Gozo, Mayors of the localities in Gozo as well as five representatives elected from civil society organisations in Gozo. This will strengthen the principle of devolution and will ensure that the future of the island is shaped and implemented with the direct participation of all stakeholders with an interest in the island.

### **125. Gozo and the European Union**

- i. In the last nine years the PN Government allocated 10% of EU funds to Gozo. This resulted in the largest ever investment in infrastructure in Gozo. The PN commits itself that if re-elected, it will again allocate 10% of the EU financial package to Gozo. In the event that Malta will not



continue to receive the same financial package, it will negotiate a direct financial package for Gozo, so that it will continue to benefit from EU funds until 2020. The funds allocated to Gozo will be used on projects in accordance with the priorities listed in this electoral programme and after consultation with the Regional

Committee for Gozo, eventually the Regional Council for Gozo.

- ii. An official with specific responsibility for Gozo in the European Union will be appointed and form part of the Malta's Permanent Representation in Brussels.





Five years ago, Ella was the face of the Nationalist Party electoral programme for the General Elections 2008. She was nine years old and used to go to primary school. Today, Ella is 14 years old and frequents a secondary school. She has chosen the subjects in which she will continue studying. In the next five years, she will complete her secondary education and will further her studies to embark on her career path.

During the same period, we will be making the necessary choices so that Ella and children her age can work towards the career that they aspire to.

The proposals in this electoral programme are a guarantee for the sound and stable future of Ella, and all of us.



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