



The Lisbon Treaty and its Implications for Malta

Malta will be able to:

- ❖ work together with the other EU Member States (MS) on relatively new issues like such as climate change, energy security, international terrorism;
- ❖ benefit from the commitment to the development of a common immigration policy;
- ❖ apply the 'solidarity clause';
- ❖ have a stronger say through the functions of the new External Action Service (High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy & Vice-President of the European Commission). This will also provide more practical diplomatic and consular assistance to Maltese citizens when travelling to third countries;
- ❖ increase the number of its MEPs to six. The European Parliament will have no more than 751 members – thus decreasing the number of MEPs from the other European MS;
- ❖ retain "its" Commissioner;
- ❖ increase the number of policy areas when its 6 MEPs in the European Parliament approve EU legislation together with the Council. (Co-decision procedure);
- ❖ allow its citizens, together with other EU citizens who total at least one million, to directly request the European Commission to bring forward an initiative of interest to them in an area of EU competence;
- ❖ voting in the Council of Ministers through Qualified Majority Voting (double majority) to effect more policy areas. This means decisions in the Council will need the support of 55% of Member States / 15 out of 27 EU MS / representing 65% of the EU's population. Unanimity will be retained in areas including tax, foreign policy, defence and social security;
- ❖ grant its citizens a legally binding Charter of Fundamental Rights that covers the individual rights related to human dignity, fundamental freedoms, equality, solidarity, rights linked to citizenship status and justice;
- ❖ have the right to oppose the availability of its civilian and military capabilities and operations since military capabilities remain in national hands and will be on voluntary basis ;
- ❖ coordinate its economic and employment policies within the sphere of competence of the EU, which will allow for the possible coordination of MS social policies;
- ❖ share some of its sovereignty to complement the goals of all the EU MS together. The Treaty of Lisbon will acknowledge that the Union reflects the will of the Member States and their citizens, and that its powers stem from the Member States;
- ❖ offer a privileged position of scrutiny concerning all Union legislation to national parliaments.

The Commission is to send national parliaments:

- its consultation documents (green papers, white papers and communications);
- its annual legislative programme and other planning documents;
- draft legislation.

Moreover, national parliaments should also receive:

- initiatives originating from the EP or a group of Member States, requests from the European Court of Justice, the European Central Bank or the European Investment Bank for the adoption of a legislative act;
- the agendas for, and notice of the outcome of Council meetings;
- the annual report of the European Court of Auditors.



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

The period given to national parliaments to examine draft legislative texts and to give a reasoned opinion on subsidiarity will be extended from 6 to 8 weeks. Exceptions possible in cases of urgency.

Subsidiarity means that – except in the areas where it has exclusive powers – the EU acts only where action will be more effective at EU-level than at national level. Any national parliament may flag a proposal for EU action which it believes does not respect this principle. This triggers a two-stage procedure:

- if one third of national parliaments consider that the proposal is not in line with subsidiarity, the Commission will have to re-examine it and decide whether to maintain, adjust or withdraw it;
- if a majority of national parliaments agrees with the objection but the Commission decides to maintain its proposal anyway, the Commission will have to explain its reasons, and it will be up to the European Parliament and the Council to decide whether or not to continue the legislative procedure.