

The European Parliament & Malta's First 3 years of EU Membership

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Outline:

- Role and Powers of the European Parliament
- What is an MEP and what can they do for us?
- Three Years' Experience

The European Parliament: Role and Powers



Role & Powers of the European Parliament

Legislation	Representation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Decision 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assent 	Budgetary Power
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify Budget Lines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve or Reject the Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overrule Non-Compulsory Spending
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day-to-day scrutiny of Commission activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reject the Whole Budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on Reports 	

**What is an MEP and what
can they do for us?**

What is an MEP?

- People's choice – democratically elected representative

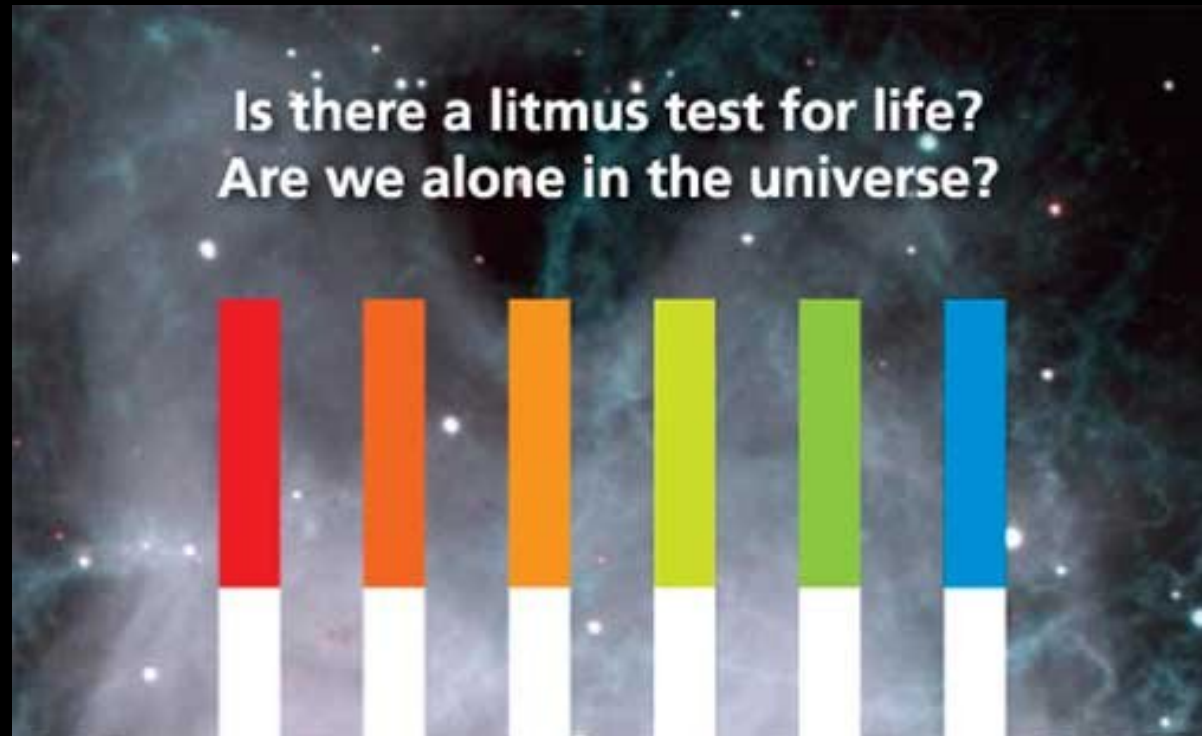


What is an MEP?

- Aim – to secure the best deal in the Maltese citizens' interest



What is an MEP?



- Best Litmus Test of accountability – success or failure in winning electorate's confidence

What Can an MEP Do?

- Help the public participate

The role of the Media in helping the public know what's going on in the EP and how things are developing

What Can an MEP Do?

- The size of a country/delegation doesn't matter

Presence at crucial meetings, active participation and commitment can be even more influential than size

What Can an MEP Do?

- Coalition-building not government vs opposition approach

**Constructive
dialogue not
confrontation**

What Can an MEP Do?



In the Committee:

- Rapporteur to draw up a report
- Initiate a proposal
- Propose amendments to reports etc.

What Can an MEP Do?



Generally:

- Promote public debate on any issue
- Raise an issue in their political group
- Question Commissioners, Ministers from the Presidency etc., formally and informally

Malta in the EP

the first 3 years

Illegal Immigration

- Has been high on Agenda of Maltese MEPs
- Big steps made to increase awareness to help Malta and other South Mediterranean Countries
- Need to tackle urgent problems of influx – avoid deaths and fight against human trafficking organisations

Illegal Immigration

- What Happened?

Nov.2006:

Commission proposes measures for establishment of a common migration policy, based on solidarity, including proposals for the setting up of a European coastguard service, as part of FRONTEX, the EU's external borders agency

Illegal Immigration

- What Happened?

MEPs have worked to
increase FRONTEX
operational budget

Illegal Immigration

- What Happened?

Agreement between EP and Council re insertion of 'emergency clause' regarding EU funds for immigration – now possible for Malta and other affected EU MS to benefit from EU funds to address emergencies effectively (Refugees Fund, External Borders Fund, Integration Fund and Return Fund)

Departure Tax



Departure Tax

- The Issue:
 - Compatibility of Maltese departure tax with EU rules questioned – MEPs' intervention
 - Maltese government under pressure to remove the tax
 - Rather than remove MT government reduced the tax as from mid-2007

Departure Tax

- What Happened?

**Commission has sent a
letter of formal notice to
Maltese authorities
requesting its modification**

Departure Tax

- What Happened?

**...after a Parliamentary
Question was tabled,
querying the
compatibility of Maltese
departure tax with EU
law**

Maltese MEP as Rapporteur on Roaming Charges

- An issue which hits all EU citizens, notably MT, hard
- Resulting regulations to slash roaming charges by 50%



Maltese MEP as Rapporteur on EU Budget

- 14.12.2006 - One of 3 EP representatives who signed the EU's 2007-2013 budget together with outgoing Finnish Presidency and European Commission was Maltese
- Report criticises waste in some areas, failure of EU bodies to work together cost-effectively and identifies shortcomings in staff recruitment policy and procedure



Conclusions

- Eurobarometer – EP is institution that is most trusted by the Maltese
- A Learning Curve – new way of doing politics
- Citizens – greater awareness of their rights and of assistance that can be provided by their MEPs
- Malta – the realisation that MT citizens can make their voices heard and put forward their concerns through their directly elected MEP

How well are you
monitoring the work of
the EP, its committees
and your MEPs?



Thank you for your attention

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