



Need to Employ?

SAVE

on new salaries

over
€8,000,000
towards salary costs

EMPLOYMENT AID PROGRAMME
EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

If you recruit a person from any of the following groups, you will receive a subsidy on the wage cost and on the employer's national insurance contribution for a specific duration*:

- ▶ under 25 or over 50 years of age
- ▶ has recently been made redundant
- ▶ has been absent from work for at least 2 years
- ▶ is a single adult looking after dependants
- ▶ is a registered disabled person
- ▶ is a long term registered unemployed person

*Terms and conditions apply.

Contact us or visit our website for more details.

Tel: 22201 217 / 219 / 235
Email: eap.etc@gov.mt



Operational Programme II - Cohesion Policy 2007-2013
Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life
Aid Schemes part-financed by the European Union
European Social Fund (ESF)
Co-financing: EU Funds, National Funds, and Private Funds
Investing in your future



Joseph Muscat: trusted, but an unknown quantity

Just under half the country says it is ready to trust Labour's young leader with the reins of government. But only 35% know what his policies are: MaltaToday's survey paints the picture of Joseph Muscat as the Maltese have got to know him.

JAMES DEBONO

JUST under half of MaltaToday's survey respondents – 47% – say they are willing to trust Opposition leader Joseph Muscat with the next government, but then only 35% think he has "clear policies".

In a first of a series of surveys on voters' perception of party leaders, this is the first to show how three years before Malta's next general election, nearly half the Maltese electorate is already seeing Muscat as prime minister-in-waiting.

But a sizeable 28% are still not sure. And another 25% said they would not trust the country's government in his hands.

Muscat still enjoys considerable support for a party leader who is clearly shown to have a lack of clear, alternative policies.

In fact, the Labour leader does not have clear policies, according to 32% of respondents who said they are willing to trust him with power. Even among Labour voters, a staggering 22% are unsure whether he has clear policies, and 7% think that he lacks any.

This seems to be the general perception of Muscat in the minds of MaltaToday's respondents: Muscat is certainly different to Alfred Sant and his approval rating shows it. But his new agenda, his umbrella of progressives and moderates, or even his 'political earthquake', has not provided people with clear policies. In some instances, they even jar with what voters traditionally expect from a social democratic party – his immigration plan is uncomfortable to liberals; his MPs display uncomfortably conservative and parochial traits; and he is not as confrontational as some inside his party expect him to be.

Significantly, 18% of respondents who said they voted Nationalist in the 2008 general election are now willing to trust Muscat in power. This suggests that in the past two years Muscat has succeeded in making deep inroads inside the PN's electorate, a sure sign of likeability among non-Labour voters.

The survey also shows that despite his young age of 36, 49% think that he has enough experience to become Prime Minister. Only 29% think he is inexperienced

while 23% are not sure. But the survey also shows that a significant number of respondents do not find Muscat convincing in his speeches: something his predecessor Alfred Sant excelled at during parliamentary sessions, but not at mass-meeting oratory which Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi has retained the upper hand in.

Asked whether they feel convinced when listening to Muscat, only 36% replied yes while 25% replied no. A significant number of respondents (22%) replied that they are "not always convinced" by Muscat.

Significantly, among Labour voters 25% do not feel entirely convinced when listening to their leader. On the other hand 21% of PN voters feel that Muscat is convincing in his speeches. This could be an indication that in his bid to reach out to Nationalist voters, Muscat risks coming across as artificial and contrived to part of his electorate.

The survey also shows that while 17% would like Muscat to become "more moderate" in his opposition to the government, only 11% would like Muscat to become more confrontational. Significantly, while only 8.2% of Labour voters would like him to be more confrontational, the figure rises to 14% among respondents who voted PN in 2008.

This could be an indication that a segment of Nationalist voters are so disillusioned with the current government that they would like Muscat to take a more aggressive stand in keeping the administration on its toes.

Yet this category of angry voters are outnumbered by 34% of Nationalist voters who say Muscat must be more moderate.

The survey also shows that 70% of Labour voters are satisfied with Muscat's style present style of opposition.

Methodology
The survey was held between Monday 12 March and Thursday 16 March. 441 people were chosen from the printed and on-line versions of the directory. 300 accepted to be interviewed. The results were weighed to reflect the sex and age balance of the population. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 5.7%

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- 35% think Muscat has clear policies
- 36% feel convinced by Muscat when listening to him
- 17% want him to be more moderate
- 11% want him to be more confrontational
- 49% think that Muscat has enough experience to become Prime Minister
- 47% ready to trust Muscat with country's government
- 18% of Nationalist voters in 2008 election ready to trust Muscat with country's government



Is Joseph Muscat offering concrete policies for when he is elected in government? (%)

	PN voters	PL voters	All
Yes	15.3	71.2	34.8
No	59.7	6.8	29.5
Don't know	25	22	35.7

(Respondents were asked to state how they voted in 2008 general elections)

Should Joseph Muscat be more or less moderate in his opposition to the government? (%)

	PN voters	PL voters	All
More moderate	34	8.2	16.9
Less moderate	13.9	8.2	11
Good as he is now	18.1	69.9	41.4
Don't know	34	13.7	30.7

FROM EUROSCEPTIC TO EUROPHILE



Old Aloysian Born to a Burmarrad family 'half-Labour, half-Nationalist', Muscat is educated at St Aloysius, the Jesuit-led college that produced a sizeable chunk of the Maltese political class, including Eddie Fenech Adami.

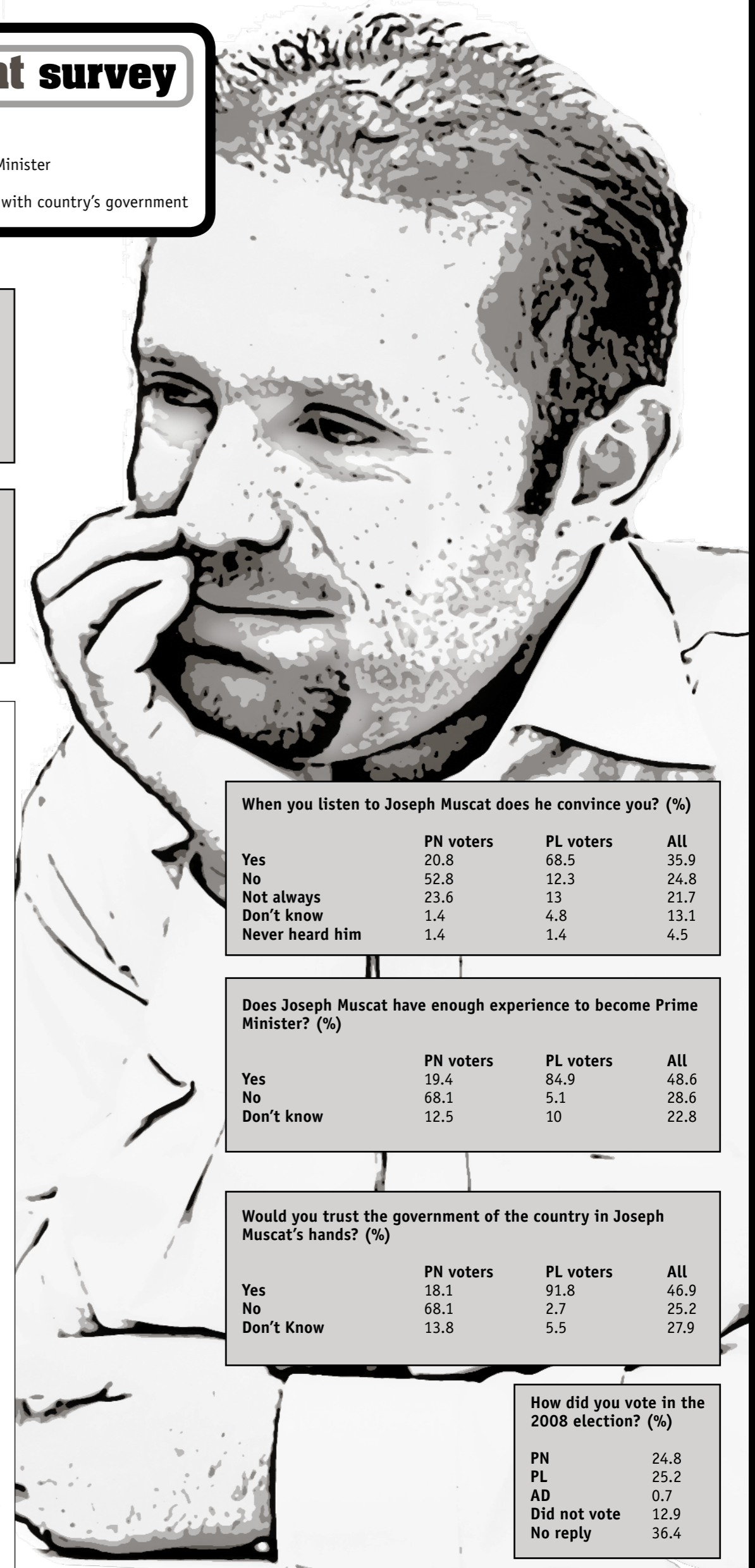
No to EU After university, Muscat becomes an investment advisor and Labour's education secretary, helping to create its online presence with maltastar.com. Staunchly eurosceptic, in 2002 political office seems a long way ahead: "To stand for the general elections you must be either a robber, a missionary or just plain crazy." Bless...



A man changed As MEP, Muscat enters a new world of politics. He is rapidly changed into a prospective Labour leader, and returns with a self-styled progressive agenda bagged from Brussels' euro-socialists. "We cannot be European on paper only... We must be European also in our actions."



Party leader Muscat promises a 'political earthquake' whose tremors do not provoke any earth-shattering changes, except for the centralisation of power within Labour HQ. Still, he rides on popular discontent with the Nationalist government and soon becomes the political adversary that the PN never had with Alfred Sant.



When you listen to Joseph Muscat does he convince you? (%)

	PN voters	PL voters	All
Yes	20.8	68.5	35.9
No	52.8	12.3	24.8
Not always	23.6	13	21.7
Don't know	1.4	4.8	13.1
Never heard him	1.4	1.4	4.5

Does Joseph Muscat have enough experience to become Prime Minister? (%)

	PN voters	PL voters	All
Yes	19.4	84.9	48.6
No	68.1	5.1	28.6
Don't know	12.5	10	22.8

Would you trust the government of the country in Joseph Muscat's hands? (%)

	PN voters	PL voters	All
Yes	18.1	91.8	46.9
No	68.1	2.7	25.2
Don't Know	13.8	5.5	27.9

How did you vote in the 2008 election? (%)

PN	24.8
PL	25.2
AD	0.7
Did not vote	12.9
No reply	36.4