



Questions for political parties and their candidates to the 2019-2024 European Parliament European Parliament Elections 25th May 2019

On Saturday 25th May 2019, Maltese citizens will be joining their counterparts in the other EU Member States and vote to elect a new European Parliament.

It is now beyond any reasonable doubt that the global economy is leading to massive climate change that poses an existential threat to humanity. It is also beyond any reasonable doubt that human activities are causing a collapse of biodiversity and an impoverishment of ecosystems on a massive scale.

So in view of the important EU elections this May, we've drafted a set of 5 priority issues which we are calling on political parties in Malta and their candidates for the MEP elections to consider, promote and endorse. These include global issues but also local environmental activities that might not fall in line with the spirit of conservation.

From ODZ development to climate change, from hunting and trapping derogations to the need of better enforcement, from the transport challenges to clean air, from biodiversity loss to unsustainable fisheries and bycatch...we shall be sharing this manifesto with all of Malta's European Parliament candidates and requesting their responses to each of the 10 questions below.

Before it is too late, we need the citizens of Europe to stand up and be counted. The next European elections are a perfect opportunity to put environment on the agenda!

1. Protecting nature and biodiversity

Despite world-class legislation and good intentions, the EU is about to miss its 2020 target of halting biodiversity loss. We are not only losing unique species and our natural heritage, but we are also eroding the living systems that sustain our societies and human beings. Biodiversity continues to vanish, mainly due to intensive farming, damaging infrastructure development and serious underfinancing of effective conservation action.

Q1: According to an evaluation led by the European Commission¹, the EU budget co-finances only a fraction (9-19%) of what is needed to implement Natura 2000 – the EU's network of protected areas. Do you agree that next EU budget must significantly increase and is protection of biodiversity and natural ecosystems amongst your priorities? What will you do to ensure that Malta and the EU stop losing their biodiversity and get on the path of recovery of nature?

I definitely agree that EU must increase this budget based on sustainable outcomes. Furthermore I am in favour that EU budget and funds are

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/fitness_check/docs/nature_fitness_check.pdf



formulated on the premise that they are guided by the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals.

I would definitely declare a war on the use or misuse of certain pesticides and herbicides, commit myself to the reduction in use of single use plastics, ensure that the drinking water directive is more ably worded and stricter targets on carbon footprints are established.

Locally I am for :

-Noise and light pollution legislation have to be implemented forthwith.

-A masterplan on waste management that hails on a circular economy has not as yet been endorsed. Reduction and reuse are not key elements in our waste strategy. We have embarked on a project of waste incineration to produce energy from waste.

Encourage the concept of construction and demolition sustainability thus decreasing the burden on landfills.

-It is also high-time that we have a cut-off date for use of all plastics in supermarkets.

At a Global level, it is imperative that EU continues to safeguard our macro-system and it should be imperative that in any treaties or trade offs with other countries outside EU, our common global environment heritage is nurtured.

I would remain me, a guardian and keeper of a healthy environment. As if it fails all else fails, and worse off will be humanity.

Q2: If there is one piece of legislation that all the EU agrees that it is healthy and relevant, these are the Nature Directives (Birds and Habitats). Are you comfortable with Malta derogating from these Directives solely for the enjoyment of a small part of the population such as for hunting in spring and trapping? Especially when hunting is done during the spring migration when birds are heading to their breeding grounds, and even more importantly when many of these, like the Turtle Dove, are in decline and declared as vulnerable by the EU and IUCN?



I am against this type of political lobbying. We must call a spade a spade. I am in favour of sustainable hunting and bird trapping. Spring hunting should not be permitted.

Q3: How do you feel about the fact that a few politicians remain adamant to find further loopholes even within ECJ rulings such as that which stopped Malta from continuing with finch trapping? What message does this send to our community when laws, and now even court rulings, are bent backwards with no justification?

Implementing measures anti-legally (not illegal), because man made laws are not perfect as they may lack clarity, specificity and reproducibility, does not mean that they are right and fair.
I stand by what is right and fair.

In Malta, anti-legal interpretation and implementation has become a norm. Our constitution lacks the principles that have a rule of law control system. (The only exception is human rights).

Q4: In its latest country report on environmental implementation for Malta the European Commission asks the Government to pull its socks up with regards to the Natura 2000 sites designation process and the implementation of management plans for these protected sites. How will you, if elected, make sure that Malta comes in line not only with its obligations on Natura 2000 sites but also in regard to protecting the ever-decreasing Outside Development Zones (ODZs)?

It is useless designating Natura 2000 sites if the conservation objectives and management plans as dictated by EU's directive on Birds and Habitat are not adhered to. I am referring to those that fall within Malta's jurisdiction both on land and at sea.

First and foremost Malta needs to have an Architectural Policy (National Masterplan) and must rectify the European Council Landscapes Directive. Moreover SPED terminates in 2020. This clearly underlines the dire states we face in protecting our natural capital and ODZ. I am not in favour of extending the development zone.

I am of the opinion that at EU level, the Birds and Habit directive should be revisited, more so because of climate change, thus articulating stricter regulations which are tied to win funds if one adheres to the required processes or penalties if one defaults.

2. Bringing oceans back from the brink

The reformed Common Fisheries Policy and Marine Spatial Planning Directive brought some hope that years of fisheries mismanagement and damage to ecosystems would end. However, due to inadequate implementation and wrong targeting of funds, oceans continue degrading because of human activities, resulting in seabird bycatch, pollution, uncoordinated offshore development and climate change. Furthermore EU institutions have repeatedly put the short-term interests of powerful fishing lobbies before scientific advice.

Q5: Mapping and protection of sensitive species and habitats should precede determination of human activities in the marine environment. Do you agree? What steps will you take to ensure that spatial planning and management plans truly ensure sustainable use of the seas, especially with regards to our Maltese Coastal and Marine Protected Areas?

In and outside Parliament I (PD) have been upfront to protect our coastal waters and marine life and marine natura 2000 sites. Human activities has been of detriment to marine flora and fauna. Sikka l-bajda natura 2000 site which is 20 times bigger from our ODZ needs to be better protected.

At a local level I note that:

- (1) I am in favour of an aquaculture industry which has more stringent regulations and site monitoring, and for a robust National Aquaculture Strategy that is science based when it delves into fish farming. (particularly blue fin tuna farming)
- (2) We must once and for all stop the leakage of raw drainage especially from Gozo Treatment Sewage plant.
- (3) I am against the dumping of construction waste at sea and land reclamation to creat an artificially island. Studies must be very thorough if such a project in embarked by government.

Q6: Would you support taking fishing quotas and authorisations out of the direct control of EU member states (Ministers) and base them on binding

scientific advice and first principles such as ensuring stock recovery and preservation of threatened species?

Fishing quotas have to be better sustained from overfishing and I am in favour that certain quotas should not be transferable from one state to state. Seasonal and regional variations should be based on scientific advice and this should be paramount to guide EU Commission's decision. Which ever authority decides the crux is that we must act timely and objectively.

3. Giving Europe healthy food and a living farmland

The EU spends almost €60 billion a year for an obsolete and unfair Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) – the policy that supports the intensive model of agriculture that is damaging nature and climate. Furthermore, the CAP fails farmers both at the social and economic level, so that many smaller farms disappear, and generational renewal is at risk.

Q7: The loss of biodiversity (birds, butterflies, pollinators) in the farmland, pollution of water, loss of soil, driven to a large extent by unsustainable farming, is alarming. Do you agree that the future CAP must seriously invest into rectifying this problem by allocating at least 50% of its budget to environmental and climate measures?

I am of the opinion that the Common Agricultural Policy will not be solved just by increasing budgetary allocation or proportional percentages in favour of environmental and climate measures although these will definitely assist, but by a determined and shared political will that stirs away from unsustainable farming. Soil conservation has to be given a more topmost agenda. I am all for clean, fair and healthy foods.

4. Preventing dangerous climate change

The fight against climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing our society. Current trends of dangerous increases in temperatures pose an existential threat to society and will push a huge number of species to extinction within the next few decades. There is a need for a new, long-term climate protection strategy with the goal to reach climate neutrality, including a transition to a clean, properly sited, sustainable renewables-based energy system that works in harmony with nature.

Q8: Do you agree that to be in line with the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement, the EU needs to step up its climate change ambition, namely greenhouse gas



emissions must be reduced by at least 55%, energy efficiency has to be increased by 40% and the share of renewable energies needs to be increased to at least 45% by the year 2030?

By 2050 EU will be carbon neutral. As an intermediary step green house emissions must be reduced by 55% by 2030 when compared to 1990 levels.

Increasing climate and environmental co-operation is crucial to meet the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (2030 Agenda)

To reach these targets, we must complete the Energy Union and move to foster research and development in low emission technologies, infrastructure, clean energy production, energy efficiency, and a reduction of industry and transport emissions including aviation and shipping.

Q9: With rather alarming pollution readings which are also contributing to climate change, how do you see Malta solving this health issue? Only 1.5% of our cars are electric while our ever-growing cruise liner industry contributes to high air pollution levels mainly in the Grand Harbour area and the southern localities. Would you support the drive to designate the Mediterranean Sea as an Emission Control Area (ECA)?

I am for clean air and safe travel. Our primary goal should be to create a transport system which is eco-and customer- friendly and which is accessible, affordable and reliable. Smart driving and alternative means of transport, especially cycling should be encouraged, and a much desired mass transportation should evolve into a better system. Bus Rapid Transport may be easily set.

Urban streets should be are made livable, and principle and secondary roads offer the necessary infrastructure to the health and safety of drivers, commuters and paedestrians.

All these measures will definetly contribute to better emission readings. Pollutants are a risk factor to a number of health conditions increasing mortality and morbidity. If health fails all else fails. Our air, sea and land have to be nurtured. Malta is a drop in the ocean to solve climate change but every little effort counts. Every ocean starts with a drop.

The fuel station policy is just one example of how government's political direction is irrational and environmentally unfriendly when our drive should be more towards the presence of more electric vehicles in our roads. Moreover the annual local subsidies to change to electric, targets only a few to make the much desired change.

Sustainable transportation is a must. We must head towards zero-emissions vehicles to decarbonize all forms of land transport. The EU should be the first to enable self-driving vehicles on its roads. Agreed targets should be adhered to.

Trans-European networks, more so railways, should be better integrated. Sea and air transport should also be looked into and better means of transportation and routes analyzed and implemented. Individually Member States may champion an innovation, and EU pilot studies used to establish the objective criteria to embark on inter-union projects.

I am all for supporting the drive to have the Mediterranean Sea an Emission Control Area. It is an interesting proposal.

5. Waste and plastics

With the increase in populations across Europe and visibly also in Malta, together with the increased consumption rate both from citizens and tourists, today waste has become a daunting challenge to manage. The biggest concerns are mainly plastics, which end up in the sea. However Malta also has a problem with waste resulting from massive development projects.

Q10: Do you support the removal of all single-use plastics across the EU Member States? Do you see a future problem for our country with regards to the waste generated from major infrastructural projects and what are the solutions you envisage for this, without impacting the natural habitat, both marine and on land?

First and foremost I am for reduction and repair principles in waste management. I am in favour of eliminating single use plastic across all member states. This should be a step up approach.

Sustainable Construction has the following dimensions:

-Reduction of waste: building re-use of parts of existing building and material re-use in another site or for redecoration purposes.

-Recycling of waste by re-using raw materials even in another form even because of down quality.

-Old unused buildings can be re-developed or rehabilitated into another form by conversion.

-Demolition and new construction with excavation : Waste generated from such construction sites is either dumped in landfills or re-used for infrastructure projects. Soil is preserved. I am not in favour of land reclamation. I am awaiting for the publication of the land-fill policy and land reclamation studies by ERA.