



Europe

Do you agree that Malta should become a member of the European Union in the enlargement that is to take place on 1st May 2004?



Foreword

From time to time a people is called upon to take national decisions which have far-reaching implications for both present and future generations.

Here in Malta we are today at such a stage. In a few weeks' time we have to decide whether Malta should become a member of the European Union or not.

The answer to this question touches upon issues of fundamental national interest. Our response will in the first place reflect our perception of the meaning and values we attach to our European heritage. At the same time it will define the manner and direction in which we aim to pursue the continuing prosperity and security of our country.

Our decision will not be made in a vacuum. It comes at the end of a series of political choices taken over the last two decades. More specifically, it



comes at the end of a twelve year process which included three full years of detailed negotiations which have highlighted the key issues and touched upon the major concerns of Maltese society today.

The decision we now have to take is therefore very much an intimate part of the life we are living today, inserted as

we inevitably are in a fast changing, complex and challenging international political and economic environment. Because of its extensive and far-reaching nature, our decision will also have a determining impact on the type of country and society we will hand over to our children and grand children.

I am deeply convinced that Membership of the European Union will provide a firm anchor for Malta's own fundamental commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It will insert us and give us a role in a process which is progressively radiating an area of peace, prosperity and justice throughout the whole



European continent. It will extend to us the long term benefits of collective cohesion and solidarity.

I am equally convinced that the negotiations we have just successfully concluded have tackled, and to a satisfactory extent resolved, all those issues which were of particular concern to Malta. At the same time, the results of these negotiations provide a solid basis for Malta to effectively take up the rights and the responsibilities of EU Membership.

Membership of the European Union will

galvanise our economic development by providing us with a solid foundation and an indispensable leverage to meet the unavoidable challenges of globalisation. It will widen and deepen our policies for social cohesion through added dimensions in such areas as those of workers' rights, consumer protection, environmental safeguards, and the care of the elderly and the disadvantaged. It will serve as a broad platform upon which we can further pursue our policies of friendship and cooperation with other

countries at bilateral, regional and global levels.

The discussions and debates we have had over the last few years, have ensured that the Maltese people are well equipped to take their decision on EU Membership in full awareness of the issues involved.

This document is intended as a further contribution in this regard. Its aim is to provide a broad picture of the nature of the European Union together with a summary of the various issues which have been tackled and resolved in Malta's accession negotiations.

Eddie Fenech Adami
Prime Minister