



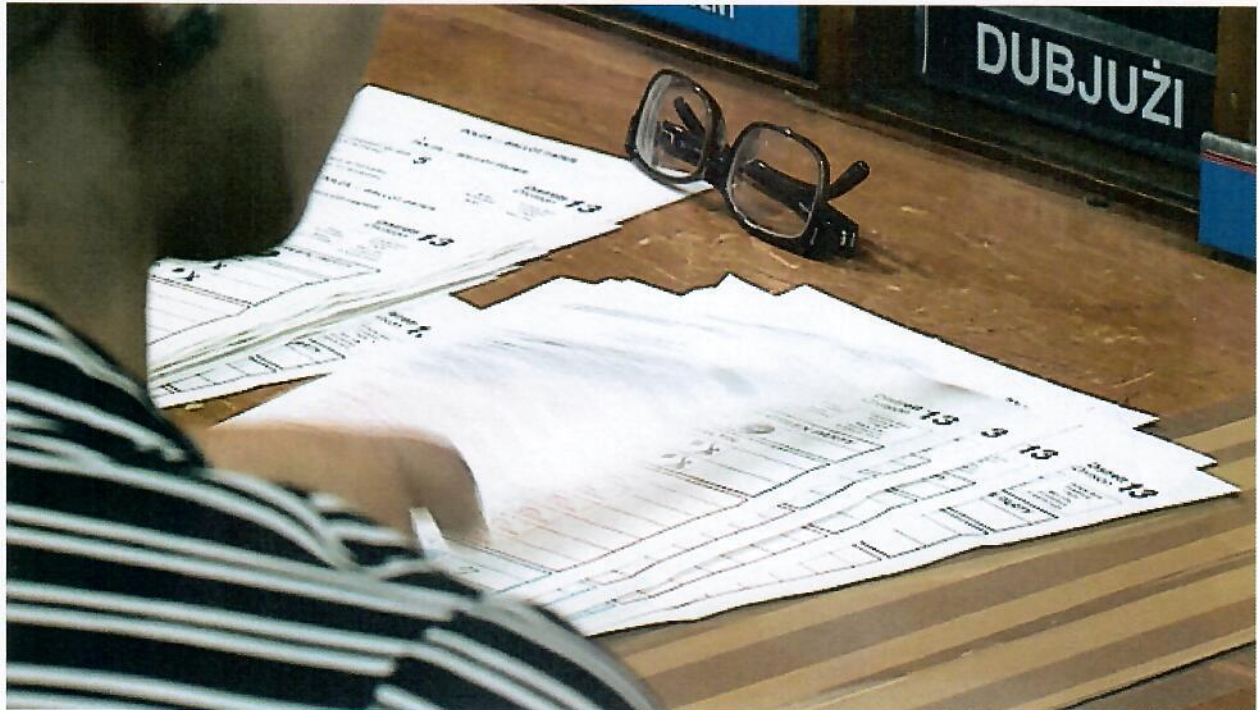
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Lacking substance and excessively aggressive – OSCE on the 2017 General Election

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In the opinion of a commission of observers from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Malta's General Election almost a year ago was held in a context of total freedom and liberty for a pluralistic media although political party stations were obviously partisan and did not provide space for all contestants. OSCE concluded the election was a totally democratic process and was managed professionally and efficiently.

An OSCE delegation followed the electoral campaign and the election and in a 20-page report said that the electoral campaign was confrontational between the two main parties, although in the opinion of the observers the campaign contained little substance. It was also reported that the campaign was excessively aggressive.

The delegation met with party representatives, the Electoral Commission, the Broadcasting Authority and PBS and reported the small parties had complained they were not accorded enough representation by the Electoral Commission, the media and the Broadcasting Authority, making it difficult for them to achieve Parliamentary representation. Regarding broadcasting, the report remarked the Broadcasting Authority ensures PBS impartiality but does not do the same for other stations. The Authority did not impose any fines and itself organises political broadcasts on TVM which was reported as the station most followed.

The OSCE observers remarked that legislation covering party financing had taken a step forward but needs to be further refined to enable more transparency in party finances. Various recommendations were put forward for this to be achieved including that donations from certain entities should be deposited in a bank account that is clearly identified for this purpose.

The report concluded with 21 recommendations two of which were implemented in recent months to continue strengthening the democratic process in Malta. Among other proposals, OSCE recommended a change in the voting ballot and recommended that all parties be involved in all stages of the electoral process.

The observing commission also recommended the elimination of the voting document and that votes for prisoners be considered. There was also a recommendation that a greater number of people be enabled to participate in the country's political process.