[MT] Election broadcasts

IRIS 2017-7:1/25

Kevin Aguilina
Faculty of Laws, University of Malta

Following the dissolution of Parliament and the calling of a snap election on 3 June 2017 by the Prime Minister of Malta one year prior to the scheduled end of the legislature, the Broadcasting Authority has launched a scheme of election broadcasts for the political parties participating in the general elections. The political parties concerned are the two main political parties represented in the House of Representatives during the last legislature, namely the Labour Party (the party in government) and the Nationalist Party (the party in opposition), and the smaller parties, these being the Green Party - called “Democratic Alternative” -, the Alliance for Change, the Maltese Patriot Movement and the newly-formed Democratic Party, which held one seat in the House of Representatives prior to its dissolution after its leader had splintered from the Labour Party.

What is innovative about this general election is that the Nationalist Party (PN) and the Democratic Party have entered into a pre-electoral pact. These two political parties have united together in a “national force” (as it is being referred to). However, due to electoral law constraints, they have to contest the general election under the PN banner as the electoral law does not recognise the possibility of two or more registered political parties coming together to contest a general election under the umbrella of a new political grouping such as “national force”. This has also meant that on the ballot vote only the name of the National Party will appear; candidates of the Democratic Party will be distinguished from those of the Nationalist Party through their designation of “Orange Party”, orange being the colour adopted by the Democratic Party to distinguish it from the blue of the Nationalist Party, the red of the Labour Party and the green of the Green Party.

In so far as the Broadcasting Authority scheme of election broadcasts is concerned, broadcasting time allocated to the Democratic Party has also been subsumed under that of the Nationalist Party; thus, no time has been allocated to the Democratic Party per se but to the Nationalist Party in representation of both political parties.

The scheme of election broadcasts started on 8 May and ended on 31 May 2017. It was a very short scheme of 24 days in all. It consisted of two political debates between representatives of the two main political parties, the Labour Party and the Nationalist Party, two press conferences delivered by each one of the said

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

parties, and a debate between representatives of the three smaller parties (the Green Party, the Alliance for Change and the Maltese Patriot Movement). The smaller parties were also entitled to deliver a message to the electorate, as were the two independent candidates. The scheme of election broadcasts closed with a debate between the leaders of the two main political parties, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.

In addition to debates, press conferences and addresses to the electorate, the scheme also allowed the possibility of broadcasting party productions and political spots; for such productions/spots, the Labour Party and the Nationalist Party enjoyed 120 minutes each, the other three smaller parties were allocated 20 minutes each, whilst the independent parties were allocated no time at all.

The scheme of election broadcasts was transmitted by the public service broadcaster.

Broadcasting Authority, [08/17] General Elections 2017 - Political Debate, 14 May 2017

http://www.ba-malta.org/0817-general-elections-2017-political-debate

Broadcasting Authority, [08/17] General Elections 2017 - Political Debate, 14 May 2017

Broadcasting Authority, [09/17] General Elections 2017 - Political Debate, 16 May 2017

http://www.ba-malta.org/0917-political-debate

Broadcasting Authority, [09/17] General Elections 2017 - Political Debate, 16 May 2017

Broadcasting Authority, [10/17] General Elections 2017 - Press Conference, 19 May 2017

http://www.ba-malta.org/2017-press-conference-22-may-2017

Broadcasting Authority, [10/17] General Elections 2017 - Press Conference, 19 May 2017

Broadcasting Authority, [11/17] General Elections 2017 - News Conference, 23 May 2017

http://www.ba-malta.org/1117-news-conference

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

Broadcasting Authority, [11/17] General Elections 2017 - News Conference, 23 May 2017

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026