

INTERRELATED REGIONS AND DISTRICTS FOR MALTA AND GOZO

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*Addendum to the Study Paper
“Proposals For An Improved Malta Electoral System”*

*To establish interrelated Regions and Districts
as the basic organisational network
for Malta and Gozo, with the Districts
also serving as Electoral Divisions.*



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Reference to Study Paper

Part of the concluding note in section 5 of the study paper states:

«It would be a very positive step forward had the main entities in Malta, (namely, the Central Government, the Local Councils, the Malta National Statistics Office and the Police) to eventually come to utilize the fixed districts defined by the electoral commission as a common basis for their organisation, namely, as “Fixed Administrative Districts”. This would definitely give a unified direction in the administration of the country. This change would require a change in mentality.»

1.2 Main Objectives of Addendum

This exercise takes up the matter further, now including also the regions in the equation, and puts forward this proposal: To establish interrelated Regions and Districts as the basic organisational network for Malta and Gozo, with the Districts also serving as Electoral Divisions.

Malta and Gozo are divided into 68 localities, grouped into 5 regions, identified as the Regions of Malta, with each region having its own regional committee. To elect the members of parliament, Malta is presently divided into 13 electoral divisions each electing 5 members. No relationship exists between the regions and the electoral divisions.

The scope of this exercise is to propose an organisational structure of interrelated fixed regions and fixed districts. This proposal respects the boundaries of the regions and the localities, and achieves its scope without splitting up any of them.

1.3 Parameters Governing this Exercise

- In establishing the proposed interrelated fixed regions and districts, each locality is to be retained as one whole unit.
- Note is to be taken of the existing Regions of Malta in establishing the proposed regions, keeping the required changes to a minimum.
- The regions are to be made up of a number of adjacent districts.
- The districts within each region are to be made up of localities within the same region respectively and, where possible, these localities are to be adjacent to each other.
- The number of districts within each region is to be established in proportion to the number of the registered voters in the respective regions.
- In establishing which localities are to be defined within the districts, priority is to be given to their geographical vicinity.
- The number of districts for the whole of Malta and Gozo is to be a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 15.
- The number of members to be elected to parliament from each district is to be a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 7.
- The total number of members to be elected to parliament is to be an odd number, presently fixed at 65.
- The number of the registered voters in each district is not to be regulated.
- Gozo is to be one of the defined regions and districts.

2. ESTABLISHING THE REVISED REGIONS

Table 2a

Definition of the Proposed Revised Regions and the Number of Districts in Each Region					
Region	Localities	Registered Voters in Region	Region Size Factor	Projected Number of Districts	Actual Number of Districts
Central	Attard, Balzan, Birkirkara, Floriana, Gżira, Ħamrun, Iklin, Lija, Marsa, Msida, Pembroke, Pietà, San Ġiljan, San Ġwann, Santa Venera, Sliema, Swieqi, Ta' Xbiex, Valletta	110,781	20.53	3.73	4
South Eastern	Birgu, Birżebbuġa, Bormla, Fgura, Gudja, Għaxaq, Isla, Kalkara, Marsaskala, Marsaxlokk, Paola, Santa Luċija, Tarxien, Xgħajra, Żabbar, Żejtun	87,463	16.21	2.95	3
Southern	Kirkop, Luqa, Mqabba, Qormi, Qrendi, Safi, Siggiewi, Żebbuġ, Żurrieq	54,122	10.03	1.82	2
Northern	Dingli, Għargħur, Mdina, Mellieħa, Mġarr, Mosta, Mtarfa, Naxxar, Rabat, San Pawl il-Baħar	68,818	12.76	2.32	2
Gozo	All Localities in Gozo and Comino	29,508	5.47	0.99	1
TOTAL	(Electoral Quota = 350,692 ÷ 65 = 5,395)	350,692			12

Table 2a defines the localities forming part of the proposed revised regions. This proposal is based on the data taken from the latest electoral register published in April 2018.

First, the “region size factor” is determined for each region by dividing the number of the registered voters in each region by the electoral quota. This factor is then divided by the average number of seats allowed in each district [(4+7) divided by 2 = 5.5] so as to define the number of districts required in each region.

2.1 Proposed Changes to the Existing Regions

Each of the existing Regions of Malta groups together a number of localities whilst respecting their geographical vicinity and their individual boundaries. The existing regions have no relationship with the electoral divisions, as to date the latter are regularly revised and defined every two to five years, prior to a general election. The map of the existing Regions of Malta is shown in Appendix II.

The proposed revised regions are defined using the existing Regions of Malta as the basic startup organisational structure and by effecting the necessary minimum relocation of certain localities.

The map of the proposed revised regions is shown in Appendix III.

Changes to the Central Region

The proposed Central Region is also to include:

Floriana, Marsa and Valletta, which to date are located within the South Eastern Region;

Ħamrun, which to date is located in the Southern Region;

Pembroke and Swieqi, which to date are located within the Northern Region.

Changes to the South Eastern Region

The proposed revised South Eastern Region is also to include:

Birżebbuġa, Gudja, Għaxaq and Santa Luċija, which to date are located within the Southern Region.

3. ESTABLISHING THE DISTRICTS

Table 3a

Definition of the Districts and the Distribution of the 65 Seats					
Region	District	Localities	Registered Voters	Projected Seats	Actual Seats
Central	1	Floriana, Ħamrun, Marsa, Pietà, Santa Venera, Valletta	26,977	5.000	5
	2	Attard, Balzan, Birkirkara, Lija	33,083	6.132	6
	3	Iklin, Msida, San Ġwann, Swieqi	25,232	4.677	5
	4	Gżira, Pembroke, San Ġiljan, Sliema, Ta' Xbiex	25,489	4.725	5
South Eastern	5	Birgu, Bormla, Isla, Kalkara, Xgħajra, Żabbar	25,273	4.685	5
	6	Fgura, Gudja, Paola, Santa Luċija, Tarxien	28,416	5.267	5
	7	Birżebbuġa, Għaxaq, Marsaskala, Marsaxlokk, Żejtun	33,774	6.260	6
Southern	8	Kirkop, Mqabba, Qrendi, Safi, Siġġiewi, Żurrieq	25,272	4.684	5
	9	Luqa, Qormi, Żebbuġ	28,850	5.348	5
Northern	10	Dingli, Mdina, Mġarr, Mosta, Mtarfa, Rabat,	35,340	6.551	7
	11	Għargħur, Mellieħa, Naxxar, San Pawl il-Baħar	33,478	6.205	6
Gozo	12	All Localities in Gozo and Comino	29,508	5.470	5
Total	(Electoral Quota = 350,692 ÷ 65 = 5,395)		350,692		65

Table 3a defines the required twelve districts in the respective regions, priority being given to the geographical vicinity of the localities. Four districts are defined in the central region, three in the south eastern region, two in the southern region, two in the northern region and one in the Gozo region.

The number of members to be elected from each district (in Table 3a indicated as “seats”) is also calculated by dividing the number of the registered voters in each district by the electoral quota.

The map of the proposed regions and districts is shown in Appendix I.

3.1 Hamlets in the Electoral Register

In the electoral registers published as from January 2013, all hamlets run independently by their respective local administrative committees were listed separately under their name, stating also their parent locality.

Swatar is the only hamlet with its territory spread out within the boundaries of two separate localities, namely, Birkirkara and Msida. As a direct effect of this, the registered voters coming from Swatar are split up in the electoral register under “Swatar, Birkirkara” and “Swatar, Msida”.

In conformity with one of the parameters governing this exercise that localities are not to be split up, hamlets should also be treated at par with the localities. Thus, it is being proposed that hamlets are not to be split up either.

4. COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES

To further check the validity of the proposed organisational structure made up of interrelated regions and districts, other exercises was carried out relative to the electoral registers published in October 2007, January 2013 and May 2017, respectively.

4.1 Proposed Organisational Structure and Registered Voter Changes

Had the proposed organisational structure been effective at the time of the last three general elections, the results that would have been obtained are shown in Table 4a. For comparison purposes, the results relative to the April 2018 electoral register are also shown in Table 4a.

Table 4a

District	Electoral Register							
	October 2007		January 2013		May 2017		April 2018	
	Registered Voters	Seats	Registered Voters	Seats	Registered Voters	Seats	Registered Voters	Seats
1	27,978	6	27,446	5	26,590	5	26,977	5
2	29,493	6	31,081	6	32,182	6	33,083	6
3	23,086	5	24,553	5	24,763	5	25,232	5
4	25,360	5	26,098	5	25,390	5	25,489	5
5	23,935	5	24,606	5	24,647	5	25,273	5
6	26,881	6	27,621	5	27,836	5	28,416	5
7	28,255	6	30,746	6	32,649	6	33,774	6
8	21,305	4	22,953	5	24,405	5	25,272	5
9	26,969	6	28,129	6	28,167	5	28,850	5
10	30,086	6	32,479	6	34,180	7	35,340	7
11	25,712	5	29,537	6	32,295	6	33,478	6
12	26,188	5	27,714	5	28,648	5	29,508	5
TOTAL	315,248	65	332,963	65	341,752	65	350,692	65

The data in Table 4a shows that the proposed organisational structure of interrelated fixed regions and fixed districts would have reacted well to the changes in the number of the registered voters over the considered period of more than 10 years.

As can be seen from Table 4a, from one election to another, there were changes in the number of seats allocated to some of the districts. This was due to the irregular increase or decrease of the registered voters that existed in the districts between 2007 and 2017.

4.2 District Seat Value

Table 4b

% Deviation of the District Seat Value from the District Mean				
		Gozo District	Positive Deviation	Negative Deviation
Actual Figures for Districts in 2017 General Election		+ 8.97%	+ 0.39% to + 8.97%	- 0.19% to - 5.36%
Projected figures for Proposed Districts based on Data from Electoral Register	October 2007	+ 8.01%	+ 1.36% to + 9.84%	- 1.28% to - 7.30%
	January 2013	+ 8.22%	+ 0.05% to + 8.22%	- 3.89% to - 10.37%
	May 2017	+ 8.99%	+ 1.16% to + 8.99%	- 3.40% to - 7.51%
	April 2018	+ 9.39%	+ 1.01% to + 9.39%	- 5.51% to - 6.46%

Table 4b presents the figures relative to the positive and negative percentage deviations of the district seat value from the district mean. The values thus obtained are compared to the percentage deviations recorded in the 2017 general election. The figures for the Gozo district are compared directly in Table 4b.

Reference is made here to the second part of the concluding note in section 5 of the study paper:

«It is pertinent to observe that electoral division 13 (Gozo & Comino) has already been defined as a fixed district, irrespective of the varying number of registered voters within it. Once such a change has been proven to be possible and workable for one district, the same principle could be applied when defining the other districts in the island of Malta. »

Table 4b confirms that the highest positive and negative percentage deviations obtained in defining the district seat value from the district mean, compare very well with the actual highest positive percentage deviation recorded for the Gozo district in the 2017 general election.

The percentage deviation that has been acceptable for the Gozo district in the last three general elections, when the registered voters in the Gozo district were not regulated, should also be acceptable for all the districts of Malta and Gozo in all future general elections.

As has been proposed in the study paper “Proposals For An Improved Malta Electoral System”, the registered voters in all the districts are no longer to be regulated.

4.3 Registered Voter Changes between October 2007 and April 2018

Part of this comparative exercise includes also a study of the changes that actually happened to the number of the registered voters in each locality, district and region between October 2007 and April 2018.

Table 4c summarizes the main figures that show the tendencies of the changes experienced. It presents two sets of percentage increases and decreases in the number of the registered voters, one that happened over a period of 10 years between October 2007 and October 2017, and the other for the changes that occurred between October 2017 and April 2018, when all voters above the age of 16 were included for the first time in the electoral register.

Table 4c

REGION	DISTRICT	LOCALITIES	REGISTERED VOTER CHANGES	
			OCT. 2007-2017	APR. 2018 (16+)
Central	1	Floriana, Ħamrun, Marsa, Pietà, Santa Venera, Valletta	-5.34%	+1.87%
	2	Attard, Balzan, Birkirkara, Lija	+9.26%	+2.66%
	3	Iklin, Msida, San Ġwann, Swieqi	+6.99%	+2.16%
	4	Gżira, Pembroke, San Ġiljan, Sliema, Ta' Xbiex	-0.41%	+0.92%
	TOTAL	CENTRAL REGION	+2.59%	+1.95%
South Eastern	5	Birgu, Bormla, Isla, Kalkara, Xgħajra, Żabbar	+2.98%	+2.54%
	6	Fgura, Gudja, Paola, Santa Luċija, Tarxien	+3.37%	+2.26%
	7	Birżebbuġa, Għaxaq, Marsaskala, Marsaxlokk, Żejtun	+16.02%	+3.03%
	TOTAL	SOUTH EASTERN REGION	+7.77%	+2.64%
Southern	8	Kirkop, Mqabba, Qrendi, Safi, Siġġiewi, Żurrieq	+15.19%	+2.98%
	9	Luqa, Qormi, Żebbuġ	+4.65%	+2.22%
	TOTAL	SOUTHERN REGION	+9.30%	+2.57%
Northern	10	Dingli, Mdina, Mġarr, Mosta, Mtarfa, Rabat	+14.06%	+2.98%
	11	Għargħur, Mellieħa, Naxxar, San Pawl il-Baħar	+26.24%	+3.14%
	TOTAL	NORTHERN REGION	+19.67%	+3.06%
Gozo	12	All Localities in Gozo and Comino	+9.99%	+2.45%
	TOTAL	GOZO REGION	+9.99%	+2.45%
GRAND TOTAL FOR MALTA AND GOZO			+8.56%	+2.47%

The main salient points in Table 4c are the following:

- Whilst in 2007 the number of the registered voters in the central region increased by only +2.59%, that of the northern region increased by +19.67%.
- The increase in the other regions was relatively nearer to the average increase for the whole of Malta and Gozo which was +8.56%.
- Whilst all the regions registered an increase in the number of the registered voters, districts 1 and 4 registered a decrease of -5.34% and -0.41% respectively.
- The same pattern repeats itself with the increase of the registered voters that resulted in the latest published electoral register.
- An increase of 1.95% was registered in the central region, whilst an increase of 3.06% was registered in the northern region.
- The increase in the other regions was nearer to the average for the whole of Malta and Gozo which was at +2.47%.

5. CONCLUSION

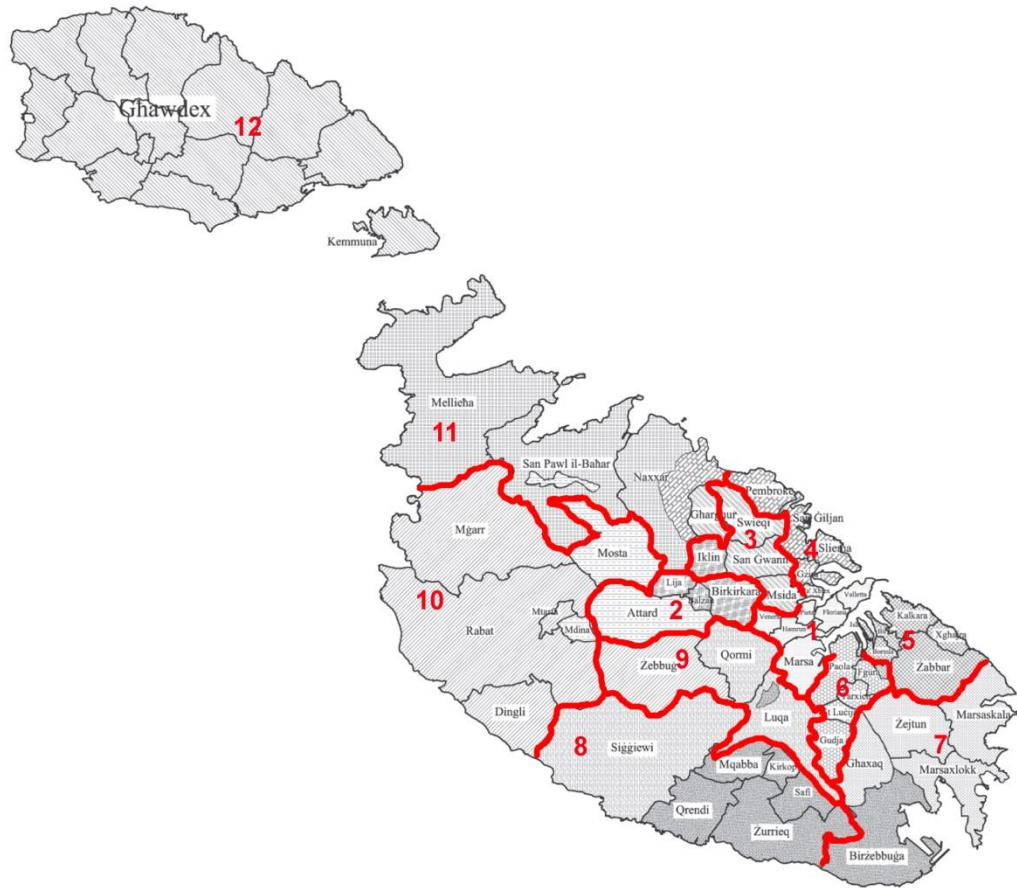
If the proposed organisational structure of interrelated fixed regions and fixed districts is adopted for Malta and Gozo, the only change that is envisaged in the foreseeable future is that the total number of fixed districts would eventually increase from the proposed 12 districts to 13 districts. This would happen if the shift of the registered voters to the northern region persists.

The increased number of the registered voters in the northern region would eventually dictate when this region would have to be divided into 3 fixed districts rather than into 2 fixed districts.

All other details in this proposal, as detailed in this exercise, would remain unchanged.

APPENDIX 1

**MALTA AND GOZO
MAP OF THE PROPOSED REGIONS AND DISTRICTS**



APPENDIX 3

**MALTA AND GOZO
MAP OF THE PROPOSED REGIONS**

