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Electoral Commission of Malta

Making electoral history in Malta - breaking records across the board with Idox's innovative e-counting software

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Joe Camilleri
Chief Electoral Commissioner
Electoral Commission of Malta

Challenge:

Transforming traditional processes to deliver timely poll results

As with a number of countries around the world, Malta's adoption of the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system – designed to achieve proportional representation through preferential voting – brings with it a level of complexity when undertaking the manual counting of votes. Given voters rank as many candidates as they wish in order of preference, calculating the winner isn't as straightforward as electoral systems such as First Past the Post, where voters indicate on a ballot their candidate of choice, and the candidate who receives the most votes wins. As such, manual counting under the STV method resulted in the country taking days to deliver the ballot results in previous nationwide elections. The Office of the Electoral Commission of Malta subsequently sought to streamline its processes, improve the timeliness of poll results announcements and transform its manual counting operations. The Commission went out to tender for a supplier of an Electronic Vote Counting Solution in 2017. Following the competitive tender process, Idox was selected as the official provider in November 2017, securing a contract to deliver the required software, services and support for all Parliamentary, General and Local elections across Malta during the 2019–2024 period. The e-counting system had to be in place to support Malta's next round of European Parliament and Local Council elections in May 2019 – the first time it would ever be used in the country. Since then, the Electoral Commission of Malta has extended its trusted partnership with Idox to deliver its 2026 snap election.

Solution:

Delivering the technology and the team to modernise Malta's electoral system

Idox's e-counting software is a robust and secure solution, proven to manage STV counting on a national scale, following its use by all 32 Scottish councils in the 2012 and 2017 local elections. Ahead of Malta's 2019 elections, the Idox team sought to implement, test and verify the solution for the Electoral Commission. Supporting a phased delivery and implementation process over an 18-month period, Idox performed ongoing system trials and performance checks, as well as external verifications and accreditations in the build-up to the May 2019 elections. This rigorous testing process included:



- Extensive bulk and performance testing over an extended period to provide confidence in the system operating under load. This included the scanning of **392,000** ballots within expected timescales
- **100%** match when both political parties in Malta verified their own software against Idox's e-counting engine
- External validation from **Radboud University** (The Netherlands)
- Validated by an **ISO/IEC 17025** accredited Electronic Voting System test laboratory in the USA

Alongside the provision of the e-counting software, Idox's remit extended to providing a complete infrastructure and services solution, delivering a closed network in Malta's Naxxar Count Centre which spanned hardware, security software, training and support. The team also built on a long-standing and successful partnership with ScytI – a specialist in developing secure election management solutions – to ensure first class security and process consultancy, and comprehensive electoral staff training via a dedicated e-learning platform. Following final solution acceptance by the Electoral Commission, the team were poised and ready for the 2019 European Parliamentary and local council elections.

Outcome:

Making electoral history with a landmark election

In May 2019, Idox supported a successful MEP eCount in Malta, alongside the simultaneous election of councillors for the local council elections. This was the first time the country had used e-counting software, and the first time it had carried out all local elections at any one time in 25 years. The elections also delivered several other milestones in Malta's electoral history, including:

- Idox's e-counting technology accelerated the counting process – the poll results were delivered in record time, cut from days to hours
- The European Parliament election had the largest electoral register for an MEP election, with over 370,000 people eligible to vote, and over 270,000 exercising this right on polling day (72.7% turnout) – all of which were counted using Idox's e-counting solution
- Malta was one of the first two countries to issue its official European election results

Joe Camilleri said: "The Idox team provided excellent service throughout the MEP and local council elections. The eCounting system continues to be highly valued by stakeholders, and we received very positive feedback from both political parties and the media. Idox's support and expertise played a key role in helping us achieve another significant milestone in our eCounting journey."

Call us now on 0333 011 1200 or email marketing@idoxgroup.com to find out more about our electoral management software and solutions.

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