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FCI-Standard N° 65

## **MALTESE**

**TRANSLATION:** Mrs. Peggy Davis. Revised by Renée Sporre-Willes. Official language (EN).

**ORIGIN:** Central Mediterranean Area.

**PATRONAGE:** Italy.

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICIAL VALID STANDARD:** 13.11.2015.

**UTILIZATION:** Companion and Toy.

**FCI-CLASSIFICATION:** Group 9 Companion and Toy Dogs.  
Section 1 Bichons and related Breeds.  
Without working trial.

**BRIEF HISTORICAL SUMMARY:** The name Maltese does not signify that the breed originates from the island of Malta, because the adjective « Maltese » comes from the Semitic word « mālāt » which means refuge or harbour; this Semitic root comes up again in a whole series of names of maritime places; i.e. in the name Adriatic island of Méléda, the Sicilian town of Melita and also in that of the island Malta. The ancestors of this little dog lived in the ports and maritime cities of central Mediterranean, where they hunted mice and rats that were found in profusion in the harbours' warehouses and in the hold of ships. In a list of dogs existing at the time of Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) is mentioned a breed of little dogs to which is attributed the Latin name « canes melitenses ». That dog was known in Ancient Rome: favourite companion of the matrons, and praised by Strabon, Latin poet of the first century A.D. Representations of the Maltese by numerous Renaissance painters show this little dog in the salons of the period at the side of beautiful ladies of the time.

**The breed is bred in Italy after World War II and remains in a situation of numerical stall until the year 80. Today it is well-bred for numbers and quality.**

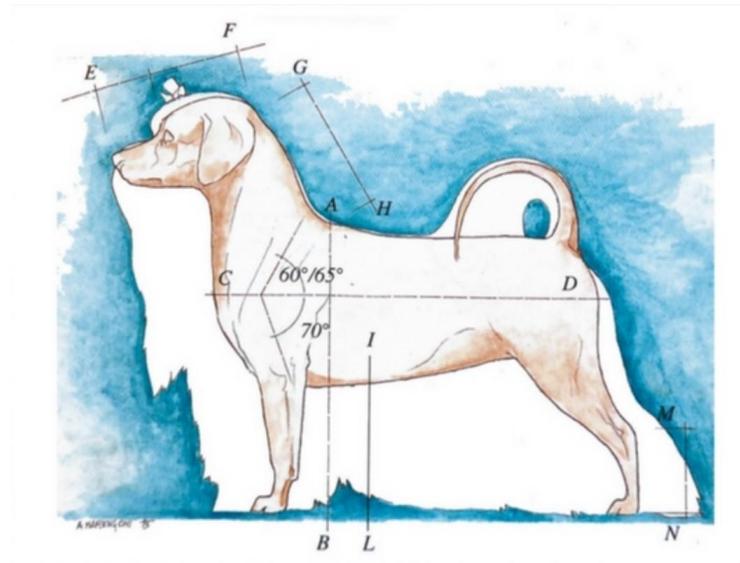
**GENERAL APPEARANCE:** Of small size, longish body. Covered by a very long white coat, very elegant with a proud and distinguished head carriage.

**A small dog, but strong in body and with a good bone**

**IMPORTANT PROPORTIONS:** Length of body exceeds by about 1/3 the height at the withers. The length of the head is equal to 6/11 of the height at withers. The circumference of the chest is 2/3 more than the height at the withers. Length of muzzle is equal to 4/11 of the length of the head; it is therefore slightly less than its half. Muzzle depth is a good 20% less than its length. Tail length corresponds to about 60% of the height at the withers.



Correct proportions



*Incorrect Proportions*



*Too high on legs and too short in body*



*Short on legs and Too long in body*

**BEHAVIOUR/TEMPERAMENT:** Lively, affectionate, very calm and very intelligent.

He loves to play, very vital and never aggressive, thus reflecting his role as a companion dog

**HEAD:** Rather broad, exceeding slightly at the half of the head length

Proportion between muzzle–skull is very important for the breed. Nowadays there is the tendency to breed Maltese with too short or in few cases too long muzzles and this is changing a lot their typical expression.

Correct proportion Skull-Muzzle



### CRANIAL REGION:

Skull: The skull is slightly longer than the muzzle; the bizygomatic width is equal to its length. In the sagittal direction, it is very slightly egg-shaped (ovoid), the upper part of the skull is flat with the occipital crest only slightly marked. The protuberance of the frontal bone and the supraorbital ridge are well developed; the frontal indentation of the furrow is very little or not marked, the lateral faces of the parietal bones are somewhat convex.

*The skull length is almost the double of the muzzle.*

Stop: Fronto-nasal depression strongly defined making an angle of 90°.

### FACIAL REGION:

Nose: In the prolongation of the nasal bridge, seen in profile, the forepart is vertical. Voluminous with open nostrils, rounded and absolutely black.

Muzzle: Length of muzzle is slightly less than half the length of the head. The suborbital region is well chiselled. The depth is much less than the length. The sides of the muzzle are parallel, but the muzzle seen from the front, must not appear square, since its anterior joins the lateral sides by curves. The muzzle is rectilinear with a well-marked furrow in its centre part.



*Muso troppo corto*

Lips: Viewed from the front, the upper lips at their junction have the shape of a very open arch.



*Muso troppo lungo*

They are slightly developed in depth and the labial commissure is not visible. The upper lips adapt perfectly to the lower lips in such a way that the lower profile of the muzzle is defined by the lower jaw. The edges of the lips must be absolutely black.

Jaws/Teeth: Normally developed and light in appearance, perfectly adapted. The lower jaw, with its branches being straight, is neither prominent nor receding in its anterior part. The dental arches are perfectly adapted and the incisors in scissor articulation. Teeth are white and the dentition is well developed and complete. **P1 Missing is tolerated**

Eyes: Lively and attentive expression, larger in size than would be expected, the shape tends to be rounded. The eyelids are in close contact with the eyeball, which is never deep-set, but rather level with the head, just slightly protruding. The eyes are set on a same almost frontal plane. Seen from the front: eyes must not show sclera (white of the eyes); they are of a dark ochre colour; eye rims and third eye lid are black.

**Open, with lively and attentive expression, larger than would be expected; the shape tends to be round. The position and the colour of the eyes is very important for keeping the right expression of the breed. The eyes should be never black and should never show the white . A black eye is giving an arrogant expression to the breed which is not the right one. This is a fault to penalize.**



*An Excellent Eye*



*The eyes could be more rounded*

**Eyes: subfrontal (but almost frontal), rounded, only slightly protruding, dark ochre. Nowadays we can see too prominent eyes and in perfect front position, in this case the Maltese has too short muzzle**

**IDEAL PROPORTIONS**



Ears: Almost triangular in shape, the width is about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the length. They are set high above the zygomatic arch, hanging close to the sides of the skull, with little erection.

NECK: Although covered with an abundant coat, the demarcation of the nape of the neck is evident. The upper profile is arched. Length of neck is about half of the height at the withers. Neck is carried erect and does not show any loose skin.

BODY: The length from the point of the shoulder to the point of the buttock is  $\frac{1}{3}$  more than the height at the withers.



The arm is slightly longer than forearm

Top line: Straight to the tail-set.

Withers: Slightly above the topline.

Back: Length is superior to half the height at the withers.

Croup: In the prolongation of the lumbar-dorsal line, the croup is very broad and long, the obliqueness is  $10^\circ$  below the horizontal. Chest: Ample, deep, well developed, let down below the elbows with ribs not too sprung. The sternal region is very long

TAIL: Set on level with the croup, thick at the root and fine at the tip. Forms a single big curve, the tip of which falls between the haunches touching the croup. A tail curved to one side of the body is tolerated.

*Forms a single big curve, the tip of which falls between the haunches touching the croup. We see often in the rings Maltese with too flat tails on the back.*



The croup is slightly inclined, the insertion of the tail is high

## LIMBS

### FOREQUARTERS:

General appearance: On the whole legs are close to the body, standing straight and parallel.

Shoulder: The length represents 1/3 of the height of the withers, with top of shoulders wide apart and well laid back.

Upper arm: Longer than the shoulder blade, of good angulation.

Elbow: Neither turned in nor out.

Forearm: Lean with few visible muscles, but with a rather sturdy bone structure in relation to the size of the breed.

Carpus (wrist): In the vertical line of the forearm, mobile. Should not be knotty. Covered with fine skin.

Metacarpus (Pastern): Has the same characteristics as the carpus and because of its short length is vertical.

Forefeet: Round, toes closed and arched; pads should be black, the nails should also be black or at least of a dark colour.

**The horn nails are perfectly accepted.**

### HINDQUARTERS:

General appearance: Sturdy bone structure. Parallel legs seen from behind, vertical from the point of the buttock to the ground.

Thigh: Hard muscled, hind edge is convex. Its downward and forward direction is somewhat oblique in relation to the vertical.

Stifle (knee): The articulation is free, neither turned in nor out. Lower thigh: With a groove between the tendon and the bone that is barely noticeable. The obliqueness below the horizontal is 55°. It is slightly longer than the thigh.

Hock joint: The forward angulation of the hock is 140°.

Metatarsus (Rear pastern): The distance from the ground to the point of the hock is slightly more than 1/3 of the height at the withers. Pasterns fairly low set and perfectly upright.

Hind feet: Round, toes closed and arched; pads should be black, the nails should also be black or at least of a dark colour.

**GAIT/MOVEMENT:** Even, skimming the ground, free, with short and very quick steps at the trot.

*Maltese gives the impression to move on roller skate*



**SKIN:** Really tight to all parts of the body, pigmented with dark patches and patches of a reddish wine colour, especially on the back.

**COAT:**

**Hair:** Dense, shiny, glossy - falling heavily and of a silky texture, very long on the whole of the body and straight throughout its length without traces of waves or curls. On the trunk it should be longer than the height at the withers and fall heavily back to the ground like a cape fitting close to the trunk without opening or forming tufts or flocks. Tufts or flocks are acceptable on the forequarters from the elbow to the foot, and on the hindquarters, from the stifle to the foot. There is no undercoat. On the head the coat is very long, -also on the foreface, where it mingles with the beard and also on the skull where it falls eventually mingling with the hair covering the ears. On the tail, the hairs fall back to one side of the body, i.e. on the flank and on the thigh, of such length as to reach the hock.

**Colour:** Pure white, a pale ivory tinge is permitted. Traces of pale orange shades are tolerated but not desirable and constitute an imperfection.





Severe fault: Woolly coat. The correct coat texture is often neglected because the woolly coat gives the impression of more volume. The coat texture is silky, heavy and it must fit the body. There is not any undercoat. When you touch the coat you have a cold feeling, which is typical of the silk.

**SIZE AND WEIGHT:**

Height at the withers: Males from 21–25 cm.

Females from 20–23 cm.

Weight: 3–4 kg.

**FAULTS:** Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree and its effect upon the health and welfare of the dog

- Bilateral strabismus (cross-eyed).
- Overlong in body.

**SEVERE FAULTS:**

- Roman nose.
- Accentuated undershot mouth.
- Size in males over 26 cm or below 19 cm.  
Size in females over 25 cm or below 18 cm.

**DISQUALIFYING FAULTS:**

- Aggressive or overly shy dogs.
- Any dog clearly showing physical or behavioural abnormalities shall be disqualified.
- Accentuated divergence or convergence of the head planes.
- Total depigmentation of the nose or nose of other colour than black.
- Overshot mouth.
- Wall eye.
- Total depigmentation of the eyelids.
- Tail-less, shortened tail, whether congenital or acquired.
- Frizzy coat.
- Any colour other than white, with exception of pale ivory.

- Patches of different colours whatever their extension.

**N.B.:**

- Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.
- Only functionally and clinically healthy dogs, with breed typical conformation should be used for breeding.