

A Word from the Rector



UNIVERSITIES THE WORLD OVER are essentially a place for study, research, learning and formation. However, every university has its own different identity determined by its history, background and areas of excellence. Universities also have a geographical dimension which makes them part of a country and separates them from neighbouring countries. A university is defined not only by what it is but also by where it is.

The University of Malta is one of those institutions that has multiple facets determined by its historical ties and its geographic location. It can be considered as one of the universities in Southern Europe, or a university on an island that is also a nation, or as one of the Commonwealth Universities. However, first and foremost, it must be defined by its region and this precisely because it lies in the heart of its region. This perspective is currently being emphasised and given great importance in the field of education and will probably lead to further political measures being adopted. Malta has both natural and historical advantages that ought to result in its university taking on a regional role.

The University of Malta's rich and chequered history has shown for some time that this is its natural vocation. Within the confines of this region, various traditional disciplines which could be advantageously exploited were identified. All aspects of university life participated in the country's Mediterranean identity as well as in the academic life of the whole region. Academic contacts, certain programmes of regional studies, formal as well as individual exchanges that since accession to the EU are constantly increasing, the actual orientation of various areas of study and research, these are all aspects of our University's Mediterranean dimension which have, over the years, been developed out of a sense of duty and pride. This came about in a natural and organised manner. The University acknowledged this Mediterranean dimension, even within the compass of its Strategic Plan both because this is already a reality and in order to further develop this important aspect. That the University of Malta features prominently in Mediterranean bibliography bears witness to this. It is at once a source of satisfaction as well as encourages us to face tomorrow's challenges.

Today, the notion of "regionality" is being developed and appreciated more than ever before. "Regionality" is not just a concept or a project, but is also a known political and cultural reality. Within the political framework of the European Union, the idea of "regionality," more so than ever before, is receiving wider recognition and support. Collaboration between universities in a region is a useful opportunity and constitutes a basis for teaching, study and research to continuously be converted into better means of understanding, appreciation and peace among nations.

Our University has much to offer to universities in the region. It is in itself a real and historical document, a synthesis of cultures, a disparate joining together which engendered the characteristics of a whole nation. It is also a reflection of the characteristics of an entire region. Our University has always believed in its international dimension from which it also drew its inspiration in the formation of our nation's identity which gives it its credentials on the international stage.

In this edition of UoM's Annual Report, we publish the Oration given by Dr Carmel Borg, Dean of the Faculty of Education, on the occasion of Graduation 2004. His discourse entitled: *The Public University and Market Hegemony – International trends and implications for the future of the University of Malta* shows how the dictates of the global market have placed the public university in a situation where its foremost objective is to reconcile the logic of profit and social service rather than focussing

on the importance of quality as an essential factor in tertiary education. He also insists that in order to compete in the international arena, real autonomy is a pre-requisite for the development of the public university.

Dr Carmel Cassar, a social anthropologist, in his article *Why Anthropological History?* looks at the various approaches available to the historian when researching a topic of historical interest. He states that since history deals with all aspects of human existence, the researcher should experiment with different methods in order to appraise the period being studied holistically.

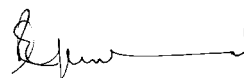
Professor Alex Felice writes about the significance of the production of haemoglobin in the human body, briefly outlining the development of his interest in the field as well as dwelling on the thrust of his research over the years. Dr Charles V. Sammut from the Department of Physics, discusses the findings of a survey he conducted of electromagnetic fields from mobile phone base stations.

Dr John J. Schranz is interviewed about E-Maps, an innovative European Masters Programme in Performer Studies which he originated. Stefan Aquilina who interviewed him was, at the time, the E-Maps Programme Administrator.

Dr Ing David Zammit Mangion from the University's Faculty of Engineering outlines the details of an EU funded programme he is involved in, by which research seeking to enhance avionics design will lead to improved aviation safety.

Professor Lino Briguglio profiles the University's Gozo Centre of which he is Director. Since its inception, its role has evolved from that of purely dealing administratively with the needs of Gozitan students studying on the main campus. Over the years, various courses have been conducted and the Centre has become a sought after venue for conferences, seminars and workshops.

In conclusion, whilst thanking all the contributors, I would like to congratulate Dr Mark W. Smith who was Visiting Fulbright Senior Scholar in 2003 and whose contribution to UoM's Annual Report 2003 has since won him an *Outstanding Career and Technology Education Writers Award* on his return home.



Roger Ellul-Micallef
Rector