

---

May 2025  
Edition

# Faculty of Laws Newsletter

Issue  
No. 30

---

## A bittersweet month

Last month was bittersweet in the sense that apart from Easter Recess we experienced a number of positive events, some of which are reported in this newsletter. However, the month was overshadowed by the passing on 21st April, of our colleague and friend, Dr Francis Zammit Dimech.

Apart from having got to know him quite well, going out to eat with him on a number of occasions and giving him a lift home afterwards in order to not keep his driver waiting late into the evening, in my years at the University of Malta, I do not recall an academic passing away while still lecturing, supervising, mentoring students and



sitting on examination boards. Despite the challenges his health presented him, Dr Zammit Dimech continued to serve the Faculty of Laws with optimism and enthusiasm, until the end. We are grateful to Francis, and as a sign of respect we put up an 'in memoriam' on the Faculty of Laws' monitors.

## Annual trip to Luxembourg

As in past years the European and Comparative Law Department organised a trip for the final year and LL.M. students, to the Court of Justice of the European Union and to the Court of Auditors. This year, we organised it over two days (one night instead of the usual two nights), rushing from the airport to the CJEU, to meet Madam Justice Ramona Frenco and Mr Justice Prof. Eugene Buttigieg (*photo below*), among others, and to sit in on the hearing of that particular day. After a full, highly informative visit we gave the students the evening off, and next

day visited Dr Hyzler at the Court of Auditors, before making our way back to the airport and back home.



Students who joined this trip were continuously reminded of the possibility open to them, to do a *stage* at one of the institutions, including with the CJEU or with the Court of Auditors.

### Joint Masters' meeting at University of Cadiz

Dr Antoine Grima, Head of the Environmental & Resources Law Department, and Ms Andrea Szakacs, represented the University of Malta at the Joint Master's Degree in Port Management and Logistics (MIPMAL) held in Cadiz on 8th April 2025.



MIPMAL is part of a transnational educational initiative that integrates the expertise, resources, and infrastructures of five SEA-EU universities, providing students with a truly European and interdisciplinary academic experience. The Universities involved in the MIPMAL program include the University of Cadiz (UCA), University of Malta (UM), University

of Split (UNIST), University of Algarve (UAlg), and the University of Gdansk (UG). Their collaborative efforts underscore the commitment to providing world-class education and training in the field of port management and logistics.

This was an essential meeting to set up the further steps in organising the Joint Master's Degree in Port Management and Logistics (MIPMAL) starting in the Academic Year 2025/6. Each university, through its representatives, presented the current status of course preparation, highlighted challenges encountered, and collaborated to harmonize practices related to the Joint Master's Degree in Port Management and Logistics. More details may be found at <https://sea-eu.org/mipmal/>.

### Visit at the Faculty of Laws

Professor Alan Berman, Dean of Law, Charles Darwin University School of Law paid a courtesy visit to the Faculty of Laws in mid-April. He was on holiday, after attending the Commonwealth Law Conference which this year was held in Malta. He met Prof. Ivan Mifsud, Prof. Ivan Sammut and Prof. David Zammit and discussed common shared interests. As part of his visit he was taken to the library where he was given a demonstration of some of the treasures to be found, by Head of Archives & Rare Books Mr Matthew Cuschieri.



In the above photo Prof. Berman and Prof. Zammit are examining a copy of the Code de Rohan.

## Berlin Rule of Law Bootcamp

Dr Steffi Vella Laurenti from the European and Comparative Law Department attended the Our Rule of Law Bootcamp at Humboldt-University in Berlin. The two-day event was part of a project entitled ‘Our Democracy Report’ which is being organized by the Our Rule of Law Foundation.

The national winner of the 2024 European Charlemagne Youth Prize, the Foundation’s mission is to protect the rule of law and democracy in Europe and beyond by empowering young people to create solutions for the current challenges facing these values. The Our Democracy Report is their latest project that has engaged students across European universities to transform the European Commission’s lengthy and complex annual Rule of Law report into an accessible citizen-centric document.



Dr Vella Laurenti is serving as a mentor for University of Malta students engaged on this project and during the Bootcamp had the opportunity to lead one of several thematic sessions for students from various universities that are participating in the project. These sessions explored the foundations of democracy – from participation in governance and digital literacy, to justice systems, equality & non-discrimination, climate transition, and education & economic empowerment.

Moreover, inspiring keynotes were delivered by Viktoriia Lapa (Lecturer, Bocconi University), John Morijn (Professor, University of Groningen) and Daniel Hegedus (German Marshall Fund of the United States). There was also the opportunity to visit the new Embassy of Poland in Berlin.

## Trip to Tallinn

On 10 April 2025, Prof. Ivan Sammut and Prof. Oleksandr Pastukhov visited the Estonian Human Rights Centre in Tallinn. The purpose of the visit was to attend the mid-term review meeting of the Reinforcing Equality and Fundamental Rights in an Artificial Intelligence-Maintained Environment (REFRAIME) project financed by the EC DG JUST under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme.



During the meeting, the progress in carrying out the Work Plan was discussed and further work under every Work Package (WP) was planned. This year, the project work will include organizing two workshops on the tensions between Artificial Intelligence (AI) and human rights in Malta: one for AI developers and the other for legal professionals. More information on the REFRAIME project and project events is available from [refraime.eu](http://refraime.eu).

### ELSA (Malta) Union's Debate

The second edition of the ELSA (Malta) Union's Debate, organised under the auspices of Dr Stefano Filletti, was held on 16th April at the Auberge d'Aragon.



This year the topic of much heated discussion was whether the defence of sudden passion should be removed from the Maltese Criminal Law system. Both sides were very well prepared, put forward strong arguments and demonstrated great

skill when replying to the jury's queries (the jury being the hundreds of attendees all of whom got to vote on the topic once the debate was over). The final outcome was in favour of retaining this defence.

### **Annual Team Building event (Admin Staff)**

During Easter Recess Faculty of Laws admin staff held their traditional team building event, albeit not on the day they originally planned to (due to inclement weather). This was organised despite the fact that, as a budget-trimming measure, the UM did not finance the event beyond authorising it without deduction from vacation leave.



This year Admin Staff went on a hike stopping in Ġnejna for lunch. As in past occasions, they enjoyed it thoroughly!

### **Successful closing event (AMPS)**

On 30th April, the AMPS Team (as they have come to be known) held its final, closing event, in which the AMPS prototype was presented and the eighteen month project, which came to an end on the same day, was discussed.

AMPS - **AI Meets the Maltese Courts: Safe Use of AI to improve efficiency** using the **Small Claims Tribunal** as a model - was a *Xjenza Malta* sponsored eighteen month project which ran between 1st November 2023 and 30th April 2025, during which time Prof. Joel Azzopardi and Dr Charlie Abela from the AI Department of the Faculty of ICT, and Prof. Ivan Mifsud from the Faculty of Laws (*photo below*) produced a TR Level Four working prototype application to serve as a research tool assisting adjudicators in the process of deciding cases before them. Pro Rector Prof. Carmen Sammut on behalf of the UM Rector, the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary for Education Mr Keith Azzopardi Tanti and the Hon. Minister for Justice Dr Jonathan Attard all addressed the conference, apart from keynote speaker Professor Kevin Ashley from Pitt School of Law. Distinguished attendees included IT Law practitioners who praised the project as a definite first in Malta.



The project was supported by the Ministry for Justice and the Court Agency, while the event was hosted by the European Commission Representation in Malta. The AMPS Team wish to express their gratitude to all those people who supported, contributed to, and helped make the project a success.

### **Promotions to Associate Professor grade**

Dr Oleks Pastukhov from the European and Comparative Law Department was promoted to Associate Professor, as was Dr Ivan Mifsud. The Editorial Board congratulates them on this significant milestone in their academic career.

**Have you got any news to share?** If you have any item of relevance to this newsletter, feel free to inform us about it. You may contact any member of the editorial board, these being Prof. Tonio Borg, Prof. Ivan Sammut, Ms Rowena Leontijevic and Prof. Ivan Mifsud. The Board reserves the right to refuse to publish an item submitted to it for its consideration.