



SECTION 2

**DR ANNA
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CLS Director



Foreword

During the past two years, the Centre for Labour Studies (CLS) continued to consolidate its position as a dynamic teaching and research centre within the University of Malta. For the first time in its history, the Centre started offering courses at multiple levels ranging from Master to Diploma level. These include our first Master level course in Lifelong Career Guidance and Development; two bachelor degree courses - one in Work and Human Resources and the other in Occupational Health and Safety, and our revised Diploma Course in Gender, Work and Society. These courses attracted well over a hundred students, the majority of whom work and study with us on a part time basis.

In parallel to its teaching vocation, the Centre kept up its strong research role by acting as the main national research agency for the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound). The research work carried out for this European Union agency, which is based in Dublin, allows us to remain *au courant* with what is happening in the Maltese labour market and to undertake a comparative analysis with other EU states on issues related to working conditions, industrial relations and restructuring.

In the last two years, the Centre also continued to collaborate with the National Trade Union Forum (FNTU) which falls under the auspices of the office of the President of Malta. During this period, the Centre was

commissioned to conduct a National Survey on Trade Unions in Malta. This research, which was carried out by the CLS member of staff Dr Manwel Debono, had the aim of investigating the attitudes of the general adult population on trade unionism in Malta. The results of this survey showed a declining interest in trade unions and this strengthens our resolve to continue assisting trade unions in any way possible through this forum.

For the first time in 2016, CLS students studying Work and Human Resources were given the opportunity to participate in an event held in Brussels called 'Europe Social Days'. This yearly event is a platform which offers students the opportunity to meet, discuss and reflect about current themes that are affecting us all. A CLS student, Lizianne Pace Frendo, won the award for the best debater during the 'House of Common Debate' held during this event.

This biennial report captures the work that was carried out by the Centre for Labour Studies (CLS) during 2015 and 2016; it highlights the not insignificant contribution that the Centre has carried out through its complement of three full time academic members of staff, three administrative members of staff, 55 part time lecturers plus various guest speakers.

This biennial report is being complemented with five interesting articles written by the academic staff of the Centre. Here, Professor Godfrey Baldacchino ponders about the current trend of a labour importing economy in a context of full employment. In his article on change and continuity, Professor Edward L. Zammit provides an overview of the recently published book, *The Sociology of the Maltese Islands*, edited by Michael Briguglio and Maria Brown (2016). Dr Manwel Debono takes a closer look at the skills gap between labour supply and demand in his article on skills governance in Malta while, in his article on the aging workforce, Mr Luke Fiorini uses the ergonomic lens to explore how workplaces could be modified to cater for older adults. Finally, in my article on work-life balance and measures for persons of working age with long-term care dependent relatives, I explore the 'work family measures' available for these families and discuss how the lack of policies may be leading more women to experience higher risks of poverty and social exclusion.

For the first time we are also publishing a synthesis of the dissertations presented by four students who obtained a First Class in the Honours Degree Course in Work and Human Resources. Likewise, we are including a synthesis of the Long Essays presented by two students who obtained a Distinction in the Diploma in Social Studies (Gender and Development). We thought to fit to recognize and showcase the work of our brightest students in this way.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues at the Centre for Labour Studies for their support and the hard work they have put in throughout these two years. The motto of our Centre is: *Academic Excellence at Work*. May we continue to collaborate and to strive for excellence in order to provide the best for our students and for our society, while consolidating the positive reputation of the Centre and the University of Malta.

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