

2. FOREWORD

It is with pleasure that I am writing this foreword for the Biennial Report (2013-2014) for the first time. I owe much to what I am today to the Centre for Labour Studies (CLS) which gave me the opportunity to study as a mature student and to obtain my first tertiary qualification at the University of Malta. From then on, I have not looked back as I progressed from being a student, then a lecturer and now the Director of the CLS.



This biennial report captures the work that was carried out by the CLS during 2013 and 2014. Until September 2014, the CLS was under the directorship of Dr Manwel Debono and a note of thanks is due for his dedication and hard work. Under his guidance, the Centre continued to grow into a dynamic teaching and research centre which is attracting more and more students each year. Today, we have 127 students who are following four courses. This Biennial Report showcases the work that has been done in terms of courses offered, research carried out and the other activities conducted by the Centre.

During this period, the Centre continued to be an essential link between the world of academia and the world of work. One of the most notable events was the establishment of the National Trade Union Forum in July 2014 in collaboration with the Office of the President of Malta, Her Excellency Marie Louise Coleiro Preca. The aim of this forum is to serve as a platform to help unions collaborate amongst themselves for the benefit of workers and the trade union movement. The CLS provides a supporting and coordinating role to this forum.

During these last two years, the Centre has continued to be the main national research agency for the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) in Dublin. This is a research arm of the European Union and on our part this entails the continued monitoring of the Maltese labour market and the sending of regular reports on the evolving

working conditions, restructuring and industrial relations in Malta. These reports are then published on the Eurofound website (<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu>) which attracted 1.7 million visits in 2014.

This biennial report is being complemented with five interesting articles written by the academic staff of the Centre. Prof Godfrey Baldacchino gives an overview of the events which led to the establishment of the National Trade Union Forum. Dr Manwel Debono focuses on activating job-seekers through start-up incentives whilst Mr Luke Fiorni provides a snapshot on Occupational Health and Safety in Malta as informed by the Long Essays of the graduates of the Diploma Course in Occupational Health and Safety of 2014. In his article called 'Fault Lines in Bridges to Europe', Mr Saviour Rizzo discusses the evolution of Industrial Relations in Malta, whilst my input is about the prevailing gender wage gap in Malta and the EU.

I hope this publication gives you a better indication of the important work that the Centre for Labour Studies does in spite of its small size. All this was possible due to the hard work put in by the academic and administrative staff of the Centre. It is essential that whilst acknowledging our success, we have to make sure we continue to evolve and adjust with the times to remain relevant in offering interesting courses and academic research in line with the dynamic world of work.

Dr Anna Borg

CLS Director

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