

1. FOREWORD

This Biennial Report covers the work of the Centre for Labour Studies (CLS) between January 2009 and December 2010.

This was a particularly eventful period for the Centre. Professor Edward Zammit retired from Chair of the CLS Board in 2009 after having been at the helm of the Centre since its inception in 1981. Professor Godfrey Baldacchino became the new Chair in 2010. Mr Saviour Rizzo, who had been the Acting Director of the CLS since 2003, retired in 2009, and I was appointed as its new Director. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Zammit and Mr Rizzo for the work that they have carried out throughout all these years and for the contributions they still give to the Centre. Ms Anna Borg, who joined the Centre in 2008, received Council appointment as assistant lecturer in 2010, and later on in the same year, Mr David Parnis also joined the Centre as assistant lecturer. With these two appointments, for the first time in its history, the staff of the Centre comprised three full-time academic members.

I would also like to thank Ms Charmaine Pace who since 2003 has been complementing Ms Josephine Agius in the administrative work of the Centre. She is due to leave the CLS after giving the handover to Ms Stephanie Muscat who I would like to welcome to our staff. My heartfelt thanks also go to the following Board members who retired from their post from CLS Board membership between 2009 and 2010: Mr Gaetano Mercieca who represented the General Workers' Union, and Ms Stephanie Abood, Mr Aldo Busuttil, Mr David Pisani and Ms Elke Sghendo who represented the CLS students.

The changes that came into effect within the CLS Board brought two new representatives - For the first time in the Centre's history, a national employers' association, the Malta Employers Association, started to be represented on the CLS Board. The other institution to be represented on the CLS Board is the FORUM Unions Maltin, a trade union confederation set up in 2004. I would like to welcome the new Board members: Mr Victor Carachi representing the General Workers' Union, Mr Joe Farrugia representing the Malta Employers' Association, Mr Kevin Bonello representing the FORUM Unions Maltin, Mr Mark Spiteri and Ms Victoria Sultana Kenneagh representing the CLS students,

and Professor Edward Zammit and Mr Saviour Rizzo who were approved by the CLS Board to act as Honorary Members.

During this transition period, the Centre's existence was put into question. However, with the help of its Board members and staff, and the good will shown by the University authorities, it has emerged unscathed and possibly stronger. Such a challenge prompted the CLS to review its accomplishments, current operations and vision, on the basis of which, a new strategy document was drafted. Meanwhile, the new CLS statute was approved by both the University Senate and Council and will now be promulgated as a Legal Notice (See Section 8). The Centre continued on its mission to foster knowledge and skills related to the world of work through its educational programmes and its research activities.

Over these two years, the Centre in collaboration with the Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy, successfully developed and offered for the first time a bachelor targeted at mature students, something that had been on the CLS wish-list for several years (see Section 4). The Bachelor of Work and Human Resources Honours was an immediate success, judging by the high number of applicants. This degree supercedes the Diploma in Social Studies - Industrial Relations, which had seen a marked reduction in its intake over the last few years. The CLS has also revamped its other two Diploma offerings in Social Studies (Gender and Development, and Occupational Health and Safety) by refining their structure and upgrading their course material. These diplomas continue to attract significant numbers of mature students. The Postgraduate Diploma in Lifelong Career Guidance and Development, offered with the Faculty of Education, is the Centre's 4th academic programme of studies and continues to be offered to cater for the specialist niche market of career practitioners.

On the research front, the CLS won the bid to act as Malta's contact centre for the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions for the third time in succession since 2003 (see Section 5). Through this contract, the Centre carries out and supplies local research to the European Industrial Relations Observatory, the European Working Conditions Observatory, and the European Restructuring Monitor. Such information is promoted internationally through the Foundation's popular website, and some of its articles are now being translated in Maltese. Throughout the same period, the Centre's staff was also involved in various other projects

in conjunction with local and foreign organisations (see Sections 6 and 7). Such research included studies of the effects of the international economic recession on Malta. Meanwhile, a new and more informative website was set up (www.um.edu.mt/cls) in order to help disseminate relevant research and impart information about the CLS's programmes of study.

Apart from delineating the organisation and the activities of the CLS between 2009 and 2010, this biennial report includes an interview with the founder of the Centre, Professor Edward Zammit about the history and future prospects of the Centre on its 30th anniversary (1981-2011). This interview is followed by a selection of five articles, written by the CLS staff, which delve into various aspects of the labour market. Professor Godfrey Baldacchino and Ms Rebecca Gatt outline the developments of trade unions in the Maltese private sector over a span of 13 years. Ms Anna Borg discusses maternity leave in Malta in view of the recent European Parliament proposal. My article focuses on the working conditions of Maltese University graduates, based on data found in several published and unpublished tracer studies. Mr David Parnis delves into a selection of issues relating to managing careers in a rapidly changing society, while Mr Saviour Rizzo evaluates recent restructuring trends across Malta's public and private sectors.

The work done by the Centre over the past two years would not have been possible without the dedication of the CLS Board members, the CLS academic and administrative members of staff, the many external collaborators who contribute to our educational programmes and research activities, the support from the Ministry of Education, Employment and the Family, the University's authorities, and the social partners.

Thank you all!

Dr Manwel Debono
CLS Director
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