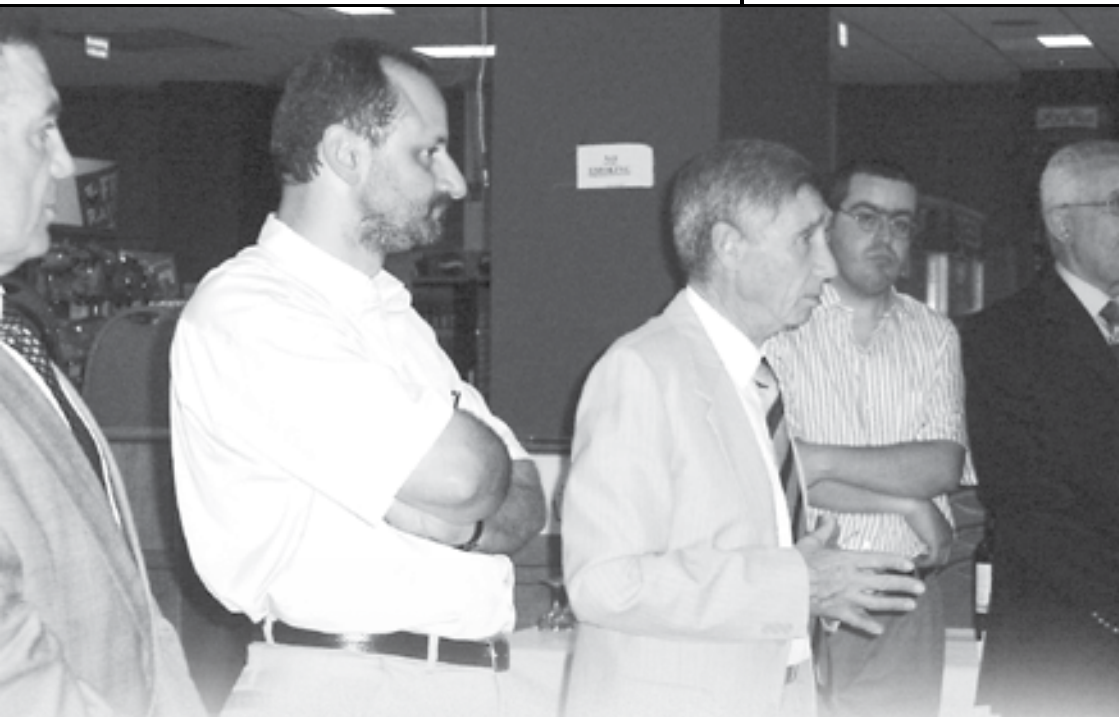


In 2006 the Centre for Labour Studies (CLS) celebrated its 25th anniversary. It was established as Workers' Participation Development Centre (WPDC) in 1981 at the University of Malta. At that time Malta was experimenting with worker democracy as a key platform for harmonious industrial relations in a sensitive period immediately after achieving political independence from Britain in 1964.

Centre for Labour Studies: 25 years old

The Centre was set up to act as an independent think-tank, commenting critically on developments, while providing a clearing house for training, education research and consultancy in this area. The name was changed to CLS in 2005, also as a reflection of the marginalization of worker self-management and participation in economic policy: it is now restricted to a few worker-directors and to the cooperative movement.

Throughout the years, the staff members of the WPDC/CLS have found themselves very closely involved in critiquing and supporting developments in economic and labour policy. In Malta, maybe because of its small size in terms of area and population, its intellectual elite usually finds itself sharing its time between academic and policy matters. Throughout the years, the WPDC/CLS has pioneered worker education programmes (leading to diplomas recognized and conferred by the University) training programmes, seminars and various initiatives relating to developments in gender studies, occupational health and safety, occupational guidance and career counselling, cooperative promotion and human resource development. At present the Centre acts as Malta's monitoring agency on industrial relations issues for EU institutions.



Professor Edward Zammit, chairperson and founder of the Centre, during his address on the occasion of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Centre. On his right is Professor Godfrey Baldacchino, the Director of the Centre.

The CLS operates as an independent structure within the University of Malta, but is closely associated with the Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy. Its staff responds to an Advisory Board, with practically equal representation from academic and non-academic sources. Close ties with the main trade union organizations, the state department of labour and the employer associations are key to having some effective influence in the field of labour policy.