

SECTION 2

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Foreword

It is my pleasure to pen this foreword for the *2017-2018 Biennial Report of the Centre for Labour Studies (CLS)*. This is the third time I have been given the privilege to do so. At present, the Centre has a complement of three full time academic members of staff, three administrative members of staff and 37 part-time lecturers. In October 2018, Theo Koning, a Dutch academic from Hanze University in Groningen, joined the CLS as a visiting scholar for a year. With Dr Luke Fiorini obtaining his PhD in December 2018, now all three full-time academic members of staff at the CLS have a doctorate.

This publication allows us to reflect on the work carried out by the Centre. During the last two years, the Centre was concurrently offering a three-year Master Degree Course in Lifelong Career Guidance and Development; a part-time five year Honours Bachelor Degree course in Work and Human Resources (1st, 3rd and 5th year cohort); an Honours Bachelor Degree course, also part-time, in Occupational Health and Safety (1st and 3rd year cohort); and a Diploma course in Gender, Work and Society. During this period we also prepared the ground work for a new certificate course in the Practice of Cooperative Societies which is due to open in 2019. Most of our lectures are delivered in the evening, and like other years, most of our students were also concurrently working whilst studying with us. As at December 2018, the number of students within the Centre was 153 and we had 24 students graduating in November 2018.

During these last two years, we have also continued to provide regular research input to Eurofound, which is the EU research arm in relation the improvement of living and working conditions. Between 2017 and 2018, the CLS submitted 53 reports or other contributions to Eurofound.

This biennial report is being complemented with five interesting articles written by the academic staff of the Centre. Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino, through his article "Firsts, numbers and trends: Gender at the University of Malta" explores the vertical

segregation of gender within our university. Prof. Edward Zammit's article "Social dialogue and competence development: The role of Malta's social partners" focuses on the development of social dialogue in Malta. Dr Luke Fiorini's article: "Understanding and managing absenteeism: A practical approach" is related to his PhD thesis and explores the issue of absenteeism amongst workers. Dr Manwel Debono's article reflects on the labour market policies adopted by the Labour government in the last five years, whilst my article provides a brief analysis on the issue of in-work poverty and its possible causes.

This publication is a testament to the hard work and dedication that all members of the CLS staff put in to ensure that the Centre remains a thriving and dynamic teaching and research centre. I want to take this opportunity to thank the CLS Board and its chair Prof. Godfrey Baldacchino and my colleagues Dr Manwel Debono and Dr Luke Fiorini, for their constant support. Furthermore, I want to show my appreciation to the administrative staff at the CLS made up of Josephine Agius, Caroline Chetcuti and Stephanie Muscat, without whom all this work would not be possible.

As we celebrate the CLS ongoing success, it is imperative that we continue to work tirelessly to improve and adapt, in order to offer the best we possibly can for the benefit of our students, our university and society at large.

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