

ISLANDS AND SMALL STATES INSTITUTE

REPORT (2008/ 2009)

1. ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTITUTE

The New Premises of the Institute

The institute is housed in the building Guze Cassar Pullicino (Tal-Qroqq Campus) building, formerly occupied by Malta University Services. It moved there August 2007 from the Foundation for International Studies, where it was located since 1989. The new offices are adequate for the Institute and the staff has adjusted well to the new set up.

Staff

The Director of the Institute is Professor Lino Briguglio who works on a part-time basis. The Institute is administered by Ms Isabelle Vella. The Institute uses the services of a Clerk, namely Ms Romina Carabott (who works on a reduce time basis) and a project officer, namely Mrs Maryrose Vella (who works on a part-time basis).

Boards

The ISSI Board

The ISSI Board chaired by Pro-rector Professor Alfred Vella, with the following members, Professor Lino Briguglio (Director) Professor Roderick Pace (appointed by Senate), Dr Gordon Cordina and Dr Godwin Cassar (scholar of repute), and Ms Ritianne Stellini and Mr Arnold Dingli as student representatives.

The ISSI Doctoral Committee

The ISSI Doctoral Committee is chaired by Professor Lino Briguglio, with Dr Marguerite Camilleri, Dr Gordon Cordina and Professor Roderick Pace as members.

The MA (ISSS) Board of Studies

The MA (ISSS) Board of Studies chaired by Professor Lino Briguglio, with Dr Roderick Pace, Prof Kevin Aquilina, Dr Gordon Cordina as members Ms Stephanie Vella as course coordinator and Ms Ritianne Stellini and Mr Arnold Dingli as student representatives.

2. THE MASTER OF ARTS IN ISLANDS AND SMALL STATES STUDIES

The Course leading to the Master of Arts in Islands and Small States Studies is spread over two years of part-time study. Lecture sessions are normally held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at the Tal-Qroqq Campus and on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings at the Gozo Campus.

Course Content

The course consists of Environmental Studies, as the major area (40 ECTS credits), Economics as the minor area (20 ECTS credits), and the writing of a dissertation (30 ECTS credits). Topics covered include “Overview of Environmental Concerns for Islands and Small States”, “International Environmental Law and Environmental Diplomacy”, “Principles of Ecology and Biogeography of Islands”, “Environmental Planning and Management”, “Aspects of Microeconomics and Macroeconomics with Special Focus on Size and Insularity Factors” and “Research Methodology”.

Fieldwork



MA ISSS students during a field visit at Ta Kandia in Malta

As part of their studies students have to carry out regular fieldworks. The latest visit during the academic year 2009- 2010 students visited the Qortin (former landfill) and the Sewage Treatment Plant in Gozo. These visits enable students to obtain practical knowledge relating to the subject they cover in the lecture sessions. Following each visit students are to give presentations on observations made during the visit.

Students

The number of students that are currently attending the MA ISSS in Malta are 9 and 6 students in Gozo. In all, since the year 2000, a total of 60 students have obtained the MA(ISSS) degree.

MA ISSS students graduating on 23rd November 2009. with Professor Briguglio, the Director of the Institute.



3. CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

The Commonwealth Workshop on Competitiveness Strategies for Small States



A participant being awarded a certificate of attendance at the end of the Commonwealth Workshop on Competitiveness Strategies for Small States.

The Training Workshop on Competitiveness Strategies for Small States held on 5-16 May 2008 was sponsored by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC) of the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the Malta Cooperation Programme Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The programme, spread over two weeks, consisted mainly of presentations by resource persons on different aspects of the main theme and country presentations by the participants.

These were all followed by discussions. In addition, field visits to the Federation of industry, Malta Enterprise and other relevant institutions in Malta were also

organised. The Institute had a very positive feedback from the participants regarding the resource persons and their presentations.

The Executive Training Programme for European Islands Chamber of Commerce

The Network of the Island Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the European Union in collaboration with the Gozo Business Chamber and the Islands and Small States Institute was held at the University Gozo Centre on the 12th and 13th June 2008. An attendance of 13 international participants and 20 locals participated. The Workshop was inaugurated by the Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo.

The objective of the Executive Training Programme was to help participants to familiarise themselves with issues of insular development and to offer them the necessary instruments to support their organisations. It promoted the sustainable development of European island regions. The



themes of the workshop included “Management of Sustainable Development with Special reference to Islands”, “Economic Vulnerability and Resilience with Reference to Islands”, “Sustainable Tourism and Islands”, “Environment and Islands: with Emphasis to Climate Change” and “Energy and Islands: Alternative Energy Resources”.

The Hon Giovanna Debono addressing participants at the Executive Training Workshop, at the University Gozo Campus.

MESST Project

The Islands and Small States Institute also participated in an EU Project entitled “Developing a Standard for Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean” (MESST) together with a group of partners from three different countries in the Mediterranean namely Cyprus, Greece, Southern Italy. The main objective of the project was to develop a standard for sustainable tourism in the Mediterranean. The project was supported by Interreg IIIB, Archimed Programme.

After several consultation meetings with Government departments and authorities in Gozo, it resulted that transport in Gozo was a main problem which needed to be addressed in order to make tourism in Gozo more sustainable. As a result, the introduction of a tourist bus service was suggested and which was to form part of the pilot implementation of the project. The bus was scheduled to visit places of interest in Gozo, most of which cannot be reached by the public transport, and was in the form of a roll-on roll-off service, leaving the capital of Victoria every 2 hours. Two big billboards with the map of Gozo with photos of the places to be visited were placed in strategic places, one in Mgarr near the ferry and the other in Victoria. Posters, brochures and flyers were distributed all over the island, in hotels, restaurants, the Gozo Channel ferries and other places frequented by tourists. The bus could also be used by locals and the Maltese tourist.



A tourist using the service of the Gozo Discovery Bus

From the survey carried out during this trial period, it resulted that a total of 1126 persons used the service, which is a good number considering the fact that it was something new for Gozo. All in all, based on the opinions of individuals who took part in the survey, the pilot test was a success and there was a big request for the service to continue.

Workshop on Sustainable Development Strategies

Between 16 and 21 March 2009, the Institute collaborated with the Small States Net work for Economic development in the organisation of a workshop on Sustainable Development Strategies. The workshop was held at the Corinthia Marina Hotel with 12 international participants.



Participants attending the Workshop on Sustainable Development Strategies for Small States, with the Hon Chris Said, who inaugurated the workshop, at Corinthia Marina Hotel, St Julians.

The workshop was structured in five main sessions on sustainable development strategies. Each session will consisted of presentations by experts followed by discussions by participants.

Workshop on Banking and Finance in Small States

Between 15 and 23 June 2009, the Institute organized an international workshop entitled ‘Banking and Finance in Small States’ at the Victoria Hotel, Sliema. The workshop was a third country programme funded by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Government of Malta and the respective government of the participants. A total of 22 international participants attended. The Workshop was spread over two weeks. It consisted mainly of presentations by resource persons on different aspects of the main theme and country presentations by the participants. In addition, field visits to various organizations were organised.



Participants attending the Banking and Finance Workshop at the Victoria Hotel, Sliema.

Mainstreaming Small-State Studies in Higher Education

On 24th November 2009, the Institute organised A workshop on ‘Mainstreaming Small-States in Higher Education’ was held on Tuesday 24th November 2009 had an attendance of about 20 participants. The workshop was held at the Council Room, Administration



building of the University of Malta. It was structured in four main sessions. Each session consisted of presentations by experts followed by discussion by participants. Topics covered include climate change, conservation, tourism studies, and economic studies. A total of 25 participants attended the conference.

Participants attending the Workshop on “Mainstreaming Small-State Studies in Higher Education” at the University of Malta Council Room

4. PUBLIC LECTURES

Will and should Iceland join the EU?

The public lecture organised by the Islands and Small States Institute at the University of Malta was held on Thursday 12 March 2009. During the public lecture on the theme “Will and should Iceland join the European Union?” Prof Thórhallsson explained that in the early sixties Iceland thought seriously about applying for membership in the European Community with Britain and others, but in the end it did not join. In 1967, however, Iceland became part of European Free Trade Area and later the European Economic Area and, as a result, adopted most of the EU regulations. However, there still remained scepticism regarding supra-national arrangements and before the 2008 crises erupted, the feeling in Iceland was that the country should remain outside the EU. The public lecture was attended to by an audience of about 70 people.



Prof Thorhallsson delivering the public lecture “Will and should Iceland join the EU?”

The Global Financial Turmoil and Small States

The public lecture organised by the Islands and Small States Institute at the University of Malta was held on Tuesday 21 April 2009. Prof Andreas Antoniou, Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Management at the Philips University in Cyprus, talking during a public lecture on the theme “The Global Financial Turmoil and Small States” said that there is a burgeoning literature and on-going debate amongst economists and political scientists on the causes and consequences of an increasingly globalised world economy. Prof Antoniou focused his lecture on problems encountered by small states as they often lack some of the key features of “normal-sized” countries, such as armies, full-fledged diplomatic missions and tax collection services. Therefore, they often offer interesting



Prof Antoniou addressing the audience during the public lecture “The Global Financial Turmoil and Small States”

case studies to explore relations between them and larger, richer or more powerful neighbours or partners. Professor Antoniou discussed various methods Central Banks have adopted to overcome issues small states encounter. These include significant injections of liquidity, the lowering of collateral requirements, asset swaps, longer-maturity refinancing operations, intervention in foreign exchange markets, co-operation among central banks in their open market operations, monetary accommodation, quantitative or credit easing, capital

injections into banks and other financial institutions, substantial fiscal stimulus packages and, in some cases, nationalisation of banks.

5. PUBLICATIONS

Occasional papers

The Institute publishes a series of six occasional papers every year (ISSN 10246282). With a focus on issues relevant to islands and small states. The list of paper titles can be accessed from <http://www.um.edu.mt/islands/publications>.

Small States and the Pillars of Economic Resilience

The book entitled 'Small States and the Pillars of Economic Resilience', by: Lino Briguglio, Gordon Cordina, Nadia Farrugia and Constance Vigilance was published in 2008. It was published by the Islands and Small States Institute in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat ISBN 978-99909-49-24-7.

This 484 page book contains 20 chapters, with an introduction by the editors and contributions by various authors. The publication is aimed at developing the conceptual underpinnings of economic resilience and at deriving a sound basis for its measurement.

The main argument put forward in this book is that economic resilience can be built through appropriate policy interventions in four principal areas, namely macroeconomic stability, microeconomic market efficiency, good governance and social development.



Front cover of the book
Small States and the Pillars of Economic Resilience

Mainstreaming Small-State Studies in Higher Education

Following the workshop entitled "Mainstreaming Small-State Studies in Higher Education" which was held on Tuesday 24th Nov 2009, the Institute has obtained University funding to publish a book on the theme of the workshop. All participants and were invited to submit a paper on the topic. The editors of the books will be Professor Lino Briguglio, Professor Roderick Pace and Dr Sandro Lanfranco.

6. FUTURE PROJECTS

Commonwealth Secretariat Workshop on Competitiveness

For the past 10 years, the Islands and Small States Institute has organised a Workshop on Competitiveness. This year it will be held on 19 – 27 April 2010 at the Kavallieri Hotel

St. Julians. The aim of the workshop is to disseminate knowledge and provide training on Competitiveness Strategies, covering a variety of themes with a focus on small states. Another objective of the workshop is to enable the participants to benefit from the sharing of ideas and experiences during discussions. Participants will be expected to present a brief paper describing the competitiveness strategies adopted in their respective countries. It is anticipated that 17 international participants will be attending.

Possible Student Exchange

The Institute and the University of the West Indies are developing a funding scheme for the exchange of students (and maybe of staff) between the two Universities. The Universities will devise a compressed course spread over 2 weeks, covering 24 hours of tuition (plus assignments to be worked out over a period of time following the course). The course will focus on Environmental Studies or Economics or International Relations and will be offered sometime between July and September. This course will form part of a Masters course offered by our respective Universities. Scholarships will be offered to 5 UWI students to visit Malta and 5 University of Malta students to visit Barbados to follow the condensed courses. There is a possibility that the scheme will be operational in summer 2010