

CLS Activities 2021-2022: Events, Meetings & Milestones



2021

40th Anniversary Event (24th February 2021)

The CLS celebrated its 40th anniversary at a well-attended event, held at the Aula Magna, University of Malta Valetta Campus. The occasion was opened by Prof Godfrey Baldacchino, CLS Chair, and Prof Alfred Vella, Rector of the University of Malta. This was followed by a keynote speech by Prof Edward Zammit who reflected upon how work and Industrial Relations have changed over the last 40 years. Prof Godfrey Baldacchino then chaired a panel discussion of distinguished guests on the same topic, including, Mr Josef Bugeja, Secretary General of the General Workers Union, Mr Josef Vella, CEO of the UHM - Voice of the Workers, Mr Marco Bonnici, President



of Forum Unions Maltn, Mr Joe Farrugia, Director General of the Malta Employers Association, and Ms Diane Vella Muscat, Director General of the Department of Industrial and Employment Relations. The panel discussion was followed by interventions by Members of Parliament, including Hon Clyde Caruana the Minister for Finance and Employment, Hon Carmelo Abela, the Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister responsible for Industrial and Employment Relations, and Hon Jason Azzopardi, Opposition Spokesperson for Employment, Enterprise and Industrial Relations. The occasion was closed by speeches by the current and previous directors of the CLS, including, Dr Luke Fiorini, Mr Saviour Rizzo, Dr Anna Borg and Prof Manwel Debono.

As part of the 40 year anniversary celebrations, a series of videos were created to mark the event. These focused on the experiences of notable alumni as well as memorable events and occasions.

New Employment Policy – Discussion (March 2021)

Prof Manwel Debono participated in an online focus group organised by the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development, Malta. He discussed aspects relating to transferable skills, career guidance, morality and sustainability, foreign workers, employee relations, and unionisation.

Focusing on Values During Career Change or Progression

(March 2021)

Prof Manwel Debono carried out a keynote address at the online “2020 Europass Annual Conference” organised by EUPA, Malta. The address focused on the meaning and importance of values and outlined a model that can help individuals reflect on their own work values.

Autism Advisory Council (March 2022)

Dr Luke Fiorini was appointed a member of the Autism Advisory Council. The council operates under the auspices of the Ministry for Inclusion, Social Wellbeing and Voluntary Organisations.

Migrants and Decent Work in Malta (May 2021)

Prof Manwel Debono participated in the online “Third International Workshop about Decent Work”, organised by the University of Malaga, Malaga, Spain. His presentation focused on the challenges faced by Filipino migrant workers in Malta and how the pandemic affected their working conditions.

COVID-19 as an Occupational Disease (10th June 2021)

Dr Luke Fiorini was invited to provide a presentation about the occupational implications of COVID-19 in Malta at an online conference organised by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), Brussels. The presentation focused on if COVID-19 was considered an occupational disease in Malta and the implications for occupational health and safety, workers’ compensation and the employment of workers in Malta.

Evaluation of the University of Malta’s Sexual Harassment Policy (June 2021)

Prof Manwel Debono was invited to present the results of a survey to the University of Malta Gender Equality and Sexual Diversity Committee. The presentation showed the attitudes and experiences of University of Malta workers and students relating to sexual harassment.

Measuring and Understanding Inequality Dynamics in Malta Conference (22nd June 2021)

The CLS organised a hybrid conference held at the University of Malta to present research commissioned by the CLS and conducted by Mr Melchior Vella and Mr Gilmour Camilleri on inequality dynamics in Malta. Following the presentation of the research, representatives of key social partners and academics were asked to comment on the findings during a panel discussion. The panel discussion was chaired by CLS senior academic, Dr Anna Borg, and included interventions by Mr Kevin Camilleri the Deputy Secretary General of the GWU, Ms Isabelle Farrugia, the Assistant Director of the UHM –



Voice of the Workers, Mr Joseph Farrugia the Director General of the MEA, Dr Daniel Gravino, a Lecturer from the Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics, Management & Accountancy, University of Malta, and Dr Anne Marie Thake, the Head of Department, Department of Public Policy, Faculty of Economics, Management & Accountancy, University of Malta. The meeting was opened by CLS Director, Dr Luke Fiorini, and closed by CLS Chair, Prof Godfrey Baldacchino.

Change in Leadership Position (July 2021)

Prof Tanya Sammut Bonnici, Pro-Rector for Strategic Planning and Enterprise, was appointed Chair of the CLS board. She succeeded Prof Godfrey Baldacchino who occupied the position of Chair for around ten years. The CLS would like to thank Prof Baldacchino for his efforts over the years, who was instrumental in many of the CLS achievements both during this period, as well as prior.

Richmond Foundation - Appointment to the Board of Trustees

(October 2021)

Dr Anna Borg was appointed as a member of the Board of Trustees to the Richmond Foundation. The foundation provides community mental health services that promote mental wellbeing, address the prevention of mental health problems and provide support for good quality of life.

Book launch - Working Life and the Transformation of Malta:

1960-2020 (4th November 2021)

The book 'Working Life and the Transformation of Malta: 1960-2020' was launched during the Malta Book Festival 2021, held at the MFCC. The book was edited by Prof Manwel Debono and Prof Godfrey Baldacchino. The book documents and discusses the transformation of the world of work in Malta from the 1960s till the present day.

Ergonomics Seminar (24th October 2021)

The CLS held a seminar on ergonomics for the Bachelor (Hons) in Occupational Health and Safety second year students. The seminar, held at the Radisson Blu Resort, St Julian's, was delivered by Dr Luke Fiorini and forms part of the unit on the same topic.



Bachelor (Hons) in Work and Human Resources Student Visits (2021)

As part of their studies, and accompanied by Prof Godfrey Baldacchino, students of the Bachelor (Hons) in Work and Human Resources students carried out visits to Farsons (October) and to Koperattivi Malta (November).



Undergraduate Graduations (December)

The CLS celebrated the graduations of three different cohorts of students. These included students who had studied for the Diploma in Gender Work and Society, the Bachelor (Hons) in Work and Human Resources and the Bachelor (Hons) in Occupational Health and Safety. The latter, pictured above, were the first cohort to graduate with this degree.



The Economic Impact of COVID: Sectors Strengthened

(December 2021)

Prof Manwel Debono was asked to participate in the international conference “Impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on employment and social matters”, organised by the Union Haddiema Maghqudin – Voice of the workers, Malta. He discussed how particular economic sectors adjusted to the impact of the pandemic.

National Order of Merit (13th December 2021)

Professor Edward Zammit, the founder of the Centre for Labour Studies (CLS), as well as an ex-Director, ex-Chair, and current honorary member of the CLS Board, was bestowed with the National Order of Merit on the 13 December 2021 by the President of Malta in recognition of his academic career.

2022

Workgroup on Mental Wellbeing in the Maltese Workforce

(January 2022)

Dr Luke Fiorini was appointed a member of the Workgroup on Mental Wellbeing in the Maltese Workforce. The group was chaired by Prof Edward Zammit and was organised under the auspices of the Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister of Malta.

Centre for Labour Studies Research Conference (16th February 2022)

The CLS organised a very well-attended online conference which aimed to present the many research findings of CLS academics and alumni. The conference was opened by Dr Luke Fiorini who presented the CLS research efforts. This was followed by a presentation on poverty in Malta. The study was commissioned by the CLS and was conducted by Mr Gilmour Camilleri



and Mr Melchior Vella. This was followed by presentations by Dr Luke Fiorini on the health of remote workers, by Dr Anna Borg, who offered a gender perspective on the evolving Maltese labour market, and by Prof Manwel Debono who presented research findings on the working conditions of Filipinos in Malta. These presentations were followed by two parallel sessions featuring alumni from the Bachelor (Hons) in Work and Human Resources and alumni from the Bachelor (Hons) in Occupational Health and Safety. In total, thirteen alumni presented the results of their theses.

The Health of Remote Workers During COVID-19 (February 2022)

Dr Luke Fiorini participated in the 33rd International Congress on Occupational Health (ICOH) where he presented research conducted on the health of remote workers during COVID-19. The conference was carried out online due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Diversity Pays (March 2022)

Dr Anna Borg delivered the keynote speech at a conference organised by the Malta Chamber called “Diversity Pays”. Her presentation focused on Gender Balance and Decision Making at the Workplace.

Postgraduate Graduation (March 2022)

The CLS celebrated the graduations of those who completed the Master in Lifelong Career Guidance and Development in March. The ceremony was held at the Valletta Campus, University of Malta.

External accreditation by IOSH (March 2022)

The Bachelor (Hons) in Occupational Health and Safety was re-accredited by The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH). IOSH is the world's Chartered body and largest membership organisation for health and safety professionals.



A New Contract with Eurofound (March 2022)



Since 2003, the Centre for Labour Studies has provided regular research reports on the Maltese labour market to the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound). This is a tripartite EU agency based in Dublin. The CLS won a tender to continue representing Malta in Eurofound's Network of European Correspondents which runs until 2026. This contract provides the CLS with a valuable European platform and revenue stream.

Dealing with Addiction Difficulties from an HR Perspective

(May 2022)

Prof Manwel Debono was invited as a speaker in a national conference called "Ix-xoghol... u l-Addiction?" organised by OASI Foundation, Malta. The presentation tackled topics relating to how HR professionals should deal with addiction issues at places of work.

Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave in Malta (22nd June 2022)

Dr Anna Borg was invited to participate in a panel discussion on maternity, paternity and parental leave in Malta. The event, which was held in Valletta, was organised by Moviment Graffiti.

Erasmus Academic in Malta (June 2022)

The CLS hosted Dr Ing Lucie Kocurkova, an academic from the VSB Technical University of Ostrava, Czech Republic, where she specialises in occupational safety. Dr Ing Kocurkova travelled to Malta via the Erasmus mobility arrangement. During her stay, the health and safety programmes offered by the two universities were discussed, as was a possible future collaboration between the two universities.

The CLS Open a LinkedIn Page (August 2022)

In an effort to improve the CLS' visibility and maintain contact with CLS students and alumni, the CLS opened a LinkedIn page. The CLS already operates a Facebook page, which has over 1,000 followers.

Periodic Programme Review (September 2022)

Between May and September 2022, under the direction of the Quality Support Unit at the UM, the CLS undertook a Periodic Programme Review (PPR) of its four courses. Self-evaluation documents on each course were compiled by the Centre and were discussed during a stakeholders' committee meeting held in June. Commendations and recommendations for each course emerged from this process, and the CLS developed an action plan in order to further improve each course.



New Member of Staff (September 2022)

The CLS welcomed a new member of staff, Alessia Zahra, who joins the CLS administrative team. Alessia, who holds a Bachelor of Science in Home Economics, replaces Caroline Chetcuti who contributed to the administrative operation of the CLS, and who mainly focused on the Bachelor (Hons) in Occupational Health and Safety programme. The CLS thanks Caroline for her efforts and wishes her well in her future endeavours.

Opening of New Courses (October 2022)

Following a sustained marketing campaign, both the Bachelor (Hons) in Occupational Health and Safety and the Bachelor (Hons) in Work and Human Resources opened once again in 2022. To mark the occasion, a special opening lecture followed by a reception was organised for each course.



Promotion to Associate Professor (October 2022)

Manwel Debono was promoted to Associate Professor. Prof Debono has worked as an academic at the CLS since 2003 and also served as a Director of the CLS between 2009 and 2014. During his time at the CLS, he has contributed substantially to lecturing, the development of its courses, research efforts and other outreach activities.

The Transposition of the Work Life Balance Directive

(October 2022)

Dr Anna Borg gave a presentation to the Social Affairs Committee members in Parliament on the transposition of the EU directive on Work-Life balance and its impact on women and men in Malta.

Appointment to Erasmus+ Advisory Board (October 2022)

Dr Luke Fiorini was appointed to the advisory board of an Erasmus+ project entitled OSH Digit. The project aims to create digital tools relevant to occupational safety and health education.

COVID-19 Impact on the Employment Conditions of Women, Youth, People with Disabilities, and Atypical Workers

(October 2022)

Prof Manwel Debono together with Ms Christine Garzia carried out two training seminars for trade union members as part of the project commissioned by the General Workers' Union (GWU), forming part of an initiative called "Trade Unions for a Fair Recovery - Strengthening the role of trade unions in mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 crisis", launched by the European Trade Union Confederation, Malta, October 2022. The seminars included the presentation of results from a survey and discussions of how trade unions can improve the working conditions of workers in Malta.

Representativeness in Malta (October 2022)

Dr Luke Fiorini provided a presentation on ‘Representativeness in Malta’ at a two-day meeting on representativeness studies by Eurofound, held in Bucharest, Romania. Representativeness studies primarily deal with the degree to which trade unions and employer associations represent workers in specific sectors.

Session Held with Minister Responsible for the OHSA

(8th December 2022)

The Centre for Labour Studies hosted the Minister responsible for the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA), Hon Stefan Zrinzo Azzopardi for a session entitled “Occupational Health and Safety in Malta: The Way Forward”. The session consisted of a candid discussion between the Minister and students reading for a Bachelor in Occupational Health and Safety (Hons). Topics discussed included the regulation and management of specific sectors such as construction, the growth and regulation of the profession of health and safety in Malta, and emerging issues such as mental health at work.



Bachelor (Hons) in Occupational Health and Safety Students

Visits to Industry (2021 – 2022)

Conducting visits within workplaces is a key consideration in order to enhance the knowledge of students of the degree in occupational health and safety. During 2021 and 2022, students of various cohorts carried out a number of visits, although the number of visits was restricted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These included visits for first-year students to the Palumbo Superyacht facility and to Farsons. Visits for other cohorts included those to KIA motors, De La Rue and Attard and Co. The students also carried out practical session within UM laboratories and sites.

Involvement in Work Participation Europe Network (2021 – 2022)

Dr Luke Fiorini is a member of the Work Participation Europe (WPE) Network, by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), Brussels, Belgium, where he represents Malta. Dr Fiorini attended biannual meetings during 2021 and 2022, three of which were carried out remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, whilst one was carried out physically in Paris.

Centre for Labour Studies Board Meetings (2021 – 2022)

The Centre for Labour Studies held several board meetings throughout 2021 and 2022. The date and location for each board meeting are listed below.

Chair Prof Godfrey Baldacchino

Thursday 20 May 2021 at 10 am virtually via Zoom

Chair Prof Tanya Sammut Bonnici

Wednesday 6 October 2021 at 9 am Council Room

Wednesday 19 January 2022 at 10 am virtually via Zoom

Monday 4 April 2022 at 10 am virtually via Zoom

Thursday 7 July 2022 at 10 am Faculty of Law Boardroom

Tuesday 4 October 2022 at 10:30 am Council Room