

Report

The Malta Chamber of Scientists - The Second Anniversary

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In the first issue of *Xjenza*, The Journal of the Malta Chamber of Scientists, it is our privilege as Foundation President and Foundation member of Council, to outline the activities of the first two years of the Chamber's life. This also gives us an opportunity to reflect on what we see as the future of the Chamber.

The Malta Chamber of Scientists has become the national representative organisation of practising scientists in Malta. The new organisation which is administratively sound, with a healthy budget, ready to face the future with confidence. The introduction of *Ajzenza* roughly coincides with the second anniversary of the inaugural event with which the new Malta Chamber of Scientists was publicly launched. It completes a package of three publications that complement each other. The publications have been sustained successfully and it is hoped that they will be developed further. A quarterly newsletter, produced by Dr. Christian Scerif, serves to inform members of Chamber

activities, and the monthly Malta Science Reports in "The Times", edited by Dr. Richard Muscat, provides space for the members of the Chamber to give visibility to their work in the eyes of the general public. Together they contribute substantially to increasing science awareness and science literacy especially among the younger generations. It is known that the Malta Science Reports are read with considerable interest by prominent members of the reading public including high officers in the civil service and diplomatic representatives.

The regular Business and Scientific meetings have been prominent activities successfully sustained for the last two years. Many important and relevant topics have been covered ranging from basic or enabling sciences to science policy and industrial applications. One of the most notable events was the joint meeting that was held with the PUGWASH Conference on Science and World affairs. This was the first public appearance of



The Excellency Dr U. Mifsud Bonnici, President of the Republic of Malta addressing the Chamber at its inauguration on 28 July, 1994, at the University of Malta. Seen to his left are Prof AE. Felice, President of the Chamber, Rev P. Scerif, Director of the University, Mrs Mifsud Bonnici and Prof V. Fento, President elect of the Chamber.

PUGWASH and of Nobel Laureate Joseph Rotblat after they had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Since then, the Malta Chamber of Scientists has represented the Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs in Malta. It is hoped that the role of the Chamber in this prestigious group will be increased. Equally important meetings on science policy have been held in conjunction with the Malta Development Corporation and other business leaders. Following such a meeting, an agreement was reached with Messrs. Simon and Parsons Cisk Ltd., for financial support for the scientific meetings. Henceforth, these scientific meetings shall be known as the Parsons Series. The Chamber played an important part in the Malta Science Week by providing public speakers and many members contributed in various capacities. It is hoped that the Chamber will participate again next year.

The Chamber continues to grow and to establish itself on the Maltese professional scene. There are now 200 members drawn from all sectors of the national economy and from all scientific disciplines. A professional register of scientists has been compiled for the first time. This register will occupy an important position in the certification of science specialists in the context of professional recognition within the European Union. Further growth is possible by targeting new graduates for membership. There is scope for undergraduates and possibly sixth form science students to be affiliated with the Chamber of Scientists in a junior Chamber. Also a Corporate Clerk deserves attention to sustain growth.

There have been areas in which less success has been achieved, such as in promoting accreditation and continuous professional development credits. This is important because shortly it will no longer be possible, in Europe, to use my professional scientific designation without an appropriate national accreditation process. Perhaps, more sad events in the industrial sector serve to emphasise the importance of this issue in a dramatic manner. The membership should be left in no doubt as to the importance of a properly conducted accreditation system which will serve all members in enhancing their professional standing in Malta and within the larger European context. The next council will undoubtedly have the onus of implementing professional accreditation system linked to programmes for continuous professional development. The new council will also have to work harder at the political level to ensure stable and sustained funding for scientific research and to improve the link between enabling sciences and social or economic development - perhaps, through a National Foundation for Scientific Research.

All the above mentioned activities would not have been possible without the effort put in by those members sitting on various committees of the Chamber. Also new sponsors have supported the Chamber and special mention should be given to the Malta Council for Science and Technology for a foundation grant of Lm 10,000 and Messrs. Lowenthal Ltd. for cordially hosting council meetings. It is hoped that this support together with additional public and private SEC of financial support will be attracted in the future.

Membership

Full membership of the Malta Chamber of Scientists is open to all individuals possessing a first degree in a science related subject. Candidate membership is open to students reading for a science related degree. Membership fees are due on the 1 June of each year.

Yearly membership fees: Em 10 for full membership (Lm 15 for a married couple both of whom are members).
Em 5 for candidate members.

Benefits include:

1. Subscription to *Xjenza*
2. Right to attend all monthly scientific meetings
3. Quarterly newsletter

Please mail or fax your details to the:

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