

## FOREWORD

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Using the terminology of Heraclitus, one can say that the Faculty of Laws, at the University of Malta, is passing through a state of flux. Not a permanent state of flux but a temporary one. A lot of developments have been taking place here. These developments relate, *inter alia*, to the curriculum, Faculty structures and the entry requirements to the law courses, the Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) and the Doctor of Laws (LL.D.) degree courses.

In October 2012, the Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) degree will be transformed into a four year course and at the end of the course in 2016, a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) degree will be awarded. In so far as the Faculty of Laws is concerned, it now comprises nine Departments and four Programmes. Up till 2008, the Faculty consisted only of 6 Departments (Civil; Commercial; Criminal; International; Public; and European and Comparative Law). Since 2008, three new Departments have been established – Environmental and Resources Law; Legal History and Methodology; and Media, Communications and Technology Law. In 2012, Senate approved the establishment of four new Programmes, three in the Department of Public Law – the Private International Law Programme; the Human Rights Programme; and the Alternative Dispute Resolution Programme – and one in the Department of Media, Communications and Technology Law. All these new Departments and Programmes enhance and diversify the teaching and research carried out at the Faculty of Laws. Moreover, the Programmes ensure that there is inter-departmental coordination in academic output. That apart, the Faculty has developed two new evening courses – the Diploma in the Laws of Procedure and the Master of Arts in Mediation. In addition, the Faculty is working, with foreign universities, to develop joint degrees. We also look forward to offering new courses to para-legal staff and persons involved in restorative justice. The Faculty continues to service other Faculties and Institutes with law-related teaching. The Faculty also collaborates with the Judiciary’s Judicial Studies Committee in training the members of the Judiciary and continues to organise various seminars and conferences on legal matters.

The entry requirements to the Bachelor of Laws degree will change from October 2014, to place more emphasis on languages – these being the tools the legal professions use in their daily work. In 2015, a new Intermediate subject in Legal Studies will be offered by MATSEC. A book on the Maltese Legal System is currently being written with the first volume expected to be in print soon. New study-units have been developed to plug in certain *lacunae* in the curriculum to ensure that both core subjects and non-core subjects are addressed by the Faculty. The Faculty is also discussing new publications in addition to its *Mediterranean Journal of Human Rights*. The Faculty has this year established an Academic Excellence Award and a Dean’s List. Since last year the Faculty began to celebrate Faculty Foundation Day on 17 December 2012. This year, the University has built an additional floor over the Faculty building which provides larger space for the Faculty Library, a new Boardroom, an Academics Common Room and

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more office space for full-timers who have now increased to eighteen. Additional part-time academic members have been engaged to teach new study-units falling within their respective field of expertise. The Faculty Office, which is indispensable to organise all the legal courses taught at the Faculty of Laws, has been strengthened.

The greatest source of vitality for our Faculty remains our very own students. Indeed a Faculty without a student body is a dead faculty. The importance of law student organisations such as the *Għaqda Studenti tal-Ligi* (Law Students Society) and the Malta European Law Students Association (hereinafter '**ELSA Malta**') cannot be emphasised enough. Both these student societies have their own journal: the *Għaqda Studenti tal-Ligi* has been publishing *Id-Dritt Law Journal* – recently renamed *Id-Dritt* – for several decades and the *ELSA Malta Law Review* published by ELSA Malta. The latter journal is still in its infancy: this Foreword is being published in the second issue. However, it has proved itself in these two issues to be a journal to be reckoned with through the quality of the papers published as well as its new hybrid review system incorporating independent academic peer review and student review in one editorial review process. Having a rigorous mechanism in place ensures that only best quality material is published in this Law Review. The papers are first reviewed by the Editor and his team. All papers are scanned through the plagiarism software and those papers that pass this test are then assessed with regard to their content. If the papers pass this second hurdle they are then 'blind' peer reviewed by at least two independent academic reviewers. The latter have to draw up a report which they individually submit to the Editor. It is the Editor and his team which then go through these reviews and decide whether to accept, reject, or accept with changes, the paper concerned. Of course, there is quite a lot of work involved before the Law Review is sent for publication: the Editorial Board have to ensure that there is a consistency of style used throughout all the papers, that the highly-ranked papers by the student and independent reviewers are published and that the subjects covered are as varied as possible, so that the Law Review transpires to be one which covers diversified branches of the law, making it more appealing to the informed reader.

This second edition of the *ELSA Malta Law Review* is a good read. The papers are relevant not only to law students – to whom they are mainly addressed – but also to members of the academic staff of the Faculty of Laws, to the legal professions, the judiciary and other persons with a keen interest in the law. I augur that ELSA Malta will continue with this laudable effort and keep up the good standards. In this way, it will continue to contribute to the study and development of Maltese Law in a more rigorous and profound way.