



Member of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA) and of the Commonwealth Library Association (COMLA)

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Your Ref:

Minutes of the MaLIA Annual General Meeting 2007 held on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007 at 6 pm at the Library, University of Malta. Members present:

Robert Grima, Joseph R. Grima, Anthony Mangion, Josephine Spiteri, Louis Cini, Anita Ragonesi, Lillian Sciberras, Martes Paris, Laurence Zerafa, Philip Borg, Claudio Laferla, Monica Chalmers, Marlene Gatt.

## **1. Introduction**

The Chairman, Robert Mizzi opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present. He said that a number of people apologised for their absence including Dr. Paul Xuereb, Honorary President and Ms. Heather Brown.

## **2. Minutes of the 2006 AGM**

Minutes from the 2006 AGM were approved with some amendments. Robert Mizzi pointed out an amendment in this year's agenda.

## **3. Matters arising from the Minutes**

### **3.1 Priorities for 2007**

Mr Joe Grima stated that MaLIA fails in its target of attracting people to join the association and wished that among this year's priorities, there would be an effort to increase its membership. He also stated that the Association is to build bridges with the authorities referred to in MaLIA's *Report on the State of Maltese Libraries*. The report needs to be discussed with the people concerned and we have to see how the recommendations could best be put into effect.

### **3.2 Recognition of the library profession**

Dr Lillian Sciberras said that she recently heard that social workers and psychologists were recognised as a profession. It would be useful to meet up with the associations concerned to learn from their experience. The Register of Library and Information Professionals should be set up as soon as possible and proceed from there irrespective of the Ministry of Education's endorsement. Robert Mizzi said that the Easter recess would be an agreeable time. Martes Paris noted that since the students following

diplomas in library and archive studies would be handing in their long assignments during this period with a deadline on the 16<sup>th</sup> April, she suggested that the event be held some time later.

#### **4. Chairman's Annual Report**

Mr Mizzi went through the report and highlighted its most important points.

##### **4.1 Report on the State of Maltese Libraries**

MaLIA had received substantial coverage in the media but sales of the report or feedback about it has not been very promising. The recommendations of MaLIA's Report are still to be circulated.

##### **4.2 Feasibility Study on the development of a libraries portal**

There has been no news about this project and Mr Mizzi said that it appears that the report has been put on the backburner. Mr Mangion said that he had originally forwarded MaLIA's name to the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) representative and their idea was to create an electronic union catalogue of all collections in Maltese libraries. The draft report he was handed needed revisions. Laurence Zerafa from MCAST library stated that he too had not heard from PWC. When contacted the PWC stated that it handed its report to the Ministry of Education but there has been no communication with MITTS who had commissioned the report. Robert Mizzi said he was following up matters with Mr Michael Gonzi at MITTS.

##### **4.3 Communication with the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment**

Robert Mizzi said that a meeting was held with Minister Louis Galea who referred all communications to Ms Micheline Sciberras at the Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate. Though pending library issues were raised, e.g. Recognition of the profession, the new library law and the overall lack of funds libraries receive, the Ministry has not taken up the offer to discuss matters in detail.

##### **4.4 Courses on basic library and information skills**

Two courses were held in October and January as the first course was oversubscribed. The courses have proved to be successful and questionnaires carried out among participants will be circulated among the lecturers concerned.

##### **4.5 New logo and website**

Robert Mizzi announced a new MaLIA logo together with a website which has been revamped. Ms Martes Paris was thanked for her work in the first version and suggestions for the new version. Mr Mizzi highlighted the website's features which include recent news. Discussions with Emerald regarding the availability of electronic librarianship journals are still ongoing as we have limited funds and we have to avoid the duplication of journals already received by the University Library. The website is still being tested and should be up and going soon. Its address remains: [www.malia-malta.org](http://www.malia-malta.org)

#### **4.6 Shortcomings**

Robert Mizzi highlighted the negative aspects of this year's work. There has been no feedback on the Report on libraries and the Minister's lack of action on any issue, including that of school libraries shows that he is not seeing libraries as an integral part of the educational system. Marlene Gatt suggested that MaLIA make contact with the SLS service. Claudio Laferla suggested a meeting with headmasters and assistant heads regarding the budget of school libraries and the provision of resources. Anita Ragonesi did not totally agree with this as a school library's budget should not be primarily an individual head's prerogative but should be an allocation that the Ministry should provide for. She showed concern about the fact that the Director of Education who is always present at the SLS annual seminar does not take the issue in hand. She suggested that different organisations e.g. MaLIA, SLS, MSLA come together to approach the Ministry as a common front.

#### **4.7 Advocacy campaign**

Robert Mizzi said this year MaLIA should embark on a strong advocacy campaign to encourage people to join the association. He asked for a vote of thanks to Dr. Lillian Sciberras on her retirement from her post as coordinator and lecturer in library and information studies. Ms Paris also thanked Dr. Sciberras for her perseverance and under whose direction the course had expanded into a degree. She thanked MaLIA for its continuous support. She suggested that an annual talk be held to improve the association's profile. This would be open to the public who would get to know more about the association. Talks also related to librarianship could be chosen as themes. Heritage Malta or the University Library could be considered as likely venues.

### **5. Treasurer's Report**

The report of the Treasurer was read out and approved. Mr Mizzi noted that income this year was substantial and was mainly due to donations and courses attended. A typo under membership fees was amended. This should read 10 new members not 6. IFLA's subscription of IFLA was put into question as it is a high fee for MaLIA to pay. Besides the journal, MaLIA was getting little else in return. Mr Mizzi said he had written to IFLA and as Malta is considered a developed country, it does not qualify for a subsidised subscription fees and other benefits such as grants.

### **6. Election of the Council**

The following members were nominated and approved for election to the MaLIA Council 2007

Robert Mizzi  
Joseph Grima  
Josephine Spiteri  
Anita Ragonesi  
Marion Borg  
Manuel Cachia  
Monica Chalmers

Louis Cini and Claudio Laferla were co-opted members after a tie between Louis Cini and Monica Chalmers as members. Alfred Farrugia was nominated but not elected. Mr Mizzi congratulated and welcomed new members and thanked Mr. Mangion for the use of the University Library.

**Robert Mizzi**  
Hon. Chairman  
MaLIA