

Foreword

When I was appointed Chairman of the Malta Library and Information Association (MaLIA) back in March 2004, I set out two ambitious targets. The first was to compile a report on the current state of Maltese libraries. The second was the revamping of the Register of Qualified Librarians upon which extensive work has been done in parallel with this report. Both were massive tasks for a voluntary organisation like MaLIA and I can still recall Dr. Mike Freeman, an old friend of MaLIA, sounding a bit sceptical about the ability of MaLIA to carry out such an ambitious project.

Today, with hindsight, I can understand better the doubts that this project raised even amongst a number of MaLIA Council members given the various difficulties encountered along the way. At the same time, however, I feel honoured to have formed part of a dedicated team that despite the various difficulties encountered along the way, managed to conclude this project that will undoubtedly provide MaLIA with a solid background on which future plans and decisions are made.

It is hoped that this Report is used by the relevant authorities and the recommendations contained within are taken into serious consideration. Whilst accepting that further research may be needed in specific areas, this Report provides a concrete approach to assessing the current state of all libraries and information units in Malta. The recommendations contained within this Report may not all be achievable in the short term but if there is a professional approach and, most important of all, a willingness to co-operate and improve the current situation, positive results can certainly be obtained.

A heartfelt appeal goes out to the authorities concerned with the running of Maltese libraries to co-operate with MaLIA so that libraries in Malta and Gozo, independently of their function, can indeed develop and play a central role in the developing information society.

Finally, I would like to thank all the MaLIA members who have worked on this project for their dedication and co-operation throughout this project. I would also like to thank all the authorities and respondents. Without their contribution, this Report would not have been possible.

Robert Mizzi
Hon. Chairman, MaLIA