

## Address

### AGM KTP December 2017

Good evening. Thank you for coming to our Annual General Meeting. Actually, it is your Annual General Meeting, because the KTP is your organisation. I say this because I firmly believe that the Kamra tal-Periti can be as vocal and influential as the membership wants it to be. This requires, however, active support; and active means paying membership subscriptions, and responding to our calls and messages.

I have spent my first year of the two year term as President, a position which I am greatly honoured to hold.

I want to start by saying something about the workings of the Council. This year the Council has tried to meet every two weeks, except for the summer period. This year we had twelve members, (including the Past President); we have held 22 Council Meetings; some other meetings were cancelled because of a lack of quorum. In addition, there were other meetings focussed solely on Professional Conduct issues, which are minuted separately.

I have had a very good Council. Most of the members contributed actively, in accordance with the tasks assigned at the beginning of the year. I would like to thank them all. I would like to thank, in particular, my Vice-President, Simone Vella Lenicker, who, amongst other things, participated in the Sub-Committee meetings relating to the Periti Act, to matters relating to the Planning Authority, and to the background work for the Professional Conduct cases. She is also, as you know, editor of the KTP journal, The Architect. She was also always available to discuss issues, write draft statements, or edit correspondence.

I would also like to especially thank Andre' Pizzuto, first of all for his opus magnus, which is our brand new web-site and face-book, and, amongst other things, the issues related to marketing and branding for an event I will refer to later, and his work coordinating a Working Group on Buildings Regulations, and on the KTP's response to the proposed Vision for Valletta.

I would like to thank Amber Wismayer for yet another year in the important role of Secretary of the Council, and for her work on the Periti Act sub-committee.

I would also like to thank:

David Felice for his work on the Periti Act sub-committee - his contribution was invaluable – and for re-launching our relations with international architect organisations, such as ACE and CAA;

Lara Mifsud for her work in organizing events such as the OHSa workshop, and public lectures on the Conservation of Wood, and Zanetti Cladding systems. In these events she was helped by Jeanette Abela, who I also thank for re-launching our relations with international civil engineering organisations such as ECCE, IABSE, IStructE, ICE.

I would like to thank Alberto Miceli who was instrumental in working on something that I will describe in more detail later on.

I would like to thank: Sandro Cini for his work on Sanitary Legislation and Liability issues, and for his important contributions during Council Meetings; and also Toni Bezzina, who, inspite of his busy political schedule, including a General Election, made it a point to attend as any Council Meetings as possible.

I would like to thank Chris Mintoff, out-going Past President for his contribution to the Kamra over the past five years, including the Periti Act Sub-Committee.

Finally, my thanks go to Tony Cassar, our “permanent secretary”, who provides the backbone of our administration, including keeping our accounts, and looking after the logistics for our events, including this AGM. I would also like to thank Saviour Borg, who, although not an elected member of Council, continues to regularly help us, as he is doing today, by taking minutes of all proceedings.

I assure you that the Council is a lot of work by a number of people.

In addition, I have to mention the other non-Council periti who we nominate to represent the Kamra on various committees:

Perit Philip Grech on the Building Regulations Board

Perit Catherine Galea on the Periti Warranting Board

Perit John Papagiorcopulo on the now defunct or dormant General Servces Board

Perit Alfred Briffa representing us of the Federation of Professional Bodies.

Perit Conrad Thake, nominated to represent us on the Din L-Art Helwa Heritage Awards

Periti Eve Degiorgio, George Farrugia, Rebecca Dalli Gonzi, Luke Lapira, Rene Cutajar, on the BICC Working Groups, and the many others who contributed when we called for assistance to present position papers on major themes, such as the Paceville Masterplan debacle.

The reports from many of these representatives can be read on the KTP web-site, which we plan to develop as a repository of such information.

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Where do I start to talk about the Council's work. I could start by saying that, way back in January, when this Council began its term, we sought meetings with all the major actors in our industry, in order to introduce ourselves, and to open discussions on the main issues as we saw them. We generally had meetings with all those of whom we requested, including the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, the Leader of the Opposition, the Executive Chairman of the Planning Authority, the Building Regulations Board, and the head of the Building Regulations Office, the Chief Executive Officer of the OHSA, and the Chairman BICC. After the June elections, we immediately asked for meetings with the new Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects, and the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and the Property Market. The main themes of the relative discussions form the basis for our work over this past year.

## **Periti Act**

The amended **Periti Act** has been long coming. Discussions started nearly a decade ago. The primary objective of the amendments is to align the profession in Malta, with its particular traditions, with the professions in Europe. The "closeness" of architects and civil engineers is not unique to Malta, but the model adopted in Europe is derived from the anglo-saxon model of an almost complete professional separation between architects and civil engineers. This is important in the context of current realities. One reality has always been that Malta is small, and that a number of our talented professionals have sought to seek their fortune in other pastures, notably the United Kingdom. Recognition of their professional status has always, therefore, been an important issue; our particular combination of architects and civil engineers has often created recognition problems: are you an architect or are you a civil engineer!

When Malta acceded to the European Union, those professionals practising the profession of architect in Malta, (that is, had the warrant of Perit), up to the 1st May 2004, or who had begun a course of studies by 2006/2007, were given automatic recognition of their qualification as "architects", by Directive 2005/36/EC, On the Recognition of Professional Qualifications, (subsequently amended by Directive 2013/55/EU – (acquired rights, Annex VI) *irrespective of course content*. When this grace period expired, the University of Malta was required to notify the Commission of the course content of its academic programme, to show that it conformed to the requirements of Art.46 of the Directive. On this basis, the B.E.&A. course, offered by the University of Malta up to some years ago, was notified and included in Annex V. The amended Directive of 2013, however, opened the possibility of EU member states critically reviewing the contents of existing courses, against the amended criteria contained in the 2013 Directive.

Recognition of professional civil engineers is regulated by a different mechanism within the Directive: the General System. Basically, this requires a clear recognition of the civil engineering qualifications and professional activities by Malta, which would then be automatically recognized in all EU states. Since, in Malta, we mistakenly translate the word "perit" into "architect", and the "Kamra tal-Periti" into "Chamber of Architects" and not "Chamber of Architects and Civil Engineers, it was sometimes difficult for a perit to go to the UK, for example, and convince the authorities that he was a civil engineer and not an architect.

This was one of many reasons why the University of Malta changed its course structures.

Of course, whether the United Kingdom will continue to recognise our and other European professional qualifications after Brexit will remain to be seen!

The other reality, of course, is that, particularly with a booming construction industry, a number of EU national professionals, especially architects, have flocked to Malta to offer their professional services here. Over 2017, 34 new professionals received their warrant; 9 of these were EU nationals. It is important for all of us to recognise this reality. EU nationals, and even, in certain circumstances, citizens of third countries, have the **right** to offer their professional services in Malta, either by establishing themselves in Malta, (that is, having an office in Malta, paying VAT and CIR here) or, on what is referred to as “on a temporary and occasional basis”, from their own country. This latter right, which arises from the Services Directive, Directive 2006/123/EC, required further changes in the Periti Act, which we now hope are concluded, and to the satisfaction of the European Commission. The Commission had, in fact, opened infringement proceedings against Malta, because its existing legislation was not in conformity with EU Directives.

We had hoped that the amended Periti Act would be presented in Parliament in the last legislature. The elections interrupted this process. Given the pressure by the Commission on Malta to align itself with EU legislation, we now expect the Bill to be presented in Parliament early next year.

In this new legislation, we are expecting:

**(i) One Warrant, two lists**

Our position has consistently remained that there should be only one Warrant, that of **perit**; the Periti Act proposes that such professionals be organized in two lists, that of **perit arkitett**, and of **perit inginier civili**. The question has been debated whether this “division” requires a better definition of what each type of perit does. After long discussions on this issue, the consensus is that the Periti Act should not be the place where any distinctions are outlined. The Periti Act only regulates access to the profession, and the organisation and regulation of the profession. Any requirements for specific expertise should be outlined in other legislation. For example, it should be the Building Regulations Act provisions that require specific qualifications, skills and experience, for different tasks, rather than this Act; and it should be the Cultural Heritage Act that defines the qualifications, skills and experience that are required for interventions on heritage buildings, and not the Periti Act.

All periti who have a warrant on the basis of their B.E.&A qualifications (or earlier) will be inscribed automatically in both lists. Those who graduate with an M.Arch or M.Eng. will be inscribed in the relative lists; and those EU nationals who offer their services in Malta, will be

inscribed in accordance with their home qualifications. It is possible for anybody to be inscribed in both lists, provided that the relative academic and training criteria are fulfilled.

There are a number of other subtle but important concepts which are outlined in the Periti Act, which were required to conform to EU legislation. For example, there is the concept of “partial access”, particularly for civil engineers - when the respective professional does not have the full range of civil engineering skills to receive a warrant of perit, but where his particular specialist skills, for example in geo-technical engineering, would entitle him to work in that limited area. This requires a change in the mentality of how tenders are published, or regulations drafted. It should no longer be enough to simply say a “perit” is required, as if the fact that one has a warrant means that one knows everything, and is ready to take liability for everything. We need to start specifying the skills that are really required for that particular tender or regulation.

## **(ii) Forms of Practice**

The issue of the permissible forms of practice was one of the more contentious in the discussions with the Commission. The Commission insisted that professional services could be offered by any legal persona. We have argued that our Civil Law, and our tradition, as is the case in many European countries, envisages that professional liability, for issues such as structural integrity, could only be carried by a natural persona. The text that we have proposed seems to be a compromise acceptable to the Commission.

The KTP, as indeed many liberal professional associations in Europe, are worried by the perception that the under-lying motivation of the Commission is to push for de-regulation of all professions, in the apparent belief that this would increase business; and that issues such as liability could be addressed by insurance or other alternative means, rather than by regulating professions and reserving services. The KTP does not agree that it serves the consumers well to have to pursue remedies on the basis of insurance, taken out in other member states, or in courts of other member states, given that it is now possible for professionals to offer their services without being established in Malta, and hence without a Warrant.

Nevertheless, this trend remains, and will remain for the future. A recent Directive refers to the proportionality test; what this means is that every country has to submit an annual report to analyse why a particular activity needs to remain regulated or reserved to specific “warranted” persons. The Directive acknowledges the need to regulate when there is an “over-riding need to protect public interest, particularly in relation to issues of public health and safety, protection of the environment, protection of cultural heritage“. This includes a significant part of our work, but not all of our activities. The Periti Act, therefore, stipulates that this over-riding need exists by virtue of specific pieces of legislation, such as Civil Law, or the Code of Police Laws, or by others that might be drafted. But it must not be assumed that every activity which a perit does requires a warrant, and therefore cannot be done by a person without a warrant. Neither must it be

assumed that further steps in de-regulation will not happen in the future, unless Malta is very careful and diligent to clearly identify the over-riding necessity of regulation.

This also leads to the debate about the regulation of the title. We have fought to defend the title of *perit*, as a regulated title. We are insisting that the title can only be held by a natural person, suitably qualified and warranted. We have also defended the title of *periti*, that can be held ONLY by two or more warranted professionals working together under a joint and several liability agreement. If we wish this to survive in the future, it is important that we, all of us, use this title in this way. We should not use the title *periti*, as a description of services, as in Norman Foster Architects. Nor should we use it when the *perit* is a sole operator. If we are not careful, the title *periti* will have to be given to all commercial entities wishing to offer professional services in Malta, irrespective of warrant, or establishment, or trans-border services. I know some people are not happy with this, but you have to accept that it is for the greater good of the profession.

In fact, the Periti Act will clarify that it *is* possible for a legal personality, such as a limited liability company, *can* offer the regulated professional services in Malta, provided the relative *perit* or *periti* are identified. This has been a long battle, with the Commission only partially satisfied, but we hope that we will pull it through. I have to say that, in Malta, there are already entities offering regulated professional services under the aegis of a limited liability company; some changes in the way they work would need to be undertaken.

### **(iii) Liability and Professional Indemnity**

This leads me to a topic for which a lot more work is necessary. The related issues of professional liability and professional indemnity insurance are complicated. Malta is probably the only country in Europe where professional liability for structural integrity extends for a period of 15 years, plus the two years prescription period. The norm in the EU is between 8 and 10 years. This puts our professionals at a severe commercial disadvantage when compared to their colleagues in the European Union. Indeed, it has been commented that such a legislative requirement is discriminatory against local professionals. In addition, it is practically impossible to buy insurance for a liability period of 17 years. When the relative clauses were discussed with the insurance industry, two important points emerged:

- (a) *periti* should not accept mandatory professional indemnity unless the period of liability was aligned with what was the norm in the Europe.
- (b) given that the Civil Law considers both *periti* and contractors as liable for structural integrity, it is anomalous that *periti* are required to take out insurance for the said period of liability, whilst contractors are not.

In our discussions with Government, there is an agreement that the period of liability will be reduced. We have proposed an 8-year liability period, the Government side has proposed a 10-year liability period. We hope that, in any case, we will have a more reasonable situation.

There are indeed other complex issues, related to PII, which we would need to discuss in detail, over the next couple of years, such as, how professionals, for example employed with Contractors undertaking Design-and-Build contracts, could be covered by insurance when the projects are completed, and they are no longer employed by the Contractor. Or how professionals employed with Government, or other public entities, could be covered by insurance. We feel that these professionals are currently out on a limb.

As a body of professionals, we also need to better understand our liabilities, and from these liabilities, the fees that we charge. There has been a tendency for the periti to be considered as responsible for everything, from ensuring that the mason working on a project is properly licensed, to ensuring that the planning development conditions are fully respected – the compliance certificate covering a whole new range of planning conditions – to, recently, ensuring, on behalf of Enemalta, that a developer fulfills all the conditions binding him in connection with the erection of a new substation.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with Periti offering these services, if these are required, however, our advice is that you should make sure that whenever you are engaged for a service, you enter into a clear written agreement outlining the services you are providing, what you are responsible for, and therefore what fees will be due. Please stop depending on Tariff K, because this was rendered practically irrelevant, in 2010, when a clause was added that required an agreement on fees *before* any service is offered, for the fees to be enforceable.

We would like to publish some form of fee guidance, for periti and clients, but I would rather wait for the outcome of a particular European Court case, Commission against Germany, before we embark on this.

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## **Periti Professional Conduct Board**

Over the past year, the Council has attacked the big back log of professional conduct cases that had been, more or less, left unresolved for four or five years. The role of the Kamra in regulating the profession is an unpleasant one – since it necessarily relates to our colleagues – but it is an important one. The Kamra is one of the older self-regulating professional associations in Malta, and we believe that, if anything, this concept should be strengthened and not lost. Since the original 1919 legislation, the Kamra has been vested with the power to conduct enquiries into professional misconduct or malpractice or other violations of the Code of Professional Conduct. It is empowered to act as a Court of first instance, with appeals possible to the Court of Appeals.

Up to some six years ago, the direction, in the discussions on the new Periti Act, was that the Professional Conduct Board would become independent of the Kamra, with a more direct representation of Government. The Council has managed to divert this direction, even if we are not yet completely happy with the current proposals. However, experience has shown that the Council ought not be the body that investigates and *also* that decides on cases. The amended Periti Act envisages that the Kamra will refer any investigations to a new Board, to be known as

the Periti Professional Conduct Board, for independent determination, but self-regulation will remain the remit of the Kamra.

During the discussions with the Government committee, we have not reached full agreement on the composition of this Board. Although, we conceded the proposal that the Minister could, in agreement with the Kamra, appoint the Chairman, we do not believe it is appropriate for the Minister to also appoint two members of the panel of five (including Chairman). Our view is, rather, that the Kamra would appoint a pool of senior periti, from which four would be selected by the Chairman for specific cases, thus ensuring that there are no potential or perceived conflicts of interest. We believe that, within the philosophy of a self-regulating profession, there is need for less government involvement and not more.

The current situation is that, whatever the Council decides as penalty, i.e. suspension or withdrawal of the warrant, has to be endorsed by the Minister. To-date, Ministers seem to fear being “unpopular”, by endorsing such decisions. As a result, many consider our work as a useless waste of time. At the same time, periti are then unfairly maligned in the media, and the Kamra criticised for not taking action against its members.

Proper professional conduct, in respect of colleagues, and in respect of clients, is important; but it is also important that there is proper professional conduct in respect of society in general. As indicated before, the profession is regulated, because the profession has the responsibility to act in favour of the protection of the environment and of cultural heritage. A perit should not try to do more than his legitimate best, possibly by stretching the truth, in order to serve his client. If there is a widespread perception that periti are not, in fact, protecting the environment or cultural heritage, important reasons for retaining the regulation of the profession disappears, and we get ever so closer to de-regulation.

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## **Building Regulations and Standards**

As it has repeatedly expressed in public, the Kamra remains very concerned that the country still does not have a proper regime of Building Control, grounded in modern Building Regulations. We have expressed this concern to the Ministers of the last two legislatures; and we have expressed it in public, and we will continue to do so.

We do not need, however, a replacement of irrational regulations by other irrational ones. What we need is modern performance specifications. Last year, we won a long-drawn battle to convince politicians that Building Regulations are completely different from Planning Control Regulations, a position that was unnecessarily fuelled by the wrong advice by professionals who, because of their political loyalties, find themselves close to the centre of decision-making – in my view, this is a breach of professional conduct, in itself. But let me not go there.



The Building Regulation authority needs to be properly resourced, firstly, to draft and promote an appropriate suite of modern building regulations, but also to impose some order on the jungle that our construction process has become. Periti have been complicit in this jungle, if nothing else because of their public silence. The country needs *performance-based standards*, rather than prescriptive regulations. The regulations should, for example, prescribe the level of ventilation required in specific premises, rather than prescribe the size of the openings. Prescriptive requirements should only be used as “deemed-to-satisfy” documents, thus allowing innovation in design and technology, if it can be scientifically demonstrated that the required performance could be achieved by alternative provisions.

The Government has recently announced discussions on a new Building Industry Regulatory structure. The Kamra looks forward to frank discussions on what this entity would be and would do; if properly thought through, it could be of great benefit to the construction industry, and therefore to our profession. But, equally, if misconceived, it could become yet another talking shop, without achieving anything.

Your active help is, and will continue to be, solicited, because nobody better than us, practising professionals, can help real and modern regulation.

An issue related to Building Regulations and Standards is that of the **training and licensing of operatives**. The country sadly remains behind in the availability of operatives with the skills required for modern building construction, and for handling modern construction materials. I have raised the issue of the “mason’s” licence before, which is the only formal licensing that currently exists in Malta, and which is primarily based on knowledge of stone masonry construction, and some basic concrete technology. And yet, the “licensed mason” is expected to be responsible for dangerous operations such as excavating adjacent to existing properties or dismantling of existing buildings. The KTP will continue to actively support BICC in its efforts to address this problem.

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## Planning Authority and Heritage

In recent weeks, you will have observed a media flare-up between the Kamra tal-Periti and the Planning Authority. This is but a more explicit manifestation of a general dissatisfaction with how the Planning Authority is operating. I have personally come to the conclusion that the planning legislation is seriously flawed, both in concept and in drafting. The word “planning” scarcely comes into its activities, whilst the “authority” is applied with an increasing measure of arrogance – and I am choosing my words carefully.

When the Planning Authority publishes its proposals for “consultation”, the Council devotes considerable energy to giving valid and timely feedback. Very often, we ask you, our members, to help us with your expertise. We did this very successfully, in the past, with the draft National Transport Strategy, or the Vision for Valletta, and more famously on the Development Framework for Paceville.

Way back in July, the PA published a consultation document on a proposed mechanism by which projects related to the police, and to the correctional facilities, could be undertaken under the DNO mechanism, “should the Minister responsible determine that such works are required urgently for national security reasons”. The Council duly submitted its reservations, by the closing date; nevertheless the day following the end of the consultation period, the PA published approval of the Legal Notice. Intrigued by the timing, the Council had then written to the Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government, which had coordinated the public consultation process through its website, on the 2nd August 2017, asking for a copy of the Outcome Report on the public consultation submissions. The Council was informed that “*at the moment the Authority concerned is analysing the feedback received thus the report is not yet available.*” - this despite the fact that the Legal Notice had already been approved. We were subsequently advised that since the KTP submissions had been filed at 18:00, on the closing date of the consultations, that is, after 17:00, they were too late to be considered; and this in spite of the fact that no cut-off time had been indicated in the consultation notice. The whole charade was exposed when it was admitted that the Executive Council had met at 18:00 of that same evening to approve the Legal Notice, without bothering to process any consultation submissions. We have continued to ask for a satisfactory explanation, or at least an apology, to no avail. This, to me, is arrogance.

The recent announcement of the DNO approval of a 100,000 sq.m. shooting range at Ta' Kandja, the application for which was filed a few days after the publication of the said Legal Notice, confirms the Kamra's misgivings, which were publicly announced, but, as I explained, ignored completely.

What galls me most is not the fact that we should build a shooting range at Ta' Kandja, but that the Planning Authority goes through such devious ways to approve a project, which was after all announced in March of this year, by one party, and endorsed by the other, without going through the procedures that are required by our and European legislation – legislation that applies only to lesser mortals.

The recent case of the demolition of the ex-Sea Malta/ex-NAAFI building, on the basis of an inexistent report that the said structure was dangerous; and the more recent one of the now-stalled demolition of Villa St. Ignatius on the basis of a court report that said something completely opposite, illustrates to me both a shocking disregard of our extant built heritage, as well as a level of assumed impunity that should all shock us. It is also arrogant to ignore the Ombudsman who pointed out that the dangerous structure approval for the ex-Sea Malta building was irregular and should be declared null and void; and also arrogant to ignore a Freedom of Information request for the reports the Planning Authority claimed to have.

I believe that as professionals we ought to lead the way in helping the general public and politicians to appreciate the importance of our built and natural heritage. Our clients, and our office portfolio, should not be more important than this obligation. Otherwise our credibility is doomed. Later this year, I will be proposing some form of platform whereby we could create a

more coordinated lobby in favour of our built and natural environment, and I will ask those of you who have similar concerns to offer their help.

Some victories were registered with our representations to Planning Authority. The infamous Commencement Notice was buried earlier this year. The KTP made representations when the Planning Authority started to include, as standard conditions, in development permissions, a number of obligations arising out of legislation and regulations which govern other entities and organisations, and which have no real bearing on the planning process itself. The Planning Authority conceded that we had a point, and therefore it now publishes, as an addendum to the effective planning conditions administered by it, other conditions that an owner has to fulfill during the building process. We are still not fully in agreement with this, since we believe that it can still lead to complications when compliance certificates are required. But, up to now, this is the most we could achieve, because there is little propensity to listen to us.

There was also the issue of the CTB concessions, which we believe is being interpreted in a way that is causing hardship to a number of people who acquired property “regularized” in this way in good faith. We have raised this matter to the Parliamentary Secretary, because we believe that an amendment to the legislation is required, but there seems to be scarce urgency to put the brakes on a money-making procedure.

I would also like to make it clear that we have expressed reservations on the Design Advisory Committee, in terms of its concept, its composition, and its function. Once again, there is scarce propensity to listen to us. They are always and inevitably right. We have complained that the Planning Authority We believe that the Kamra tal-Periti is not just any other interested party; it represents the profession that is the prime customer for the Authority. We have also observed that the Planning Authority is effectively only focused on Development Control and not on Planning; this is to the detriment of what should be its primary role, that of planning, long-term vision and strategy, drawing up of development and local plans, and promotion of sustainable development. Malta needs a more integrated approach to transport, land-use, water resources, and landscape.

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## **Design Award**

After my long list of problems that I believe we have to continue to address over the coming year, I would now like to announce a positive initiative in favour of quality.

The Kamra tal-Periti believes that it is time for the profession to itself define those architectural and civil engineering works that it recognises as “of good quality”. Up to now, it has been other commercial entities which have launched design awards, primarily to promote their own publications. We are now announcing an award scheme which is run by the profession for the profession. We wish our Award scheme to celebrate, on an annual basis, good quality, sustainable and ethical design in architecture and civil engineering. We believe that it is important to identify real quality, in a context where the rush to build is not accompanied by much

thought about the care by which we build and what we leave behind for succeeding generations. We want the Award to become synonymous with good quality contemporary architecture and civil engineering in Malta

We wished to do this by associating the Award with the name of an architect and civil engineer who was, firstly, precisely this, a very good architect, but also one of the more prominent civil engineers of his time. His work is synonymous with quality. In fact, he was both a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, and a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects. His work bridges a traditional world of classical architecture, steeped in Renaissance and Baroque traditions, with the modernity of contemporary requirements. His material was limestone, as are many of the classical buildings before his time. However, he showed that, with the same material, one could be both flexible and avant-garde, without compromising the traditions of good construction. In this sense, he also symbolizes the birth, and the best, of the modern stage of our profession. He was not afraid of being contemporary without throwing tradition away. These are the timeless qualities that we wish that our Award becomes associated with.

We are therefore proud to launch the Premju Emanuele Luigi Galizia. We are working to make this award synonymous with top quality architecture and civil engineering in Malta, (and here I have to go back to my thanks to Andre Pizzuto and Alberto Miceli for their work)

We will be announcing details of the Award shortly, but I can announce that it will cover works completed in 2016 and 2017. The activity will be held in the first quarter of 2018.

I would like to announce, finally, that the Award will also include a junior scheme that focuses on the best talents graduating from the University of Malta. The presentation of the best Final Projects and the best Dissertations have already taken place, and the winners identified. The formal presentation of the awards will take place with the senior event.

As you know, I spend much of my other life at University, with the young hopefuls of our profession. I can confirm that there is a lot of amazing talent in there. If only Malta had a policy of promoting design competitions for the public buildings that public money funds, as is the case of, say France. We would then give this young unfettered talent an opportunity to show itself and to grow and, in this way, to positively influence our built environment. We badly need it.

In the mean time, as a way of welcoming and introducing these young prospective professionals, I have invited them to join us in Christmas drinks at the end of this General Meeting. I hope you will join me in congratulating them for their recent graduation, and in welcoming them to the profession.

Thank you