



Editorial

Concluding a successful year

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Dear readers and authors of Xjenza Online, as Editor in Chief, I am pleased to announce the release of the second regular issue of the 12th volume of Xjenza Online concluding a very successful year for the journal. In 2024, Xjenza Online released two regular issues and a special issue on Economics and Finance and this would not have been possible without the valuable input of our current Copy Editor, Dr Karl Pelka.

As always, I am excited to share with you the journal's latest free open access publications.

The issue opens with the manuscript by Baldacchino et al. on the differential exposure to English language in the fields of chemistry and sociology based on a survey conducted in eight universities part of the 'European University of the Seas' (SEA-EU) where the language of instruction is not mainly English.

Next, Ferranti and Fiorini report on the state of occupational health and safety in the Maltese construction industry, one of the most dangerous working sector locally including lacks of safety standards and of training for construction workers, and precarious working conditions for migrant workers. Strategies for improving the standards are suggested such as increased enforcement, alternative penalties, better resources for the involved inspectorate, adequate training, the licensing of contractors, and construction standards development.

Sciocluna et al. present then a study on the identification of candidate sites for an offshore green Hydrogen production plant concept with integrated Floating Liquid Piston Accumulator using Seawater under Compression energy storage in Malta's Exclusive Economic Zone.

The following paper by Sultana discusses the land use in the Maltese Islands and follows the changes occurred during a period of 14 years (1998-2012). The research highlights a misalignment between the intended objectives of land use policies and the actual land use changes

and underscores the importance of acquiring detailed spatial and temporal data to inform national land use and resource management policies aimed at promoting sustainable land use.

Then, Grech et al. review the influence of migration on Malta's demographic transition. The conclusions of the study are worrying in the sense that currently in Malta, domestic labour supply cannot keep up with an influx of foreign workers, weathering its demographic transition at the expense of a rapidly expanding population but the long-term results are of significant concern as infrastructures may not cope and a substantial worker efflux for whatever reason could potentially precipitate a significant economic downturn.

The issue closes with two news articles. The first one by Bianchi introduces the reader to OiPub, a new web platform for researchers where all research papers and outputs are automatically organised into topic streams that you can either access directly, or easily combine into research communities following multiple topics to create a custom stream of information and discussion in any research niche area. The second one by Mifsud et al. highlights the outcomes of the 2024 Collisions Physics and Chemistry and their Applications (COPCA) Conference in Valletta.

To conclude, I am very pleased to witness the growing popularity of the journal not only among the local scientific community but also the press.

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