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The Malta Centre of Excellence for Professional Ethics – First meeting of the partners.

As many of you know already, at the joint initiative of the Executive Board of CEPLIS and our inter-professional member the Malta Federation of Professional Associations (MFPA), a consortium was set up last year in order to apply for EU funding in the context of "Horizon 2020" for the establishment of a Centre of Excellence for Professional Ethics in the Republic of Malta.



Hon. Evarist Bartolo MP - Minister for Education and Employment

In order to fund the preparation of the relevant project, to be submitted to the European Commission's DG Research by the beginning of next year, CEPLIS and MFPA have obtained a small budget from the Maltese Ministry of Education and Employment. The Ministry in question, along with the University of Malta, the Catholic University of Louvain (UCLouvain - Belgium), MFPA and of course CEPLIS, constitute the members of the aforementioned consortium.

The 21st of this month, representatives of each one of the members of the Consortium had their first meeting in Valetta, at the kind invitation of the Minister of Education and Employment of Malta, Mr. Evarist Bartolo. CEPLIS was represented by Director General Prof. Koutroubas. The event was an opportunity to discuss the three pillars of the future centre: i.e. Training Research and Professional Development.

TRAINING

The Training activities of the future centre will regard mainly individuals affiliated to institutions, universities, etc. who would be interested in acquiring knowledge on ethical issues concerning the professions and their application in everyday professional exercise in order to bring their experience back home and prepare colleagues who will train themselves other future or current professionals (Training the Trainers)

RESEARCH

The Research activities of the Malta Centre will concern both fundamental and applied issues of ethics relating to the professional sector.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This part concerns the application of the output of the future centre and its aim will be the improvement of the level of advise professionals propose to their clients. It will also focus on the emerging professions in the context of the new Digital Economy and their ethical aspects.

The future Centre aims, thanks to its geographical position in Malta, to cover a broader space than the current EU Member States, notably the area of the Southern Mediterranean.

The partners will meet again next month to continue with the "business plan".

For further information, please feel free to contact our Secretariat.

Duke of Edinburgh: Great Engineers can improve the world

We would like to share with you today an article the Duke of Edinburgh has contributed to the "New Scientist" in which he points out that engineers have done more for humanity than almost anyone else. In the referred article, the Duke develops strong arguments in favour of the engineering profession. We feel that these arguments can be used to support our cause for the defense of the specificities of our professions in general.



HRH, Prince Philip of the UK, Duke of Edinburgh

"Engineering is one of the few ways in which human talent can be given the chance to improve, and frequently to transform, the comfort and prosperity of the human community"

"If you look around you, **everything you see that is not part of the natural world was the vision of an engineer or an architect.** Every power station, every road, every railway, every bridge, every mobile phone, every airliner, every piece of equipment and every sewage works owes its existence to an engineer.

Great engineers have a passion to improve life; a burning conviction that they can make life better for everyone. Engineers need to have a talent for invention and innovation, but what drives them is the conviction that they can find a better way to do things; a cheaper and more efficient **solution to the problems of human existence** on this planet of limited resources that we call Earth.

Many of us spend a lot of time complaining about the difficulties and problems of life. It is easy to find fault with things that make daily life arduous. **For an engineer, these difficulties can be opportunities.** How can this be made to work better? How can that process be made more efficient? How can components be made more cheaply, more accurately and more fit-for-purpose? Great engineers are convinced that everything can be improved. **Instead of complaining, they think of ways to make things better.**

In addition to ambition, those who aspire to change the world for the better also **need to acquire the skills and knowledge that previous generations** have bequeathed to the art and science of engineering.

Many people take to engineering because **they discover that they already have technical skills**; they can make things with great precision. Others discover that they can put ideas on paper or computer screens. This is frequently all it takes to start them thinking about how they can use these talents to do something original, or to devise a way of doing something better. They may have to go through years of struggle and disappointment, but this seldom diverts them from their vision and ambition to innovate.

Engineering is not just a profession to be learned and practised as a way of making a living. It **is one of the few ways in which human talent can be given the chance to improve**, and frequently to transform, the comfort and prosperity of the human community. In fact, engineering has made a greater positive difference to human life than almost any other human endeavour.

The Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering is intended to **recognise those particular feats of engineering that have made a significant impact on human existence**. The winners are an example of what can be achieved, but it must not be forgotten that they were supported and enabled by countless other specialist engineers, from this time and throughout the past.

It is obviously not possible to name every one of them, but they will all appreciate that they have played their parts, and that, I hope, will give them the satisfaction of knowing **that they have created a very significant contribution to the human lot.**"

For further information about the above, please feel free to contact our Secretariat.

The European Commission wants to tighten legislation on Medical Devices

The Commission's initial proposal for a revision of the Regulation on Medical Devices came in 2012. It aimed to improve patient safety by making future medical devices, ranging from simple sticking plasters to life-supporting machines, subject to far more stringent tests before they enter the market. Originally, the objective was to adopt the new legislation before the EU elections this year, but that did not happen.



Health scandals about hip replacements, depositing toxic metals into the blood or breast implants made from unauthorised industrial-grade silicone, have, in recent years, **stunned European citizens**.

The latest scandal caused a health related scare across Europe and the rest of the world after 300,000 women in 65 countries were believed to have received the unauthorized breast implants, which had double the risk of ruptures. **The main market was in Europe**, notably in France.

This happened four years ago. As a direct response, the **European Commission wanted to tighten legislation**. *"We must do our best never to let this happen again,"* John Dalli, EU Health Commissioner at the time, said.

The 1st of last December the Council, representing Member States, announced that **there as no possibility to reach an agreement this year**. Member States are in fact divided on issues ranging from tasks for a proposed medical device coordination group, to the scrutiny mechanism for high-risk devices and post-market surveillance.

At the meeting, the Commission reminded Member States that they, just a few months ago, agreed that **a quick adoption of this proposal was vital**. France was especially eager to get the new legislation through, partly because the breast implants scandal in 2010 revolved around a French company, Poly Implant Prothese (PIP).

Criticism from MEPs

Politicians in the European Parliament are also keen on seeing this legislation adopted.

Danish Green MEP **Margrete Auken**, member of the public health committee, said new scandals with dangerous medical devices **could still occur because of the delay**.

The EU parliament endorsed the commission's proposal back in October 2013.

German centre-right MEP **Peter Liese**, a member of the same committee, also sees a need to conclude the file as soon as possible.

*"The Parliament has been **waiting for a council position for more than a year now**. A further delay endangers not only patients' safety, but also the planning reliability of the companies working with medical devices,"* he said.

According to **Laurene Souchet**, policy officer at the **European Patients' Forum**, the consequences of a delay is *"that **patients in Europe cannot yet report directly incidents they encounter with medical devices, or receive more transparent information on devices, particularly the high risk devices**"*.

Although Souchet hopes to see progress in 2015, she also wants the EU institutions to get the regulation right the first time.

*"Once adopted it will stay adopted for many years, and we have to make sure the compromise made will **provide patients with access to safe, high quality medical devices in the EU**,"* she said.

CEPLIS will of course keep you informed of all new changes related to professionals in Europe. But in the meanwhile if you require further information about this subject, please feel free to contact our Secretariat.

Latvia set out objectives of its Council Presidency before EU Parliament committees and EESC.

Latvia will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2015. The Presidency is an opportunity for every Member State, regardless of its size or length of membership, to influence the EU agenda and guide EU endeavours. The basic principles for Latvia's Presidency will be involvement, growth and sustainability. These principles will be applied in the development of the Presidency's work programs and priorities, as well as in building up culture and communication programs.



Increasing **security, boosting growth, creating jobs, establishing a digital single market:** Latvia will have plenty to do at the helm of the Council Presidency the coming six months. **Latvian Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma** discussed her country's priorities during a debate in the European Parliament.

On the level of EESC Ms Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica, Parliamentary Secretary at the Latvian Foreign Ministry, presented the working programme of Latvia's Presidency of the EU during the Committee's 504th Plenary session,. Its **priorities include growth, the digital era, globalisation, climate change** and a special **emphasis on EU-Central Asia relations**.

EESC President Henri Malosse stated: "*To achieve these goals, **the EU must move forward with all Europeans**. This is part of a strong and much needed democratic process that will enable European action to meet citizens' expectations on the ground. This is what our Committee stands for and we will live up to this commitment.*"

The priorities presented by Ms Kalniņa-Lukaševica included the following measures:

- **Growth** – the source of job creation: industrial policy and energy policy must lie at the heart of EU action for the five years ahead,
- **Digital era:** in terms of current and future opportunities for growth, and also of its impact on other sectors, Europe must remain in the vanguard and ensure it does not leave any of its regions behind,
- **Globalisation:** Europe must be involved in the major meetings that will take place, boosting a genuine African policy and strengthening its partnership with the Mediterranean countries.
- **Climate change:** Europe should be at the forefront of the major meetings and, in particular, play a leading role in the preparations for COP21 in Paris in 2015.

Lastly, Ms Kalniņa-Lukaševica underscored the importance of cooperation with the EESC during the Latvian presidency. EESC members Mr Vitālijs Gavrilovs (**Employers' group**), Mr Pēteris Krigers (**Workers' group**) and Mr Pavel Trantina (Various interests group) took the floor to welcome and express their support for the Latvian presidency's programme.

After the official presentation by the Latvian EU Presidency, **former President of the Republic of Latvia Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga** addressed the EESC plenary and took part in a debate about economic growth and social solidarity in Europe.

If you want further information about the Latvian presidency, do not hesitate to contact our Secretariat.