

## **Note on the meeting between Minister of Public Works and Planning, Dr. Stefan Zrinzo Azzopardi and the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (Malta Branch)**

On Wednesday 18 January 2023, CILT Malta was invited to a private meeting at the Ministry for Public Works and Planning with Minister Dr. Stefan Zrinzo Azzopardi and Mr. Paul Vella Head of Secretariat. CILT Malta was represented by the Chair Ms. Miriam Camilleri, Education Secretary Dr. Emanuel Farrugia and Communications Secretary Mr. Justin Ebejer.

During the one hour long meeting the CILT Malta committee had the opportunity to introduce themselves and provide a brief outline of CILT International, including of course the Malta Branch and its commitment towards the local transport and logistics sector. Education and training of professionals was the main objective even if not the only objective of the institute that was active in many countries all over the world.

Minister Zrinzo Azzopardi set the scene by highlighting the importance of the freight and logistics sector in Malta offers a great number of opportunities to the country's economic set-up. He said that while logistics is mainly performed by private operators (employing approximately 5000 people), the sector has also become a public policy concern. Moreover, supply chains and cross-border trade with European and North African countries can be somewhat challenging. Hence, sometimes government intervention can be crucial, particularly in infrastructure such as warehousing and land reclamation. Planning policies need to be in place for such investment.

He added that one of the key challenges the logistics sector encounters, is the scarcity of land, due to the fact that Malta is a small island with limited available space. One has to consider sensitively proposals of using additional land for auxiliary local storage space for investment.

He went on to comment that local operators sometimes find themselves in the so called 'comfort zone' relying heavily on government intervention. The negative impact in such situation can result in a shortage in the undertaking and consideration of new initiatives for business expansion, competition and growth.

To counter these challenges, the Ministry of Public Works and Planning shall request the Planning Authority to look into the needs of the field (of which CILT Malta will form an integral part) to develop a strategy particularly designed towards a holistic and synergized approach. The goal is to ensure that the logistics sector in Malta is given the appropriate consideration.

In his address to the CILT Malta committee, Minister Stefan Zrinzo Azzopardi was keen to explain that one of the major roles of this framework will be that of overseeing the correct implementation of the strategy. The Minister also stressed the importance of tracking and monitoring progress towards achieving the desired strategy targets.

During the ensuing discussion such targets were acknowledged and were carefully identified as follows:

- Right balance between protection of the environment, and business expansion or diversification.
- Strengthening ties with European and North African countries, whilst identifying further business opportunities with developing countries.

As pointed out by the CILT Malta Committee, Malta is in a favorable position to become a regional logistics hub and it is of the utmost priority to seize the opportunity and boost trade flows.

- Creating and delivering custom made training programmes through cooperation between educational institutions and industry.

The study conducted by Dr. Gordon Cordina back in 2014 about *Skill Gaps and Shortages in the Transport and Logistic Industry* is an ideal benchmark of what the industry expectations are.

- Finally, strive towards a mentality shift.  
Malta needs the motivation to be at the forefront of change. Innovative ideas will be welcomed. The Ministry pledged to work closely with all the parties involved and provide the necessary development assistance to achieve the targets laid out in the strategy.

In conclusion, CILT Malta thanked the Hon. Minister for the opportunity to voice their vision and be an integral part in this national logistics policy. Both parties expressed their optimism that adoption and implementation of this policy will be a major step forward towards a better playing field in the logistics sector.