

The Land Surveyor's Society – Malta

The Land Surveyors Society is a non Governmental organisation serving the public interest for advancement of the profession of surveying in all fields of its applications.

History

Civilian Land Surveying, as distinct from its military counterpart offered very limited scope of activity in Malta before the Second World War, as private development was slow and sporadic and the process of civil land utilisation carried out at a calm and leisurely pace – this was due to the fact that the Island of Malta was solidly maintained as a Military Fortress, concerned with the security and consolidation of its installations and relying for any surveying and mapping services on personnel from the British War Departments.

As soon as Malta gained Independence from Britain in 1964, the Government started to tackle the reconstruction of the Island where a marked increase of Land Surveying activities was registered. After Independence the Maltese government launched development plans which transformed the economy of the Island from its old strategic outlook, to one of a thriving tourist resort and a promising industrial centre.

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The Land Surveyors Society of the Crown as it was then called, was set up in 1969 by the 17 surveyors employed by the Government with a view to protect their common interests, to promote uniformity of methods and procedures and maintain a reliable standard of work. The aims of the organisation were to improve the technical and scientific knowledge of its members.

The elected members of the Land Surveyors' Society of the crown were Land Surveyors in the Malta Public Service who have either qualified by a competitive examination or have gained a standard of experience in Land Surveying to the satisfaction of the Society.

The Society did not conduct its own examinations. These were held by the Board of Local Examinations of the Government of Malta which comprised papers in Theoretical and Practical Land Surveying and in General Education, concluding with an interview.

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Up to the late 1960 the only surveyors were those employed by the Public Service. These were employed after sitting for a national competitive examination in Land Surveying and other subjects. The number employed depended on the posts needed to be filled which was between 3 and 10. These were employed in order of merit.

During the late-1970's, Surveyors from the Public Service were given specialised training in Land Surveying organised with the collaboration of the Italian Military Mission in Malta by the Istituto Geografico Militare of Firenze. These surveyors took active part in the preparation of the map of the Maltese Islands at a scale of 1:25,000. This was considered as a milestone in the achievements of the survey profession as it was for the first time that Maltese surveyors took such a major role in the preparation of maps.

In 1988, the Maltese government embarked on a very challenging project, whereby the re-mapping in digital format of the Maltese Islands at the scale of 1:2,500, was launched. This was the first step towards the establishment of a Mapping Unit.

This Unit was furnished with modern equipment and the Maltese personnel running it have been adequately trained by IGN France to produce Digitised Maps. Surveyors were also trained in this field, so that they can do all the work regarding Ground control for Aerial photography, Precise Levelling and other Topographic and Geodetic works.

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In the early 1990, about eighty per cent of the surveyors working in the Public Service together with the mapping function were transferred to the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA). The MEPA together with Nottingham Trent University (UK) organised an in house course in Land Surveying at the University of Malta.

At the same time, the first Private Land Surveying Company was set up. Later on two other Surveying Companies followed suit whilst later on

towards the end of the 1990, Private building contractors and developers started employing their own surveyors.

If one was to recall the situation of a few years ago it will be concluded that the private sector was almost non-existing. One can argue a lot how and what brought about this situation. However, everybody will agree about the fact, that this change brought a major development in the survey profession as this instilled competition and as such advancement in the survey profession.

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Membership

Malta has a population of 400,000.

The Land Surveyors' Society of Malta has 49 registered members which includes 2 Honorary Members. Up until the present time the Society only accept persons who are qualified and practising as Land Surveyors. In due course there is a possibility of extending the membership to other related disciplines within the sphere of Geomatics.

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Statistics	Full Members	25
	Associate Members	18
	Probationers	4
	Students	-
	Honorary Members	2
Gender	Males	47
	Females	2

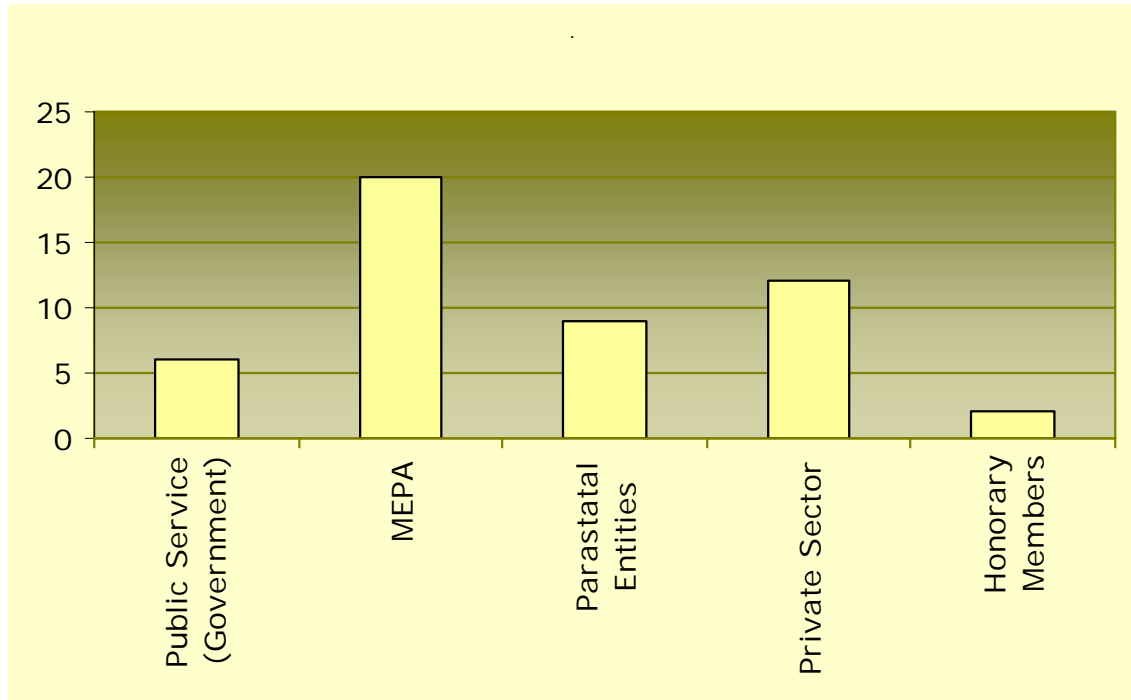
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Qualifications	Degree	3
	Diploma or other	34
	Public Service Examinations	10
	Honorary Members	2
Employment	Public Service (Government)	6
	MEPA (Planning Authority)	20
	Parastatal Entities	9
	Private Sector	12
	Honorary Members	2

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Employment Ratio

This chart illustrates clearly enough that although the major number of surveyors are employed with Government Organizations, there is quite a substantial number of surveyors employed with Private Survey companies and construction industry.



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Type of Membership

Full Member

- any person practising Surveying, with a minimum of 15 years approved experience;
- any person holding a degree or equivalent approved diploma in Surveying or in any related field and a minimum of 3 years of practical experience in the field.

Associate Member

- any person who has gained at least 7 years experience;
- any person holding an approved certificate in Surveying with at least 3 years experience in the field.

Probationer

- any person who has gained at least 4 years approved Surveying experience from the age of 18, in a surveying office;
- achieved an approved local or foreign certificate or diploma.

Student

- a) any person who has commenced surveying duties in an approved office;
- b) any person who has commenced an appropriate surveying course at an approved educational facility

Honorary Members

Any person who has shown interest in the Society and has rendered noteworthy assistance in promoting its aims and objectives. Honorary Membership must be approved by an Extraordinary or Annual General Meeting.

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Academic Courses

To date no courses leading to a degree in Surveying are being held at the University of Malta. Three of our members had to go Universities in the United Kingdom to obtain their Degree.

At present there are courses in Land Surveying leading to Certificates and Diplomas being held at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). Hopefully MCAST will finalise the approval of coordination and cooperation with the Institute of Civil Engineering Surveyors in the UK.

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Recognition

Up to twenty years ago the Architect and Civil Engineer (A&CE)* was the only person recognised and allowed to sign for Electrical Engineers, Mechanical Engineers, Land Surveyors and Quantity Surveyors. All these professions did not have a Chamber by then.

Twenty years ago the Electrical and Mechanical Engineers set up their own Chamber which was approved officially through Parliament.

So to date the Architect and Civil Engineer is the only person to certify and sign any official document related to Land Surveying and Quantity Surveying. Although this anomaly still exists officially, a few Surveyors are now being recognised and appointed directly by the Courts of Law to be expert witness in cases related mostly to Land Boundaries.

**Note: Architects have to be Civil Engineers too. This is a combined course of duration of 5 years. And the warrant is then given as an Architect and Civil Engineer.*

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International Membership

The Land Surveyors Society of Malta is an active full member with the following International Organisations:

1. Founder Member of the Commonwealth Association of Surveyors' and Land Economy (CASLE) Full Members since 1967;
2. International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) Full Members since 1994;
3. European Group of Surveyors (EGOS) – Associate Members since 1999 and Full Members since 2004;
4. Council of European Geodetic Surveyors (CLGE) Full Members since 2004.

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Immediate Tasks

1. To continue to have talks with the Malta Government at Ministerial level regarding recognition and the setting up of a Chamber of Surveyors. Here we ask for help from this organisation to help us in convincing our Government the need of a Chamber especially since Malta joined the European Union;
2. To press on the Malta University to introduce Surveying Courses leading to a Degree, or
3. Establishing a link with a University from another country by having long distance courses via the Internet

Paper presented by Randolph Camilleri,
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