

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Designated Authorities Conference**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Designated Authorities Conference was held at the Radisson, SAS BayPoint Resort, St Julians on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2008. The half-day Conference was organized by the Malta Qualifications Council. The aims of the Conference were to facilitate and promote the uniform application of Act 451 and related regulations; to co-ordinate the activities of the designated authorities and to ensure the timely dissemination of information on matters governed by the act and regulations. Over 40 participants attended this Conference, which is convened by law. These included representatives of various unions, authorities, directorates, boards and councils.

The conference was chaired by Dr James Calleja, the Mutual Recognition Coordinator who also spoke about the Qualifications Framework and its impact on Designated Authorities. The Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, the Hon. Dolores Cristina also addressed the audience present. The Minister spoke about the value of qualification recognition and how this will enhance the quality of qualifications as well as increase transparency in the process by which certification is awarded. The Minister also spoke about the need that arose to integrate the Malta Qualifications Council, the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC) and the office of the Mutual Recognition Coordinator.

Dr Stephen Zammit, Malta Qualifications Council spoke about the interaction of Directives 36/2005 and 123/2006 for Designated Authorities. These are the Qualifications and Services Directives. Mr Noel Bartolo and Mr Mark Xerri from the Commerce Division, Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment spoke about the IMI (Internal Market Information System) as a tool of Communication between public administrations at a national, regional and local level. Mr Bartolo spoke about the Professional Qualifications Pilot Project which included four professions; accountants, doctors, pharmacists and physiotherapists. It will be extended to support another seven professions namely architects, dentists, nurses, midwives, radiographers, secondary school teachers and veterinary surgeons.

The Conference concluded with a discussion on the need for cooperation between the office of the Mutual Recognition Coordinator and the various Designated Authorities. There were also a number of questions from the floor.