

## Angelo Xuereb appointed FOBC Chairman

Angelo Xuereb was unanimously appointed as the new President of the Federation of Building and Civil Engineering Contractors (FOBC) at its recently held third Annual General Meeting.

The FOBC was set up just over two years ago when 22 major contractors in one of Malta's most important infrastructural sectors, that of building and civil engineering, got together to form the new Federation to take care of their interests and to exchange ideas in order to improve their working practices. This was a historical landmark for the construction industry and the Federation still endeavours to promote the interests of building and civil engineering contractors.

The Annual General Meeting thanked outgoing President Joe Micallef for his sterling work and appointed the following members to the new Council: Francis Vella (Ballut Blocks), Etienne Bartolo (B&B Construc-

tion), Jimmy Calleja (Elbros), Thomas Sammut (Attard Bros.) and Boris Farrugia (Polidano Group) together with the new Federation President, Angelo Xuereb.

Xuereb is the Chairman of the AX Holdings Group of Companies and has been a major player in the construction industry for the last 28 years. He was also instrumental in the setting up of the FOBC and has also occupied the position of Vice President within the Federation from the onset. Mr Xuereb is also FOBC's representative on the Building Industry Consultative Council (BICC).

"I look forward to continue building on the useful work which has been carried out by the FOBC till now. Although still an infant, the Federation has carried out very significant work. I trust that the FOBC will continue to increase its membership and will show their support towards the Council and the aims of the Federation, which, after all,

works hard for the benefit of all building and civil engineering contractors", Mr Xuereb said.

During his long career, Mr Xuereb has always been on the forefront to improve the building sector, and has written many articles and presented many papers in this regard, especially to encourage youths to take up a career within this very important industry, which is not only one of the major motors of the Maltese economy but also acts as a barometer for economic activity.

During these last two years, the FOBC has addressed and continues to address many important issues, including:

- The lack of skilled labourers.
- Training courses for skilled construction workers through the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC), the Building Industry Consultative Council (BICC), and the Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST).

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## FOBC outlines objectives

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- Helping to finalise the standard form of contracts through the BICC to take over the outdated one used by Government, and hopefully to replace the various forms of contracts adopted by various Architects in the private sector.
- The effect of certain regulations which may be imposed if Malta joins the E.U. These were discussed during various meetings were held with MIC.
- An emphasis on the importance of Health and Safety measurements which have to be addressed by all contractors. This is one of the major concerns for all. Meetings were held with the Health and Safety Authority in order to enforce the very stringent regulations gradually, since many workers still require training. Various on-the-job Health &

Safety education programmes were held with the collaboration of some main contractors.

- The concern that youths are not joining the construction industry because of its present laborious conditions. The situation is aggravated further because of early retirement from the industry due to backache. To this effect, discussions are being held to reduce the size and weight of our local stone and to improve building practices. The FOBC has noted with satisfaction that the concrete sector within the industry has improved in great strides and reduced its laborious conditions. In fact the main contractors are in line with the major European Countries.
- The importance that all contractors should be registered, including the establishment of classifications of contractors. This is required due

to the fact that very often Government and developers adjudicate the tenders based on the price considerations only and not on the capability of the contractor.

- The distinguishing between developers and contractors. It is often that contractors are accused of being a nuisance, when in fact contractors are only acting to the instructions given by the Employer. FOBC is also working on new ways of handling certain materials on site in order to reduce the inconvenience to the neighbourhood of a construction site.

- The protection of the environment. The FOBC places great importance on the role which the construction industry plays in environment aspects, especially due to the intrinsic nature of the industry.