

IMLI e-News

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IMO Director of Legal Affairs and External Relations Division:

IMLI is a vital part of the IMO family



Dr. Rosalie Balkin, with IMLI students.

Dr. Rosalie Balkin, the Director of the Legal Affairs and External Relations Division of the London based International Maritime Organization (IMO), delivered on the 22nd of September the inaugural lecture of the 16th annual LL.M. course in international maritime law at the IMO International Maritime Law Institute, entitled “*The Legal Framework of the IMO*”. The Inaugural lecture was attended by 29 lawyers from all over the globe, which are currently pursuing their LL.M. studies at IMLI, and by a number of diplomats and distinguished guests.

Dr. Balkin, what is the role of the IMO International Maritime Law Institute within the international maritime community ?

IMLI is a vital part of the IMO family, as it trains lawyers from countries that need expertise from the field of international maritime law. IMLI graduates are assisting States, especially the developing ones, to adopt and implement their international obligations. This is an invaluable contribution to the achievement of the goals of the International Maritime Organization, which can be described as “*Safe, secure, and efficient shipping on clean oceans.*”

What is your opinion about the legal training that IMLI offers ?

IMLI training has a long term effect on the graduates home countries and also on the maritime community as a whole. I would say that it has a global effect. Lawyers coming to IMLI have already a degree in law, but an IMLI course enables them to give greater assistance to their governments.

In fact, a lot of IMLI graduates come back to IMO as heads or members of their national delegations and their contribution to the work of the IMO is very much appreciated. They are trained maritime lawyers, they understand the issues and their participation in the meetings of the legal and of various other IMO committees is much more active and constructive, as it would be otherwise.

Can you mention maybe some IMLI graduates, who are currently involved in the work of the IMO ?

An outstanding example is Mr. Kofi Mbiah from Ghana, the current Vice Chairman of the Legal Committee. But you can find IMLI graduates also in other IMO committees. What distinguished them is the fact that they know the system well and therefore are able to understand what is going on at IMO.

But is not just about IMO. When IMLI graduates go back to their home countries, they often start with new projects. I learned that in Pakistan, an IMLI graduate, Mr. Akhtar Hayat Qasmi, shortly after his return from Malta, was one of the initiators for the establishment of a Maritime Legal Affairs Department of the Pakistan Navy, which had not existed before.

What are your general impression about IMLI, students, visiting lecturers, premises, library... ?

It is a marvelous environment. One of IMLI's advantages is that it is located in a suitable academic background, close to the Maltese University. The library is

excellent and the facilities are very good. It is definitely, a good environment for studying. A lot of friendships are made here, which later develop into working relations.

It is a unique place, and it provides a unique range of subjects, taught by specialists from all over the world.

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