**Message to the IMLI Class of 2015/16**

Your Excellency the IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim,

the ITLOS Judge, Director and Professor David Attard,

members of the IMLI Faculty,

graduates and families,

distinguished guests,

Today is probably one of the greatest days for our outgoing IMLI students after spending almost a year on the unforgettably attractive Mediterranean island of Malta, at the crossroad of powerful history, tradition, culture, shipping, fishing, tourism, intercultural dialogue, diplomacy, education and international rule of maritime law.

Most regrettably, despite of my wishes and enthusiastic plans I cannot be with you at the Graduation Ceremony as I am presently attending the Adriatic Maritime Law Conference in Portorož, Slovenia, organized by the Italian, Croatian and Slovenian maritime law associations. The European Commission has included the Conference in the official list of events on the occasion of the European Maritime Day 2016, so I really could not justify my absence, although you are intensively with me and I am with you in my heart and in my thoughts.

The vision of our new IMO Secretary-General is one of the strengthened partnerships between developing and developed countries, governments and industry, and the IMO Member States and regions. If we paraphrase this commendable vision just slightly, we may see IMO, IMLI and WMU as the three motors of the giant ship belonging to all these stakeholders in a “voyage together” which will bring us anywhere if we mutually cooperate as the One, rather than compete individualistically and egoistically. Our planet the Earth - which would be better called the Ocean - should not be seen as blue from the limitless space only, it should be blue as a synonym for wisdom in reality, here and now.

Dear graduates, I wish you a safe and confortable journey back home, as well as a fruitful and satisfying career. It is well known that fortune favours the brave and bold, however, I believe it also favours the visionary, the intelligent, the diligent, the compassionate, the fair and the honest. Work hard but also play hard, because Abraham Lincoln advised us lucidly that ”in the end it’s not the years in your life that count, it’s the life in your years.” Congratulations from the bottom of my heart!

May God bless and keep you always, may your wishes all come true, and may you stay forever young. Please do keep in touch.

Professor Marko Pavliha

Visiting Fellow,

Member of the Board of Governors

Member of the Academic Committee