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IMLI e-News

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* 1. **DIRECTOR OF IMLI ADDRESSES THE CLASS 2008/2009 DURING THE 20TH ANNUAL GRADUATION CEREMONY**
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2. IMLI held its 20th Annual Graduation Ceremony on 2 May 2009 at the Aula Magna, Old University Building in Valletta.

The Ceremony was presided by H.E. Mr. Efthimios E. Mitropoulos, Secretary – General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The Welcoming Address was delivered by Professor David Attard, Director of IMLI.



*Professor David Attard, Director, IMLI, delivering the Welcoming Address*

In his Address, Professor Attard pointed out that “the cornerstone of any academic institution is its reputation. At IMLI we are conscious of the need to ensure that our training and teaching conforms to the highest standards which need to be maintained if we are to preserve our reputation as a centre of excellence.” He emphasized that “this academic success is the result of various practices that have been put in place, such as the appointment of independent external examiners, and our cooperation with leading institutions such as Yale University and more recently Sorbonne.”

Professor Attard recalled two other important relationships. He said:

“Our institutional linkage with IMO provides us with access to the most competent expertise in shipping available throughout the world.  With IMO’s assistance, IMLI continuously seeks to fine-tune its syllabus to reflect the latest developments in international maritime law.

Furthermore, the Chairmen of the IMO Legal Committee, Professor Lee Sik Chai, often lectures at IMLI to inform our students of the latest legal developments at IMO. I am pleased to announce that on his initiative, two new prizes will this year be awarded: “Chairman of the IMO Legal Committee’s Prize for Best Performance in Maritime Transport Law” and “Sea Pine Tree Prize for the Best Performing Asian Scholar”. We are indeed fortunate that the Secretary-General, Mr. Mitropoulos, has shown a great interest in the Institute’s work from the very first days of his appointment.  He is a prime supporter of the Institute and of its role in the training of international maritime lawyers.”

Professor Attard congratulated the grandaunds of 2009 by saying:

“Please remember that your participation in the IMLI programme is an opportunity granted to a few well-chosen lawyers. This privilege carries with it a responsibility which I am confident you will bear with great pride. You have now been endowed with the knowledge and skills required to assist your Governments in adopting and implementing international maritime rules, measures and standards. Your future achievements will continue to consolidate the Institute’s academic reputation.  Remember you are the Institute’s best Ambassadors, dedicated to serving the rule of international maritime law. I wish you well in your endeavours. We are proud of you!”

1. The Ceremony was attended by many personalities, including The Hon. Dolores Cristina, Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, Ambassador Lino Vassallo, Executive Director, Merchant Shipping and Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen, and Permanent Representative of Malta to the IMO, Ms. Makiko Tanaka, Project Coordinator, Maritime Affairs, The Nippon Foundation, Professor Dr. Marko Pavliha, Professor of Commercial, Transport and Insurance Law, Faculty of Maritime Studies and Transportation, University of Ljubljana.

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*H.E. Mr. Efthimios E. Mitropoulos, Secretary – General, IMO, Professor. David Attard, Director, IMLI, Professor Marko Pavliha, Professor of Commercial, Insurance and Transport Law, Faculty of Maritime Studies and Transportation, University of Ljubljana and IMLI Graduands*

*at the 2009 Graduation Ceremony*

1. Hereunder follows the welcoming address of Professor David Attard, Director of IMLI.
2. **Welcome Address by Professor David Attard, Director, IMLI**
3. **At the 2009 IMLI Graduation Ceremony**
4. **2 May 2009**
5. Your Excellency Secretary-General,
6. Honourable Minister of Education,
7. Members of Parliament,
8. Excellencies,
9. Honourable Justices,
10. Graduands,
11. Distinguished Guests,
12. It is my great pleasure and honour to welcome you to our 20th Graduation Ceremony, which celebrates the academic success of our graduands.
13. I am particularly pleased, this morning, to welcome the Secretary-General, Mr. Efthimios Mitropoulos, who despite his many commitments has agreed to preside over today’s Graduation Ceremony.  Once again I wish to congratulate him for the prestigious Honorary Degree which he has received earlier this morning.
14. I would like to specifically welcome the Honourable Minister of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport - Mrs. Dolores Cristina.  She has demonstrated a continuous interest in the welfare of our Institute.  Particularly significant is the fact that through her efforts all IMLI qualifications are officially recognized by the Education Authorities in Malta. Her presence is a reflection of the support which the Maltese Government continues to give IMLI.
15. I wish to recognize the presence of other distinguished personalities who have come to Malta to attend this Ceremony.
16. We are privileged to have with us today Professor Marko Pavliha, who apart from being an eminent scholar, is a member of the IMLI Governing Board.  This is his second visit to IMLI this year.  Last January he delivered his 10th Annual Course in Marine Insurance Law.
17. We also have with us this morning the Project Coordinator of the Maritime Affairs Department, Ms. Makiko Tanaka, who represents the Nippon Foundation of Tokyo, with whom IMLI has a long and fruitful academic cooperation.
18. Distinguished Guests,
19. Today’s Ceremony marks the end of the 20th academic year and the entry of our graduands (from 24 States) into the fraternity of 463 IMLI graduates from 112 States and territories.  This year we are particularly pleased to have, for the first time, a lawyer hailing from Costa Rica. Indeed I wish to welcome her father, a distinguished diplomat, who is here in our midst.
20. This Graduation Ceremony also marks an important landmark in our Institute’s history: the second award of a Doctorate in Philosophy in International Maritime Law.  We are honoured to confer this degree on Dr. Patricia Mallia, the Head of Department of International Law at the University of Malta  who wrote an impressive thesis entitled “Migrant Smuggling by Sea:  Combating a Current Threat to Maritime Security through the Creation of a Cooperative Framework”. I believe it is noteworthy that the IMLI appointed supervisor was Professor Vaughan Lowe, the Chichele Professor of International Law at the University of Oxford.  The examiners were Professor Frank Wiswall and Professor Stefan Talmon.
21. Distinguished Guests,
22. It gives me great satisfaction to look at our graduands, newly- crowned with academic success, and to congratulate them for having succeeded despite the magnitude of their task.
23. For the past months they have undertaken an exceptionally intensive and comprehensive programme covering the full spectrum of international maritime law.  Their task should not be underestimated. The subject matter covered is vast. Our academic standards are very demanding, as confirmed by the external examiners. It is therefore a great pleasure to be able, on this important day, to honour their academic success.
24. The cornerstone of any academic institution is its reputation. At IMLI we are conscious of the need to ensure that our training and teaching conforms to the highest standards which need to be maintained if we are to preserve our reputation as a centre of excellence. Today I feel it is reasonable to assert that the Institute’s world-wide recognition and respect is reflected in the confidence demonstrated by the 115 Governments which have sent their finest legal officials to train at IMLI.
25. This academic success is the result of various practices that have been put in place, such as the appointment of independent external examiners, and our cooperation with leading institutions such as Yale University, and more recently Sorbonne University. There are two other important relationships, upon which I wish to focus this year.
26. Our institutional linkage with IMO provides us with access to the most competent expertise in shipping available throughout the world.  With IMO’s assistance, IMLI continuously seeks to fine-tune its syllabus to reflect the latest developments in international maritime law.
27. Furthermore, the Chairmen of the IMO Legal Committee, Professor Lee Sik Chai, often lectures at IMLI to inform our students of the latest legal developments at IMO. I am pleased to announce that on his initiative, two new prizes will this year be awarded: “Chairman of the IMO Legal Committee’s Prize for Best Performance in Maritime Transport Law” and “Sea Pine Tree Prize for the Best Performing Asian Scholar”.
28. We are indeed fortunate that the Secretary-General, Mr. Mitropoulos, has shown a great interest in the Institute’s work from the very first days of his appointment.  He is a prime supporter of the Institute and of its role in the training of international maritime lawyers. We were pleased to read his statement in the current Graduation Brochure.
29. *“….*over the years, IMLI has produced a body of expert and qualified maritime lawyers who are now, collectively, making a very positive and valuable contribution in pursuance of the causes espoused by IMO – safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean oceans. In pursuing its noble educational objectives, IMLI has drawn praise from the highest quarters.*”*
30. It is a matter of great pride that - almost 20 years after its establishment - last November – the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Resolution (A/Res/63/111) which:
31. “Recognizes the importance of the work of the International Maritime Law Institute of the International Maritime Organization as a centre of education and training of Government legal advisers, mainly from developing States, notes that the number of its graduates in more than 102 States, confirms its effective capacity-building role in the field of international law, and urges States, intergovernmental organizations and financial institutions to make voluntary financial contributions to the budget of the Institute.”
32. In furtherance of our efforts to strengthen our academic reputation we invite to IMLI the most eminent academics, experts and practitioners in international maritime law. This practice also serves to enable our students to establish important professional contacts, which could prove to be extremely useful in their future careers.
33. Whilst the resident faculty is responsible for the teaching of the programme, visiting fellows are invited to lecture on the latest developments in the field of their expertise In this academic year we had the privilege and pleasure of welcoming 45 visiting fellows from distinguished Universities such as Sorbonne and eminent practitioners supported by the Comité Maritime International.
34. I am also pleased, on this occasion, to announce that the Institute has decided to award Ambassador Lino Vassallo an Honorary Masters Degree in recognition of his significant contribution to the establishment of the IMO International Maritime Law Institute, to its work, and the international maritime community in general.
35. The success that the Institute enjoys is also largely due to the support received from many sectors of the international maritime community.
36. I am particularly grateful to IMO, to the Nippon Foundation and to a number of Governments for their generous contributions in providing scholarships. The Governments of Malta and Switzerland deserve special tribute for their unwavering, constant support to the Institute’s funding, as do the CMI and Lloyd’s Register who have always been very willing to financially assist the Institute.  Special thanks should also go to the EU funded SAFEMED project, the scholarships of which have been kindly administered by REMPEC.
37. I would also like to express my appreciation for the support and work of the Institute resident faculty in the person of Mr. Norman Martinez, Mr. Ruben Maceda and Ms. Elda Belja.
38. Please remember that your participation in the IMLI programme is an opportunity granted to a few well-chosen lawyers. This privilege carries with it a responsibility which I am confident you will bear with great pride. You have now been endowed with the knowledge and skills required to assist your Governments in adopting and implementing international maritime rules, measures and standards. Your future achievements will continue to consolidate the Institute’s academic reputation.  Remember you are the Institute’s best Ambassadors, dedicated to serving the rule of international maritime law. I wish you well in your endeavours. We are proud of you!
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41. *\*\* For further information please contact Ms. Elda Belja (Editor, IMLI e-News) at* publications@imli.org