



## SPANISH PROFESSOR OF MARITIME LAW LECTURES AT IMLI

Professor Ignacio Arroyo Martínez (Professor of Commercial and Maritime Law at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and former President of the Spanish Maritime Law Association) visited IMLI on 21 October 2016 and delivered a set of lectures entitled “*The Unification of Maritime Law through International Conventions.*” Indeed, the pivot of Professor Arroyo’s lecture centered on how – amidst apparent diversities in our various legal cultures – the uniform application of maritime laws can be achieved.



*Professor Ignacio Arroyo (Professor of Commercial and Maritime Law at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and former President of the Spanish Maritime Law Association) with the IMLI Class of 2016-2017*

Professor Arroyo commenced his lecture by posing the question of whether unification can be combined with diversity. To expatiate this point, he engaged the students in the discussion of what the word “law” may epitomise in their respective languages, with regards to sound and meaning. It was the diversity in their answers that was identified as a first challenge to attain unification. A comparison was then made between the challenges of attaining a uniform application of maritime laws through maritime conventions and the challenges faced by societies in unifying their laws.

The students learned that in order to overcome the challenges of diversity, two key factors are relevant, namely, the adoption of legal instruments which instill certainty in the law, and the establishment of adjudicatory bodies with powers to enforce the law. On meeting these factors, diversity is replaced with uniformity and parties to an international trade agreement (for example) may not insist on the application of their national law as the relevant law.

Professor Arroyo continued his discussions by examining the genuine connection between commerce and national development on one hand and successful commerce and efficient shipping on the other. He noted that ‘overcoming our diversity so as to develop what we have in common is indispensable to national development’. Thus, the unification of maritime law through maritime conventions is the response to the challenges of diversity. To illustrate this point he examined some international instruments such as the Hague- Visby Rules; the Hamburg Rules, and the International Convention on the Arrest of Ships, among others.

Professor Ignacio Arroyo holds Bachelor of Laws and Doctor of Laws Degrees from the University of Deusto (Bilbao, Spain) and the University of Bologna (Italy) respectively. In 1975, he obtained an LL.M. degree from Harvard University. In 2011, the University of Bologna recognised Professor Arroyo’s academic excellence with the conferral of the ‘Sigillo di Ateneo.’ He served as President of the Spanish Maritime Law Association from 2005 – 2012. He is the founder and general editor of the Spanish Yearbook of Maritime Law (*Anuario de derecho Maritimo*). He has published extensively in the area of maritime law. The Spanish maritime community affectionately referred to Professor Arroyo as the ‘Father of Modern Spanish Maritime Law.’

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