



IMLI DIRECTOR DELIVERS THE WELCOMING ADDRESS

Professor David J. Attard delivered the following welcoming address during IMLI's 22nd Graduation Ceremony.

“Your Excellency Secretary-General
Excellencies
Honourable Speaker
Honourable Justices
Attorney-General
Graduands,
Distinguished Guests,

It is my great pleasure and honour to welcome you to IMLI's 22nd Graduation Ceremony, which celebrates the academic success of our graduands.

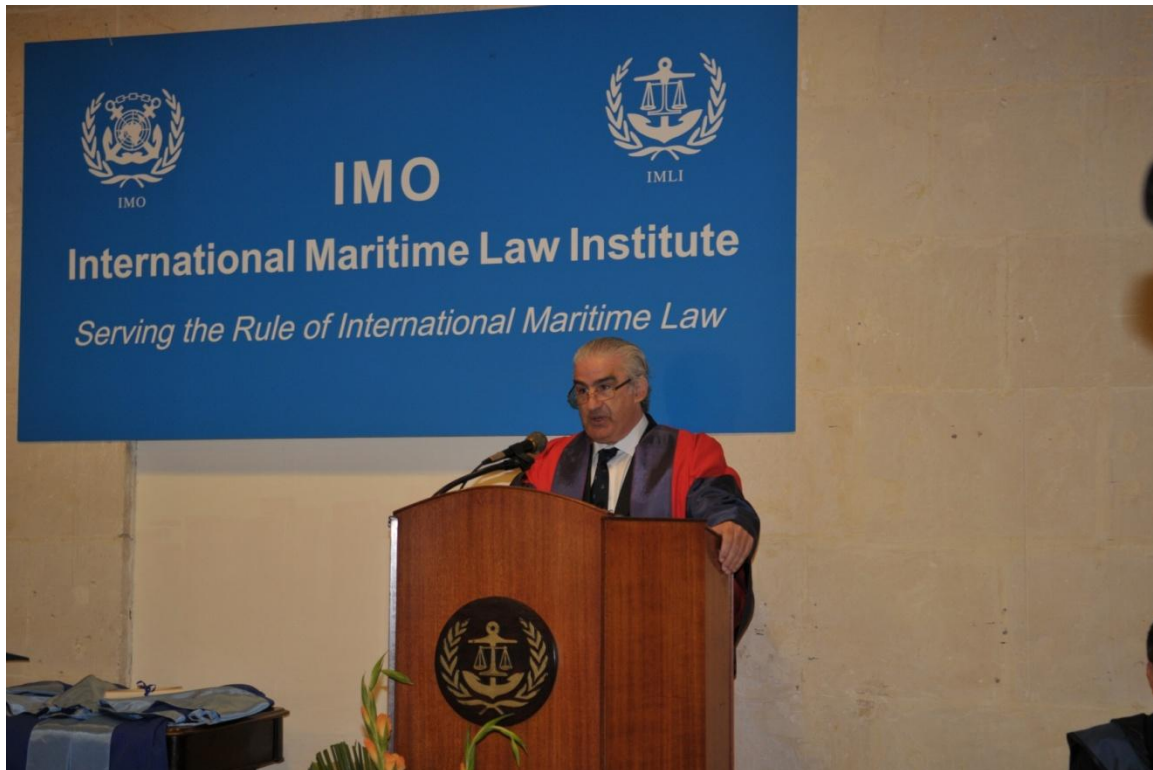
I am particularly pleased, this morning, to welcome the IMO Secretary-General, Mr. Efthimios Mitropoulos, who despite his many commitments has agreed to preside over today's Graduation Ceremony. We are extremely grateful for his continuous interest in the welfare of the Institute.

I wish to recognize the presence of other distinguished personalities who have come to Malta to attend this Ceremony. Capt. Ian Finley, Permanent Representative of Cook Islands to IMO, Mr. Dwight Gardiner, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to IMO, Capt. M. Proaño Silva, Permanent Representative of Ecuador to IMO, Mr. Patrick Griggs, Member of IMLI's Governing Board and Prof Francis Reynolds, Professor at Oxford University and IMLI Visiting Fellow.

I wish to recognize the presence of Mr. Kiyoharu Sugiura of the Nippon Foundation, with whom IMLI has a long and fruitful academic cooperation. The past few months have been a turbulent period for your country. Our prayers are with you. I am confident that the people of Japan have

the strength and courage to overcome their problems and together to make their country an even greater force in the world.

I also wish to welcome friends and family of the graduands who have travelled from all over the world to attend this momentous event.



Professor David J. Attard (Director of IMLI) delivering the welcoming address

Distinguished Guests,

This Ceremony marks the end of the 22nd academic year of the Institute. Today 31 lawyers from 23 States will be graduating from the Institute's LL.M. programme and one student will be graduating from the Advanced Diploma programme. These graduates will be joining the already existing fraternity of a total of 557 students from 120 States and territories worldwide who have successfully undertaken studies in the Institute's programmes and courses. This year we are particularly pleased to have, for the first time, lawyers hailing from Antigua and Barbuda, The Cook Islands and Mongolia graduating from the Institute's LL.M. programme.

This ceremony also marks the successful completion of yet another fundamental research project which has brought about substantial contributions to knowledge in the field of international maritime law. In recognition for this research, the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in International Maritime Law will be awarded today to Mr. Mitja Grbec, from Slovenia, who

wrote a thesis entitled “Extension of Coastal State Jurisdiction in Enclosed or Semi-Enclosed Seas: An Adriatic Sea Perspective”. Mr. Grbec’s research was supervised by Professor Robin Churchill, who is a Professor of International Law at the University of Dundee in the United Kingdom and a recognized world authority on the law of the sea. The examiners of Mr. Grbec’s Thesis were Professor Frank Wiswall from the United States of America and Professor Stefan Talmon of Oxford University.

Distinguished Guests,

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.

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.

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 123 Governments which have sent their finest legal officials to receive training in IMLI’s different programmes and courses.]

In this respect, it is also a matter of great pride to announce that the United Nations General Assembly for three consecutive years now has recognized our Institute’s work. The latest Resolution (A/Res/65/37) adopted on 7th December 2010 entitled “Oceans and the law of the sea” states *inter alia*, that the General Assembly:

“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, 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.”

I must emphasize that the Institute’s 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, Sorbonne University, University of Oxford, Queen Mary – University of London, and the University of Rome “Tor Vergata”.

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 51 distinguished academics and eminent practitioners from all over the world.

The Institute's success is also the result of the institutional links between IMLI and many organizations. I wish to refer to the Institute's institutional linkage with IMO which 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.

Our institutional linkage with IMO is best reflected by the fact that since the very first years of IMLI's establishment the Chairmanship of its Governing Board has been held by the Secretary-General of IMO. These were: Dr. C.P. Srivastava, Mr. William A. O'Neil and Mr. Efthimios E. Mitropoulos.

We are particularly proud of our relationship with the current Secretary-General, Mr. Mitropoulos, who has shown a great interest in the Institute's work from the very first days of his appointment. In the most recent edition of the Institute's Graduation Brochure he has observed that:

[...] Properly trained maritime lawyers play a vital role in ensuring that internationally agreed measures are fully and accurately enshrined in national law – and lawyers trained by IMLI, over many years now, form a trusted body of professionals who collectively maintain and uphold the highest standards.

We are fortunate to enjoy the support of one of the world's leading personalities in the field of maritime affairs. As IMO Secretary-General, Mr. Mitropoulos has been a beacon of light to the international maritime community. In this capacity, he has contributed directly and in a meaningful manner towards the progressive development and codification of international maritime law. In fact, during his tenure as Secretary-General, IMO traversed historic milestones in the process codifying a number of international maritime rules into landmark conventions, recommendations and guidelines concerning the whole realm of international maritime law.

Mr. Mitropoulos is a prime supporter of the Institute. For years he has dedicated his time and efforts towards the Institute as Chairman of the IMLI Governing Board and has been instrumental in the continued development of the Institute as a centre of academic excellence for the teaching of international maritime law. Thus, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the international maritime community in general and to the Institute in particular, the Institute

will bestow on him today the Award for Meritorious Contribution towards the Progressive Development and Codification of International Maritime Law.

The Institute is also proud of its association with the Comité Maritime International. Today I wish to acknowledge the admirable efforts of one of its Officers, Mr. Patrick J.S. Griggs CBE.

Mr. Griggs served as President of the CMI between 1997 and 2004 during which time the Institute forged close ties with that Organization. His relationship to IMLI has always been selfless. For many years he has contributed actively to the Institute's work as a member of the IMLI Governing Board and of the IMLI Academic Committee and as a visiting fellow in the Institute's LL.M. programme. Recently, within the Institute's Ph.D. programme, Mr. Griggs also acted as a supervisor of the work that eventually was published as the first volume of the recently launched book series "IMLI Studies in International Maritime Law".

In a professional career spanning over fifty years, Mr Griggs has specialised in marine litigation and has written numerous scholarly publications, including the pathfinding *Limitation of Liability for Maritime Claims*, of which he is a joint author. Through the CMI, IMLI and other international fora, Mr. Griggs has been greatly influential in the international maritime community and in recognition of his contribution to the continued development of the Institute as a centre of academic excellence for the teaching of international maritime law the Institute will confer on him today the Title of Doctor of International Maritime Law *Honoris Causa*. I am delighted that Professor Francis Reynolds from the University of Oxford has agreed to introduce the granting of the honorary degree.

Distinguished Guests,

Besides these institutional links the success that the Institute enjoys is also largely due to the financial support received from many sectors of the international maritime community.

I am particularly grateful to IMO, to The Nippon Foundation, to the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), to the Lloyd's Register Educational Trust (LRET) 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 does the CMI who has 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.

I would also like to express my appreciation for the sterling work of the Institute's resident faculty in the person of Dr. Norman Martinez, Mr. Ruben Maceda, Ms. Elda Belja and Mr. Riyaz Hamza, as well as to the Administrative staff for their unwavering support.

Dear Graduands,

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.

Indeed, through your training, IMLI contributes - in its small way - to the IMO process of encouraging and facilitating the global adoption and implementation of legal instruments designed to promote safe, secure and efficient shipping on clean oceans.

In concluding I wish to augur further success to our graduands in their respective professional career. Graduands, your praiseworthy accomplishments today open up a world of opportunities for you and the countries you come from. Do savour your success, for you deserve it! And lest you forget, your future achievements will continue to consolidate the Institute's academic reputation. Remember you will always be the Institute 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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*** For further information please contact Ms. Elda Belja (Editor, IMLI e-News) at publications@imli.org*