

IMLI^e-News

The IMO International Maritime Law Institute Official Electronic Newsletter (Vol. 4, Issue No. 54) 18 May 2007

WELCOME ADDRESS OF IMLI DIRECTOR AT THE 18TH IMLI GRADUATION CEREMONY

Professor David Attard, IMLI Director, welcomed the guests to the 18th IMLI Graduation Ceremony. The full text of his speech is quoted below.



Professor David Attard delivering the Welcome Address

Welcome Address by Professor David Attard, Director, IMLI At the 2007 IMLI Graduation Ceremony 5 May 2007

Your Excellency Secretary-General,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Honourable Justices,
Chancellor,
Graduands,
Distinguished Guests,

It is my great pleasure and honour to welcome you to our 18th Graduation Ceremony, which celebrates the academic success of our graduands.

I am particularly pleased this morning to welcome the Chairman of our Governing Board, His Excellency 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 our Institute.

Another formidable supporter of the Institute is the Honourable Minister of Competitiveness and Communications, Mr. Censu Galea, who has, for well over a decade, ensured we enjoy the constant support of the Maltese Government.

I also wish to recognize the presence of other distinguished personalities who have come to Malta to attend this Ceremony. We have today from the Tokyo-based Nippon Foundation, its Executive Director, Mr. Masazumi Nagamitsu, and Mr. Mitsuyuki Unno who is the Chief Manager of the Maritime Safety Team within the Maritime Affairs Department. It is a pleasure also to recognize the presence of Mr. Ismet Yilmaz, the Head of Delegation of Turkey to IMO and Under Secretary for Maritime Affairs and the High Commissioner of the Federal Republic of Nigeria His Excellency Mr. M.K. Ibrahim. I am also pleased to welcome Professor and Mrs. Reynolds, who are visiting IMLI for the second time in this academic year.

Distinguished Guests,

Today's Ceremony marks the entry of our graduands (from 24 States) into the fraternity of IMLI trained lawyers which now proudly has 396 members from 110 States and territories. This year we are particularly pleased to have, for the first time, participants hailing from Jordan and Kazakhstan.

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, Professor Dietrich Kappeler from Switzerland and Mr. Archie Bishop from the U.K. It is therefore a great pleasure to be able, on this important day, to honour their academic success.

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.

Distinguished Guests,

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 over 110 Governments which have sent their finest legal officials to train at IMLI.

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. There are however two important factors, upon which I wish to focus this year.

Our institutional relationship 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. This is true, for example, with respect to the attention we give to maritime security law. This year we were fortunate to receive, through the good services of the French Ambassador, Admiral Oudot de Dainville, Chief of the French Naval Staff. His visit was instrumental in attracting an eminent number of visiting fellows, including Rear Admiral Fillon and Professor Yves Daudet from the Sorbonne. I am also pleased to report our cooperation with LITAV (Formazione Marittima Superiore) of Italy continues. In the last academic year, it generously funded an intensive course on the practical aspects of maritime security, conducted by security experts from the United Kingdom.

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. I am pleased to state that yesterday evening we commemorated this relationship through the unveiling, by Minister Galea, of their portraits, painted by one of Britain's leading maritime painters, Robert Lloyd.

I wish to record their contributions to IMLI, despite their heavy commitments and responsibility of running the IMO. It is well-known that the idea of establishing IMLI was that of Dr. C.P. Srivastava. It was largely through his initiative and determination that the Institute was set up. Throughout the crucial initial period, together with the late Dr. Joe Fenech, he was at the forefront of efforts to provide IMLI with the premises and resources which enabled it to start receiving its first lawyers in 1989.

In 1988, Dr. Srivastava wrote that it was his hope that the Institute would be utilized by a wide range of States and that it will fulfill the dreams and aspirations of those who are giving it their support and encouragement. I feel confident in stating that IMLI and its graduates are a reflection of the fulfillment of his great vision.

Distinguished Guests,

Dr. Srivastava's successor - Mr. William O'Neil - also took a great interest in IMLI and ensured that all efforts were undertaken to guarantee IMLI's financial and academic security. For years he dedicated time and efforts towards guiding IMLI from a nascent to a well-established Institution. Indeed by 2003 Mr. O'Neil was able to write that 'IMLI has gained a reputation for academic excellence and it is of no surprise that senior posts in many countries' maritime infrastructures are occupied by IMLI graduates. IMLI thus has an indisputable role in supporting IMO's objectives: promoting quality shipping and ensuring the proper implementation of IMO standards'.

We are indeed fortunate that the current 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. His commitment and dedication to the Institute is manifest in the generous guidance he continuously offers. We are particularly fortunate to enjoy the support of one of the World's leading personalities in the field of maritime affairs. We were pleased to read his views in the current Graduation Brochure.

"As the number of IMLI alumni continues to grow, and as they become esteemed lawyers around the globe, the practical result of the Institute's expertise is making a significant contribution towards a maritime safety and security culture and a heightened awareness of environmental issues thus underpinning the true value of shipping to the development and prosperity of nations. Each and every graduate from this excellent Institute can look forward to playing a crucial part in this most worthy efforts."

Distinguished Guests,

In furtherance of our efforts to strengthen the Institute's reputation as a centre of excellence we actively pursue a policy of attracting to IMLI the most eminent academics, experts and practitioners in international maritime law. 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 39 visiting fellows. This practice also serves to enable our students to establish important professional contacts, which could prove to be extremely useful in their future careers.

In this respect I feel it would be most appropriate to record our deep appreciation for the contribution which Professor Francis Reynolds has made to the Institute. Since 1996 he has delivered annually over a number of weeks the course on carriage of goods by sea.

Francis Reynolds first visited IMLI in 1995 as a guest of the British High Commission. At the time he was a fellow of Worcester College and a highly respected member of the Faculty of Law at the University of Oxford. In the light of his formidable academic achievements, Oxford University appointed him Professor of Law *ad hominem*.

Professor Reynolds has imprinted his mark of excellence on the teaching of shipping law at Oxford and beyond. I consider him to be a pioneer in the University teaching and academic analysis of shipping law. Thirty years ago he established at Oxford, together with Professor Treitel, the first taught course in international trade law which included shipping law. I believe it is no exaggeration to state that this course provided Universities throughout the world with a useful model upon which to base their shipping law courses.

As an active member of the British Maritime Law Association, Professor Reynolds continues to take an active interest in the efforts of CMI to develop regimes which encourage the unification and harmonization of international maritime law. Today's graduates can rightly pride themselves for having benefited from Professor Reynolds wisdom and teaching.

Francis, I am confident, would readily agree with me that the achievements of his career are also to be attributed to the continued support of Mrs. Reynolds – Susan. We are grateful for her presence in our midst here today and for her wonderful charm which she transmits when she accompanies Francis on his regular visits to the Institute.

In the light of Professor Reynolds achievements and dedication to the Institute, my colleagues and I were very pleased when the Secretary-General agreed to confer upon him the IMLI award for meritorious contribution towards the harmonization and dissemination of international maritime law.. This is only the second time in the history of IMLI that this award is being presented.

Distinguished Guests,

The success that the Institute enjoys is also largely due to the support received from many sectors of the international maritime community.

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.

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 and Ms. Josephine Uranza.

A similar word of appreciation should go to the Institute's part-time lecturers and staff. Without their loyalty and dedication, it could not have been possible to attain the achievements of the past year.

In concluding I wish to augur further success to our graduands in their respective professional careers. 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!

For further information please contact Ms. Josephine Uranza (Editor, IMLI e-News) at publications@imli.org