

IMLI *e*-NEWS

THE IMO INTERNATIONAL MARITIME LAW INSTITUTE OFFICIAL ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

Circulated in more than 150 States



IMLI BESTOWS ON PHILIPPE BOISSON THE TITLE OF PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL MARITIME LAW *HONORIS CAUSA*

During IMLI's 33rd Graduation Ceremony, Dr. Philippe Boisson (Former Legal Director, Bureau Veritas and Member, IMLI Governing Board) was bestowed the Title of Professor of International Maritime Law *Honoris Causa*.



Professor David Attard (Director, IMLI) bestowing the Title of Professor of International Maritime Law Honoris Causa on Dr. Philippe Boisson



In bestowing the Title, the Institute recognized the merits of Dr. Boisson who has been instrumental to the governance and work of the Institute through his active contribution to the IMLI Governing Board and the IMLI Financial and Human Resources Committee. For over two decades, Dr. Boisson has dedicated his time and efforts towards teaching at IMLI by delivering lectures on various topics relating to the Law of Maritime Safety, thus contributing to the continued development of the Institute as a centre of academic excellence for the teaching of international maritime law and its progressive development and codification. Dr. Boisson has given life-long service to the harmonization, dissemination, progressive development and codification of international maritime law and is a leading scholar in the area of the Law of Maritime Safety. He has written various scholarly publications including the monumental *Safety at Sea: Policies Regulations and International Law*, and countless contributions to highly regarded journals. Through his work at Bureau Veritas, the French Maritime Law Association, the Chambre Arbitrale Maritime de Paris, and other international fora, he has greatly contributed to the harmonization, progressive development and codification of international maritime law.



Mr. Kitack Lim (Secretary-General, IMO and Chairman, IMLI Governing Board) congratulating Professor Philippe Boisson

During his speech, Professor Boisson expressed his great honour and pleasure to receive the Title and expressed his gratitude to all those who have helped him to obtain the same. The speech of Professor Boisson is reproduced below.

Your Excellency Secretary-General,
Distinguished Guests,

It is my great honour and pleasure to receive this prestigious award of Professor Honoris Causa in International Maritime Law which has been conferred by the Institute up to now to very few international maritime personalities: Francesco Berlingieri, Walter Muller, Francis Reynold and Frank Wiswall. It turns out that these eminent Professors of law are also among the more important pillars of IMLI and have made a considerable contribution to the academic reputation of the Institute worldwide. So it is a great honour for me to receive to-day this honorary title.

Allow me to solemnly express my gratitude to all those who helped me to obtain this reward.

The first people I would like to thank are the management of the company in which I have spent my entire professional career, namely Bernard Anne and Philippe Donche-Gay, Managing Directors of Bureau Veritas Marine & Offshore Division.

As you know, Bureau Veritas is a leading classification society providing technical safety services to the maritime community worldwide. Bureau Veritas is also a Recognised Organisation, acting as surveyor, assessor and auditor for very many national administrations of Flag States that are themselves Members States of the IMO. As such Bureau Veritas appreciates the importance of training maritime lawyers to help their respective national administration to translate IMO conventions into national rules and to help with their consistent enforcement.

It is with great intelligence and lucidity that the successive Managers of Bureau Veritas have try to support IMLI by allowing me to spend one week per year in Malta in lecturing maritime safety law and developing relationship with the IMLI students.

Another support to the Institute was to provide facilities for the FINCOM meetings when they were organised in Paris and to welcome its participants with a maximum of comfort and attention.

I think that for Bureau Veritas this investment benefited the image of the company by providing a high level of service and credibility.

My second special thank has to go to Professor David Attard who helped me considerably for 25 years.

As a visiting professor, I could appreciate the warmth of his welcome when I first came to the Institute, his thoughtfulness to me, his great availability when I met stress and had numerous questions before lecturing.

In the same way in my role at FINCOM, I was able to measure his great competence and availability, the speed with which he answered my questions about the functioning of the Institute and the quality of the documents drafted by him that were submitted to the FINCOM members. Without his valuable help, our work would not have been as effective.

Professor Attard, I wish to express to you all my gratitude for the work that you have accomplished, for all the time spent with me and my colleagues and for the confidence you have generated in me.

I would also like to thank all the staff of IMLI in particular Joe Mifsud, Josephine Aquilina and Norman Martinez who are always available, effective and source of sound advice for visiting fellows.

On this special day, I have to tell you a little secret: I live a long love affair with IMLI and this story has been going on for 25 years. It started with a conversation with a friend of mine, Alexander Van Ziegler, President of the Swiss Maritime Law Association who told me that a Maritime Law Institute based in Malta was looking for a maritime safety expert to give lectures on the subject. I was immediately attracted by this proposal and contacted IMLI which was very happy to welcome a civil law lawyer to give courses.



As far as I can remember, I started my lectures in March 1994 with a class of 13 students. I was under a lot of stress because it was the first time I taught in English and with the fear of not understanding the questions I was asked. In the end, everything went well and the Director of the institute, happy with my performance, invited me to come back to Malta the following year. And since then, I have come back every year to give a week-long lecture on maritime safety law.

In my presentations, which dealt with the technical and legal aspects of safety at sea, I tried to make the students understand the crucial role of IMO in the development and implementation of maritime safety rules as well as the Flag State and Port State responsibilities in the safety regime and also the missions and liabilities of classification societies.

I must confess that for 25 years, I much enjoyed visiting IMLI to lecture and to develop professional and academic links with the students who were not, unlike other universities, simple students but generally senior legal government's officials. I remember in this respect a long and very lively discussion on the causes of the Tasman Spirit oil spill outside the Port of Karachi in 2003 with a student who did not agree at all with my interpretation of the disaster and who seemed to know the case well. I knew at the end of my lecture that this student was a commodore in the Pakistani Navy and had been directly involved in the accident investigation. In all my university life, I have never experienced such a strong exchange of views, ideas and opinions on safety issues with the classroom.

I also participated with great enthusiasm and commitment in the FINCOM and Governing Board of IMLI during more than 15 years. I have the opportunity to see at first-hand how IMLI has grown and matured into a top-class educational institution with an enviable academic reputation worldwide and with a sound long term financial self-sustainability. I think this success is largely due to the personality of its director, to his wise and able leadership and to his endless dedication to making IMLI a centre of excellence.

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To conclude this speech, I would like to make three remarks and suggestions about the future of the Institute. First of all, as a member of Financial and Human Resources Committee for the past 12 years it has been fascinating for me to see IMLI's financial strength and stability to improve year by year. The success that the Institute enjoys is also largely due to the financial support received from many sectors of the international maritime community. It is crucial that IMLI preserves its privileged position, maintains its closed relationships with the current donors and develops new links with new organisations and States.

My second remark concerns the size of the Institute. It is important that IMLI keeps a low staff student ratio to ensure that students enjoy an intensive and personal care and dedication, especially in legislation drafting and research programmes. In this field, a big size is sometimes the enemy of excellence.

And last but not the least, one of the great originality of the IMLI was to safeguard the difficult balance between civil law teaching and common law training courses. The Institutes welcomes students coming from all over the world, that means, people with so different backgrounds and cultures and in particular with an education in one of the two legal system. This balance must be preserved in the IMLI Syllabi, in the choice of the visiting fellows invited to lecture on the latest developments in the field of their expertise and in the choice of books available in the library.

Ladies and Gentlemen, IMLI will always be a member of my family because, as it was rightly said by Professor Marko Pavliha: "*We do not educate only minds but also hearts*". **So long live IMLI!**