

IMT Graduation Ceremony
IMT Alti Studi Lucca, June 29, 2015

Introductory remarks of Director
Prof. Alberto Bemporad

Good afternoon everyone, and a very warm welcome to our 2015 Graduation Ceremony. Thank you very much for joining us here today. A big thank you to Prof. Roberto Battiston, President of the Italian Space Agency, for joining us here today to take part in this ceremony and give his keynote speech. I would also like to particularly welcome the families and friends of our graduating PhD students. I hope you are very proud of them on this important day in their academic and professional career.

Today's graduates are made up of many nationalities from all around the world, including Egypt, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Russia, Brazil and of course Italy. They were selected out of thousands of applications that came from every corner of the globe, through a rigorous and competitive selection process. This was only the beginning. They successfully passed challenging exams during the first year of the program, spent time abroad in their second year and artfully wrote and defended their theses in their final year, completing their transformation into young scholars in all effects.

The variety of research topics reflects the multidisciplinary nature of our institute, ranging from social revolutions in the Middle East to energy markets, from cloud computing to studies on higher education.

One of the main goals of IMT is to form a new class of elites for appointments within key production, research, and institutional sectors. We are proud to have fully achieved this goal with today's graduates, who have received important top-tier appointments within and outside of academia: The Institute for Complex Systems and the Institute of Informatics and Telematics, both part of the

Italian National Research Council; the European Commission in Brussels; the transmission grid operator Terna S.p.A.; the Polytechnic University of Milan; and Telecom Italia, just to name a few. Since the Institute's foundation in 2005, more than 350 students have enrolled in our PhD programs. Last year we had 36 new students, carefully selected out of more than 2000 applications. The call for applications for this year will be closing in just a few hours, with an increase of applicants with respect to last year for 35 scholarships. I'm sure today's graduates can remember the excitement and anticipation they felt when beginning their studies here !

To conclude my brief remarks here today, and before Prof. Battiston takes the floor to talk about visions from space, let me tell what my vision of you, as the Director of this Institute, is from this podium. My vision is of a bright future of infinite possibilities in higher education, in companies or institutions, in Italy and abroad. The reason I'm confident of this is that everyone's success depends on his or her skills and ability to work hard. At IMT you have acquired unique skills and you have proved that you are able to work hard, given your full dedication in completing your doctoral studies.

Your professors and everyone at the Institute wish you every success and happiness in your lives. Know that you are always welcome back; we hope that the academic and personal relationships that you have developed here will last a lifetime, and that you will remain part of our community as much as you can as our new alumni.

Congratulations on successfully completing your doctoral studies and enjoy your Graduation Ceremony.

I now invite Professor Roberto Battiston to give his keynote speech entitled "Visions from Space".