

IP – EUROTRANS Internal Training Course ITC5
Pisa, dipartimento di Ingegneria meccanica, nucleare e della produzione
26-29 novembre 2007

Professor Emilio Vitale
Dean, Faculty of Engineering, University of Pisa
Welcome Address

Ladies and gentlemen good morning and welcome in Pisa and in our University.

And Prof. Giot thank especially to you for being here at work in our Faculty.

I have the pleasure to welcome you all in my position of Dean of this Faculty, for this course on “Structural materials and fuels for HLMR” organized by Prof Forasassi, on proposal of Prof. Giot, in the framework of the ENEN - the European Nuclear Education Network .

I thought it could be, first of all, of interest for you to have, in occasion of your venue in Pisa, some information about our Faculty.

The Faculty, located close to the leaning Tower, has in this area several buildings, where 8 Engineering Departments and about 2000 seats in classrooms are hosted. This main building, where we are now, is considered as the symbol of our Faculty and was completed in 1936, after the foundation of the Engineering Faculty in Pisa; actually in 1913: after all, a very young Faculty was founded on the basis of the previous Engineering School in the University of Pisa which, in turn, lasts since about 660 years.

Our Faculty has about 3 hundreds and fifty members and releases 13 first level engineering degrees, and 17 second level degrees, of which 4 in the ICT, 4 in the civil-construction field, and 9 in the industrial field, including chemical , aerospace, mechanical engineering and of course Nuclear engineering.

Besides this, there are several Doctorate Courses, joined in the School of Doctorate Leonardo da Vinci, which can accept about 50 new positions per year.

At present the Faculty has about 15 hundreds new students per year (close to 16 hundreds this year), which brings our overall population of students to about 10 thousands.

But coming to the job for what you are here – I understand that you have and intense work program so I will only take you a very short time – I shall say that I am really particularly glad to host you in our Faculty, and most of all I am glad that our nuclear colleagues decided years ago to join the European Nuclear Education Network, which in my opinion assures participants something more than an ordinary degree and therefore enhanced opportunities for their careers.

So, this is the occasion for me to share with you a few general considerations about it.

The application of the Bologna process, that started in Italy in 1999, brought to the formation, in Italy as in the other Countries, of hundred of new degrees (not only engineering, I mean). Therefore, we had soon the problem of setting up procedures for assuring quality of these courses. The universities and the ministry are spending a lot of time, and money, to perform the task of assuring the quality of studies at Italian Universities. As you may understand this process is mainly devoted to control the quality of the procedures, not of the content of the courses, nor of the teachers and the graduates, which is a much more difficult task. Mainly for this reason a qualification process like this is scarcely adequate to the engineering faculties, which of course face strong requirements about the quality of their graduates coming from the industrial world.

In this scenery, the European Nuclear Education Network initiative stands in my opinion as a bright example of how qualification of university studies can be obtained looking at the content and at the real quality of the courses, and not simply at the procedures.

Well, I have been very short in discussing this complex topic, but I hope that you got the message that was of strong appreciation for this initiative and about the need of extending similar practises also to other field of the engineering, looking at quality of contents instead of quality of procedures.

In conclusion, I am glad and proud that our Faculty became a partner of this European Network, and I like to take the occasion to acknowledge the efforts of our people at Department of Mechanical, Nuclear and Production Engineering that made this possible, and particularly of Prof. Forasassi (and Prof. Ambrosini) which were among the most active promoters.

Well, for all these reasons I again thank you all for being here and wish you a fruitful work and a pleasant staying in our University and in our town. Good morning, good work again and thank you for the attention.

Pisa, 26th November 2007.