

Welcome greetings from Rector Massimo Egidi

Shanghai, March 11, 2016

Mr Ambassador, Mr Consul General, Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,
as Rector of LUISS University and I would like to warmly thank all of you for being here this morning.

Please let me just take this occasion to briefly introduce LUISS University. LUISS is an independent university founded in 1974 and located in the heart of Rome, Italy. It consists of four departments (Economics and Finance, Business and Management, Political Science and Law), four schools (School of European Political Economy, LUISS Business School, School of Government, and School of Law) and offers a wide range of undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate education. Its goal is not simply to convey knowledge but to “instill flexibility” in young people, giving them a sense of mastery over their future.

Through its affiliation with the Confederation of Italian Industries, LUISS holds a privileged position in the business environment. Over 200 (two hundred) public, private and multinational corporations cooperate with the University to offer students solid career opportunities.

I have dedicated so many years to the education sector, and I am proud and honoured to have given my modest contribution to the development of Italy; indeed, I strongly believe in education as the very core of a sustainable economic and social development of a country. LUISS has undergone many changes over the years; flexibility and adaptability to ongoing changes in the global world, in fact, have been at the core of our continued success at LUISS, while always maintaining the highest academic standard.

We all know China in undergoing a profound social and economic transition. After the success of the last 35 years, China is now facing some new challenges. I am not an expert on China but I know that China, like Italy, relies on a tradition of great scientific achievements; in very many ways, we have lot in common, and our relationship has been strengthened over the year. I hope that also our universities can play a role to reinforce the above said relationship and perhaps contribute to the further development of China.

Ten years ago, we started a cooperation agreement with Fudan University in Shanghai; since then, hundreds of students from Italy and China have taken part in a Double Degree

program in International Management. All of them have proved to have learned from the others in a way that has exceeded our expectations, where learning is not confined to the time spent in class: in fact, at the end of the year of study in China, students are offered an internship at Shanghai based companies in different sectors.

So far, the 40% of those who already earned their Double Degree is already working abroad, meaning that they have developed the right abilities to manage at the best in a cross-national professional marketplace.

Even after graduation, our Italian students continue having a stronger and stronger interest in China, and so do our Chinese students who look at Italy with growing interest.

As a University, we think encouraging people to acquire knowledge as well as critical thinking and awareness is always crucial to be able to analyse, evaluate, interpret any inferences and eventually get a genuine understanding of a given context. That's why I am taking the liberty to invite you to employ these abilities of yours at the best today, so we can open and have a constructive discussion on geopolitics, Economics, Energy and Finance and make the most of it. Let's take a few seconds to frame our own views on the topics we are going to address, and perhaps let's write them down if at all possible. Then, at the end of our meeting, let's frame again our thoughts and compare them with what we are thinking now. If by 1 pm, our thoughts and understanding of the issues have even slightly evolved or changed, then we can say that today has been a good day, as we'll have learnt something new.

In the end, I have been told that in Chinese you have a saying "*Sai Weng Shi Ma, Yen ji Fei Fu*"...Unfortunately, LUISS President, Miss Emma Marcegaglia - who is also President of ENI - has been called at the last minute by Italian President Renzi for urgent matters related to Italian Steel Industry, and she asked that I convey her apologies to you for not being here with us. However, the good news is that Minister Della Vedova, Under-Secretary of State with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation will join us, instead, and will deliver a speech on the broad economic and political situation in Italy. I believe many of you here will learn from his words.

I don't want to steal your time any further. Therefore, I thank you for your attention and I shall now give the floor to our distinguished speakers.

Thank you.