

**Graduation  
of the  
*Master in Anti-Corruption Studies*  
Class of 2015 - 2017**

Laxenburg, Austria  
7 December 2017

*Laudatio*

by the Dean of IACA

**Mr. Martin Kreutner**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

***Dear Graduates,***

Distinguished Members of  
the Board of Governors,  
the Academic Defence Committee,  
the International Senior Advisory Board,  
the International Academic Advisory Board,  
the Faculty,

Mr. Michael Hershman, our Guest of Honour,  
Excellencies and Members of the Diplomatic Community,  
Distinguished Director of the Austrian Diplomatic Academy &  
Representatives of partner universities,  
Families and Friends of the MACS Graduates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to IACA, and thank you all for joining us today on this festive occasion,  
both in this historic hall and via livestream.

We are gathered here, just two days before International Anti-Corruption Day, to  
congratulate the graduates of IACA's *Master in Anti-Corruption Studies* (MACS) class  
of 2015 - 2017, the third cohort to complete this unique global academic  
programme.

Our graduates come from 16 countries around the world: Afghanistan, Australia,  
Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, El Salvador, India, Japan, Liberia,  
Malawi, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Uganda, and the United States of America. They  
work in government ministries, anti-corruption commissions, international  
organizations, private companies, law enforcement bodies, NGOs, and the media.

By successfully completing the MACS, these diverse, talented professionals have  
shown not only exceptional ability but also great dedication to the anti-corruption  
and compliance cause. We salute their achievements!

*Graduates,*

This has been a long journey and, I trust, a rewarding one. So I am sure you will join me in thanking all those people who have supported you personally along the way — especially your families, friends, and employers.

Many of you have already shared individual stories about the impact the MACS programme has had on your work. Now, as graduates, all of you have the opportunity to become *Sherpas and leaders* in anti-corruption and compliance in your own countries, corporations, and beyond.

In fact, I would put it more strongly and argue that with your MACS education you have a *responsibility* to assume this leadership role and inspire others to follow you.

So let me say a few words, if I may, about some big challenges confronting you as anti-corruption leaders — global ones, and more specific ones — and how your IACA education will help you to meet them.

One of the worrying global problems these days is the generally growing crisis of multilateralism and international cooperation, of trust and reliance on the macro level. We see this in the rising tensions between major geopolitical powers, in the surplus of simplistic and superficial language in public discourse, a language of black and white overriding and neglecting facts, and fake news taking the lead; in — most recently — unreasoned and irresponsible unilateral decisions in regard to one of the most sensitive regions of this world; and — as a consequence — in the lack of trust in elites around the world, in all sectors and at all levels.

The result is a crisis of leadership that is weakening our collective ability to tackle serious global threats, including corruption, which is increasingly cross-border and international. Indeed, corruption threatens to undermine the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an agenda that I am tempted to call the “new global social contract”, a road map for a better global future that was unanimously adopted by UN Member States just before you began the MACS two years ago.

On a similar threatening note, the sound academic model of *hypothesis - antithesis - synthesis* is more and more threatened by zeitgeisty and less critical approaches. Critical thinking, one's exposure to the *audiatur et altera pars*, the other's argument, the wealth and plenitude of thoughts, the diversity and colourfulness of perspectives and potential avenues, are steadily and silently probed and ultimately undermined by contradicting phenomena.

The wave of “political correctness” — a notion that started by addressing and opposing severe insensitivities, inequality, and inequity — has in too many instances, as a matter of fact, already become an instrument of de facto self-restriction, punitive pillorying, and clear-cut censorship, and subsequently an outright oppressive intellectual silencer. Let us not forget — and walk his talk — what one of the most influential thinkers of the Enlightenment, Voltaire, once said: “*I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.*”

On a substantive note and as a specific challenge, I see a return of the tendency to tackle corruption largely through criminal law and enforcement, taking us back to where we were 20 to 25 years ago.

Don't misunderstand me: law enforcement is vital to any anti-corruption effort and has scored some notable successes in recent years. But it's not enough on its own, and it won't change people's hearts and minds in the fight against corruption.

We can't just threaten and scare people into tackling corruption. Nor can we assume that others will necessarily share our passion and enthusiasm for this subject.

Things get even worse if those engaged with hearts and minds are being threatened and exposed to — to put it mildly — undue pressure. I am thus deeply concerned by recent events, e.g., in Ukraine that could roll back progress that has been made in setting up independent institutions to tackle high-level corruption, including the National Anticorruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) and the Special Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO).

The credibility and accountability of any legal system are critical for peace and justice in a country as well as for the social, economic, and political prosperity of this society. That credibility, in line with the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), relies strongly on the independence of anti-corruption institutions. They cannot perform their duties if their representatives are subject to unjustified pressure, most questionable interference, and continued threats of dismissal or retaliation. What is more, the sustainability of the achievements to date and the sincerity of the commitment against corruption depend upon the ability of any country's politics and institutions to respect, support, and protect the aforementioned principles and her anti-corruption bodies.

So, graduates, what can you take from the MACS programme to face these challenges and lead and inspire others? I would suggest four things, "four Cs" in fact: these are *confidence*, *curiosity*, *contacts*, and, most importantly, *compliance*.

Let's take confidence first.

You all know that a career in anti-corruption and compliance is not an easy option but rather a patient, long-term struggle. To quote Drago Kos, one of several members of IACA's frequent visiting faculty who taught you in this MACS programme, it's a field where progress is often made in millimetres. Of course there will be setbacks on the way.

But when times are tough, don't be disheartened. Draw confidence and strength from the dedication you have shown to earn this degree. Take pride in being graduates of the first programme of its kind in the world, one that has been central to IACA receiving explicit tribute in two UN resolutions within the last 12 months alone.

Remind yourselves every day of the importance of your work. And realize that simply keeping anti-corruption on the agenda can sometimes be a victory in itself.

Second is curiosity.

Michael Johnston, Distinguished Professor at IACA and another MACS lecturer, said recently that in general there is too much consensus within the anti-corruption community and not enough debate. Fortunately, this is not true of the MACS — as I am sure Michael will agree.

For two years you have analyzed corruption from multiple perspectives, evaluated theories, and gained practical insights for your daily work. You have researched, written, and successfully defended a master's thesis. And you have intensively discussed and debated with your classmates and renowned faculty from across the globe.

This intellectual training will continue to pay rich dividends. So I would urge all of you to keep challenging your own anti-corruption thinking, as well as that of others, to maintain a critical mindset in this professional arena as well as in all affairs of life.

Third are contacts.

Graduates, you are about to join IACA's alumni network of anti-corruption and compliance professionals in 153 countries and jurisdictions. This offers enormous opportunities for individual and institutional collaboration, for further exchanges of knowledge and ideas, and, I hope, for personal friendships too.

I would strongly encourage you to engage with our alumni on social media, via WhatsApp groups, in our alumni magazine, at future IACA alumni reunions, and at many other anti-corruption events and conferences. Maybe some of you will return to IACA's campus, your anti-corruption *alma mater*, in the not-too-distant future to share your leadership experience as lecturers, supervisors, panellists, or mentors. Whatever your future path, our doors will always be open for you.

Fourth, and most important of all, is compliance.

At IACA we have a responsibility, in fact an *obligation*, to comply with the standards and values we teach. And, graduates, as you assume the role of anti-corruption leaders, you will need to remain faithful to what you have learnt and shared during this MACS programme.

Being an effective and inspiring leader in any field means walking the talk and embodying the values you preach. This is especially true of anti-corruption. Or, in the words of the famous Chinese philosopher Confucius: “*The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home.*”

So I will finish these “four Cs” by urging you always to remember the importance of compliance, not only in spirit, but also in deed.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

IACA has many people and organizations to thank as the 2015 - 2017 MACS programme concludes.

First of all, I would like to pay tribute to the hard work and dedication of Professor Elena Helmer, the Director of the MACS programme, her colleagues Petra Susac, Khusraw Parwez (himself a graduate of the first MACS class), and Alena Gustafikova, and all the other members of IACA’s Academic Programmes team.

Next, let me express my deep gratitude to the many renowned academics and practitioners from around the world who have shared their expertise during this programme, whether as in-house or visiting faculty, thesis supervisors, or external evaluators.

My sincere thanks go to our international academic Defence Committee for supervising the students towards the end of the programme. We are indeed fortunate to have had two outstanding chairs: Prof. Peter Rosner of the University of Vienna, and Prof. Huguette Labelle, Vice-Chairperson of IACA’s International Senior Advisory Board and Former Chair of the Board of Directors of Transparency International.

They were most ably supported by the other distinguished Committee members: Prof. Johannes Maerk of the Danube University of Krems, Prof. Eduardo Vetere, the Chairperson of the IACA Board of Governors and formerly with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Prof. Ilker Ataç of the University of Vienna, Prof. Elena Helmer, and Prof. Han-Kyun Rho from IACA.

I would also like to thank Prof. Michael Levi of Cardiff University and Prof. John Hatchard of the University of Buckingham, both in the UK, and Masauko Chamkakala of IACA for their valuable contributions to evaluating the master's theses.

Furthermore, it is a great privilege to have Michael Hershman, the Chairperson of our International Senior Advisory Board, as our guest of honour today. He has made an outstanding worldwide contribution to anti-corruption over many decades and has been one of IACA's strongest supporters since the very beginning. Thank you once again, Michael, for all your efforts on behalf of our organization, and we very much look forward to hearing your remarks shortly.

Off-site modules further enrich the global flavour of the MACS and add an extra perspective to students' learning. In this regard let me express my sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Justice of Georgia for hosting the final module of this programme in Tbilisi in April this year.

Generous financial support from The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Austrian Development Agency, the Siemens Integrity Initiative, and Philip Morris International provided scholarships that enabled students from Least Developed Countries to take part in the 2015 - 2017 MACS programme, and IACA is extremely thankful for this.

My special appreciation also goes to Austria as a host country and the county of Lower Austria as well as the community of Laxenburg for their warm hospitality and the support we receive. It makes us proud to humbly contribute to the international reputation of this nation as a global hub of international organizations and multilateral dialogue.

I am also particularly grateful to all IACA's staff for supporting this MACS class throughout their studies and helping us to prepare for this ceremony.

Last, and certainly not least, I hope you will join me in thanking the Klimt-Quartett for their excellent musical accompaniment.

*Graduates of the 2015 - 2017 MACS class,*

By any historical standard, the global anti-corruption movement is still very young. You are bold pioneers in this field, and we are proud to have you as ambassadors for IACA and for this noble cause.

Likewise, all of you should take great pride in what you have achieved so far. And as you celebrate today, just take a moment to think how much more you can still do as anti-corruption leaders.

Because if you can meet this leadership challenge, and inspire others as I hope the MACS has inspired you, then the best is yet to come.

This engagement of yours will not be an easy one. It may remain an uphill battle. But then again, let us not forget what Theodore Roosevelt once said: *"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."*

On this note, let me wish you all a wonderful event today and every success in the future, on all of your professional and also private paths.

***Ergo*** – in the spirit of this ceremony – ***gaudeamus igitur!***