



**Commissioner Michael McGrath message on the occasion of
conferral of Honorary Doctorates to
Judges Rosario Salvatore Aitala and Nicolas Guillou
21 May 2026**

**Chancellor, distinguished faculty, honoured guests, and above all,
Judges Rosario Salvatore Aitala and Nicolas Guillou**

It is a profound privilege to address this message to you today as the University of Tuscia bestows this well-deserved honour upon two outstanding jurists whose professionalism and commitment to justice has left an indelible mark on the world.

Your careers embody the highest ideals of judicial integrity, courage, and dedication to the rule of law. Through your work at the **International Criminal Court**, you have not only upheld the principles of accountability but have also demonstrated that justice—no matter how difficult the path—must prevail. Your careers demonstrate that upholding international justice and thus contributing to peace and security in the world, is one of the highest ideals we can aspire to.

Judge Aitala, your extensive experience, both as judge and prosecutor in Italy tackling the most serious cases involving terrorism, corruption

and international crime and subsequently at the ICC, reflects a lifelong pursuit of truth and justice. Your contributions have strengthened the foundations of international justice, ensuring that victims are heard and perpetrators are held to account.

Judge Guillou, your distinguished service, from the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Kosovo to your current tenure at the ICC has been defined by an unwavering resolve to confront impunity. I had the opportunity to hear firsthand from you in December of the detrimental impact and serious consequences of the unjust sanctions imposed upon you by the United States.

No judge should ever be exposed to such impositions on their ability to carry out their work or to live a normal life. These measures are not merely personal attacks; they strike at the very heart of judicial independence and severely undermine our rules-based international order, in violation of the collective commitment we had made to uphold accountability in the wake of recent unlawful wars.

The ICC is a cornerstone of global justice, a beacon for those who seek redress for the most heinous crimes. Let me be clear: the European Union stands firm in defending the independence of the ICC, including all its judges and prosecutors who are dedicated to upholding its mandate.

We recognise that the ICC's work is urgent and indispensable—whether in investigating war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide. We are exploring all feasible tracks of action to safeguard the Court's operations and to provide our financial and political support.

To Judges Aitala and Guillou: your work reminds us that justice is not a theoretical concept but a living, breathing necessity and one that demands courage, sacrifice, and principle. This honorary doctorate is a testament to your extraordinary contributions, but more importantly, it is a recognition of the values you uphold: fairness, impartiality, and the belief that justice must transcend borders.

To the students and faculty of the University of Tuscia: you honour not just two remarkable individuals today, but the very idea of justice itself. May this ceremony serve as a call to action for all of us to defend the institutions that protect our shared humanity, to reject impunity, and to stand with those who hold the powerful to account.

In conclusion I extend my heartfelt congratulation to Judges Aitala and Guillou. This honour is richly deserved. Thank you for your service, your courage, and your unwavering dedication to justice.

Grazie mille et merci beaucoup.

Michael McGrath, Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, the Rule of Law and Consumer Protection