

**International PhD School InDiCEE**  
**37<sup>th</sup> Plenary meeting (online)**  
**21-22 April 2020**

Opening Address  
Claudio Borri, Chairman/Coordinator

Buongiorno a tutti, good morning everyone, bonjour a tout le monde, guten Morgen allerseits, buenos dias a todos, bom dia a todos ...  
... and welcome to the spring plenary meeting 2020 (the 37<sup>th</sup>) of the International Doctoral school in Civil and Environmental Engineering (InDiCEE)

Dear candidates, students, colleagues and friends;  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you can easily imagine, today it is not easy for us to welcome You to what it was supposed to be a very “special event” for celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our program, which started indeed in the a. y. 2000/'01 with preparatory workshops and a “kick-off” plenary meeting in Villa Vigoni, the Italian German center of excellence at lake Como.

We have started preparing this meeting since last September and have worked tirelessly doing everything possible to host such a large group of academics in the possibly most worthy environment, i.e. there where everything has began, in Villa Vigoni (let me thank here warmly all the actors involved in the organization, in Florence, in Braunschweig and in Villa Vigoni, namely: Margherita Mellini, Luca Solari, Lorenzo Cappiotti, Stephanie Theil, Klaus Thiele, Udo Peil, Christiane Liermann, Simona Della Torre ...

.... but our plans have been swept away by the pandemic of Covid19, which made unavoidable to organize this meeting in a virtual way (online), challenging us with unexpected tasks and even “legal” issues (since Doctoral Examinations never were done before “on distance”, nor such system was provided by our law and reglement). Nevertheless, the organization work done is not lost and we may ensure You that once this tragic times will be over, we shall resume all together again and celebrate properly our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Indeed: besides the immense and intangible loss on human lifes, socio-economic damages and consequences and the need of restarting with a

completely new sustainable development model, the present pandemic has given us (the entire world community of educators, researchers and scientists) one more encouragement - and how strong one ! - to continue working hard and tirelessly in our different fields and disciplines for progressing the “knowledge society”, so reinforcing our consciousness to serve our communities in the most advanced way as possible.

This message is especially addressed to our 10 candidates of today and tomorrow, who will defend their Dissertation and then take their start in a professional career, either as researchers or as professionals; but it is also intended to reach all younger students of future generations attending our today meeting. Let me quote here President N. Mandela when he stated in front of the plenary session of the UN: “Be aware that education and knowledge advancement is the most powerful weapons which you can use to change the world”.

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Last but not least, we wish to acknowledge here the work and commitment of so many colleagues spread in Universities almost all over Europe: Lausanne, Pavia, Alicante, Minho, Padova, PoliTO, UP Madrid, Thrace Univ. Greece, Kansas State Univ., PoliMI, Univ. G Eiffel Nantes, Parma, Cassino, Reggio C. Mediterranea, Perugia, IUA Venice, Univ. NOVA Lisboa, Bologna, UNRLS Vienna, ... and last but not least, U Firenze e U Pisa, TU-Braunschweig. Thanks to their commitment and devotion to our post-graduate program !

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#### A MINUTE OF MEMORIAL:

I am sure You will agree with us to hold a minute of silence in memory of all those who lost their life due to the pandemic but also to honour those persons that are

Finally: let me come to the organization of this online meeting, for today and tomorrow: you have been invited to a unique session, starting today at 9:00 and ending tomorrow at 19:30.

All members of the Examination Boards (Juries) have been additionally invited to separate “meeting rooms”, which they will access only for the last part of exam, i.e. the assessment and evaluation meeting. This is scheduled to last 30min (at maximum); after the end of this “restricted” meeting, the Jury

members will re-enter the plenary “room” of our meeting and the President of the Jury will announce the result and perform the proclamation.

During the 2 hours scheduled for any examination (30min presentation + max 1 hour question time + max 30min evaluation meeting), the President of the Jury will lead the meeting and take over and return the floor to us (Chairman of overall meeting).

For your awareness: the whole meeting is going to be recorded

Please all the candidates send us a picture in order to post a “group photo” on our website