

# **COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY**

## **European University Board of Trustees confers Doctor of Civil Law, Honoris Causa to Ambassador Zahedi in recognition of his committed leadership**

*Geneva, June 25, 2014*

On the 25th. of June 2014 European University graduate and post-graduate students from 47 different countries including Iran gathered together often with their families in the annual Commencement Ceremony in presence of many personalities from the academic, diplomatic and business world to get their diplomas but also to participate in a homage to Ambassador Ardeshir Zahedi's life-long contributions to world peace and understanding.

The European University with the headquarters in Switzerland was recently celebrating the fortieth year of its foundation, its great achievements, high academic standards and remarkable expansion in Geneva, Montreux, Munich and Barcelona has be-



come one of the most innovative modern universities and praised for its pragmatic and global approach to education.

Amongst the dignitaries present at the commencement ceremony and the awarding of Degree of Doctor of Civil Laws Honoris Causa to Ambassador Zahedi were Dr Adolf Ogi, former president of Switzerland, Mr. Mathieu Jaton, Director of the Montreux Inter-

national Jazz Festival. After the procession of students in their colorful graduation gowns and an opening address by Professor Stef Jong of Geneva Campus of EU, President Dirck Craen welcomed the guests, congratulated the students for their achievements and started introducing the guest of honour, Ambassador Zahedi on whom the board of trustees of EU had decided to confer the Honorary Doctoral Degree in Civil Laws.

In the biographical introduction to Ardeshir Zahedi we read that he comes from one of the oldest Iranian families, which has played a leading role in Iran's political life for many centuries. His grandfather on the mother's side, Hossein Pirnia, known as Mo'tamen al-Molk (1875–1948),



was one of the most enlightened Iranian statesmen who played a leading role in drafting the text of the Fundamental Law of the Constitutional Revolution and served four times as Prime Minister between 1915 and 1924. Following his retirement, he published a three-volume history of pre-Islamic Iran, entitled *Tarikh-e Iran-e Bastan* (History of Ancient Iran), which is still regarded as an indispensable text on the subject. On his father's side, the Zahedi family trace their ancestry back to a famous 13<sup>th</sup> century Iranian mystic whose name the family still bears, namely Tajj od-Din Ebrahim known as Sheykh Zahed Gilani, who came from the shores of the Caspian Sea and who was the Grand Murshid or Master of the famed Zahedi-yeh Sufi Order of Lahijan.

His father, General Fazlollah Zahedi, was one of major the architects of modern Iran. He was the youngest person ever to achieve the rank of general in the Iranian army and took part in many campaigns to unify the country. In 1953 he restored the Shah to power and as Prime Minister helped him bring stability and pave the way for peace and progress of

the country in the decades to come.

Ardeshir Zahedi had just finished his graduate studies in USA that was invited by the Shah of Iran to join the Imperial Court and to embark upon a diplomatic career to become one of the youngest leading politicians in the country. He married Princess Shanaz Pahlavi, the Shah's only daughter from the first marriage. They had a daughter, Princess Mahnaz. Despite the divorce he remained very close to the Shah right to the end. In 1959 he became Ambassador to the United States and then to the Court of Saint James before being offered the post of the Minister of Foreign Affairs which he held from 1966 to 1972. He then returned to Washington for a second term as the Iranian Ambassador while being endorsed as Ambassador to Cuba, Mexico, Bahamas and Venezuela. He thus played a most crucial role in Iran's recent history. As the Iranian Ambassador to the United States, he established close links with practically all the leading US politicians and was on personal terms with a number of US presidents.

During his diplomatic career,

Ardeshir Zahedi took part in discussions between the Arabs and Israelis after the 1967 war, the preparation of the famous Islamic Summit in Rabat, the peace negotiations between Pakistan and India, and played the key role in the release of 165 hostages at B'nai B'rith in 1977 bringing the first major terrorist attack in USA to a peaceful end. He was known, and several times rewarded by the world organizations, as an architect of peace and a major authority in settling global issues through diplomacy.

Mr. Zahedi has received the highest national decorations from Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, Pakistan, Jordan, Lebanon, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, The Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Korea, Sweden, Finland, Brazil, Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal and Ethiopia as well as from the Pope. Today, Ambassador Zahedi lives in Switzerland and while still contributing to promote understanding between nations and looking for ways to ease the global tensions, he is busy writing his memoirs. The first two volumes have already been published in English, Persian and French and the third





***President Craen of European University presenting the University title of Doctor Honoris Causa and the diploma to Ambassador Ardeshir Zahedi & Luc Craen, son of President Dirk Craen***

volume that covers his years as Minister of Foreign Affairs is on the way. Ardeshir Zahedi has also received honorary doctoral degrees from several major universities of the world (no less than forty) in recognition of his outstanding diplomatic achievements and academic contributions.

Along with the degree, The Board of Trustees had decided to enumerate the reasons for its decision and the honor it had reserved for the Iranian diplomat. In the accompanying

citation.

Ambassador Zahedi addressed the audience to thank President Ogi and other distinguished guests, professors and students of EU for their kindness and expressed his gratitude to President Craen and members of the Board of Trustees for this exceptional honor bestowed upon him. He said that above all he was happy to witness the success of the young students from 47 seven different countries in the world having completed their stud-

ies and receiving their degrees from this prestigious university. Addressing the youth he added:

*"You are the hopes of future. You are the makers of future and you have a great challenge and a tremendous responsibility facing you, that of making the world a better place to live, that of leaving to your children a safer, cleaner world in which love and understanding, charity and justice will replace the present divisions and prejudices. The most important*



# EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR MANAGEMENT STUDIES

The board of trustees of European University Geneva (Switzerland)  
has decided to confer the Degree of Honoris Causa to

**Ardeshir Zahedi**

Because of your extraordinary accomplishments and committed leadership in national and international politics as a world diplomat; because of your vision, wisdom, expertise, belief, respect and passion to serve and to be a builder, negotiator, leader and contributor to a peaceful world order; because of your dedication to neutrality; because of your contribution and tireless commitment to public service and your unequalled positive sense to progress towards a peaceful world; because of your love of family, friends and Switzerland and your generous spirit with positive attitude. The European University by actions of its Board of Trustees is honored to present you with this Degree of Doctor of Civil Laws, Honoris Causa on the twenty-fifth of June 2014 at Geneva.



President  
Dr. Dirk Craen



UNIVERSITAS EUROPAEA  
OMNIBUS HAS LITTERAS VISURIS  
SALUTEM IN DOMINO  
CURATORES UNIVERSITATIS, EX FACULTATIS SCHOLAE ARTIUM ET SCIENTIARUM  
CONSULTO,

**Ardeshir Zahedi**

PROPTER EXIMIA MERITA, ACADEMICUM GRADUM

DOCTORIS IURISPRUDENTIAE CIVILIS

CUM OMNIBUS IURIBUS, HONORIBUS AC PRIVILEGIIS HUIC GRADUI ADNEXIS CONFERENTES,  
EIDEM HOC DIPLOMA, PUBLICO UNIVERSITATIS SIGILLO MUNITUM, IN COLLATI GRADUS  
TESTIMONIUM TRADUNT.

DATUM GENAVA (HELVETIA) DIE XXV MENSIS IUNIUS ANNO DOMINI MMXIV.

PRAESES UNIVERSITATIS  
UNIVERSITAS EUROPAEA

*Honorary Doctoral degree in Civil Law awarded to Ardeshir Zahedi by  
the unanimous decision of the Board of Trustees  
of European University in recognition of his merits and services*

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*Dr Dirk Craen."*





**Ambassador Ardeshir Zahedi with Shahrokh Alizadehrad**

**From Iran Who Had His Master Of Business Administration With A Major In International Business  
and his family during the graduation ceremony at the European University**

thing I would like to tell you is appreciate your situations. In a world in which some two billion people do not even have water that you have at your hand to drink and are deprived of all the facilities you have and the education you receive to be particularly grateful to your loving parents that provided you with such opportunities and privileges."

"A few days ago," he said: "I was attending the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of Mon-

te Rosa Institute in Montreux and Mr Bernhard Gademann, Director of the establishment concluded his speech with these beautiful words that I have kept in mind:

**"If you think for a year,  
you seed some corn,**

**If you think for 100 years,  
you plant a tree,**

**But if you think for a generation,  
you educate a human being."**

I remember in 1986 reading an inspiring book "Segregation, Emancipation, Education," by Enoch Powell the well known British politician in which he argues that the absence of education and culture is chaos and confusion, injustice and slavery. Here you have been equipped with the culture you need to overcome the difficulties, to strive for a peaceful world and never to yield. Living with the people from other cultures and countries you learn to understand and love each



other and make lasting friend-



*prejudices and hatred and fanaticism and all that divides humankind. You shall certainly do a lot and you have the capacity for it, to avoid wars and establish peace. What is war but misery, destruction, blood-*



e  
le,  
essence  
ers from Geneva Television that covered the event. When asked if he could recommend just one book for students

*and I can see that desire in your loving eyes. I know you will trade vengeance for forgiveness and greed for generosity.*

**Human beings are members of a whole. In creation of one**

ust before the ceremony the *violence and war, how to put the canons in museums and*

*and you read it inscribed at the main entrance of the United*



start to talk, face to face and heart to heart, how to open schools in place of prisons, how to export ideas, food and medicine instead of arms of massive destruction.

longer had I been given more time, may give you a different vision of life and new sense of responsibility to build a better world; a world less divided and not so threatened by the arrogance of those who think that

and other institutions of learning ensure the bright future of the young generation, a land of peaceful democracy, the splendour of its beauty and above all the warmth of the heart of its welcoming people.

first visited Switzerland. My father wanted to show me everything, the snow capped mountains, the freshness of the water, the purity of the air and refreshing sceneries. My mother also appreciated being in Switzerland and decided to continue her studies in Geneva. His Majesty the Shah himself was fond of this great country and did much of his studies here. Later on when my father resigned from Premiership, he came to settle in Villa les Roses in Veytaux. Here we have hosted many celebrities, heads of states and artists like Charlie Chaplin, James Mason, Roger Moor, David Niven, President Richard Nixon, Mrs Nixon, Henry & Nancy Kissinger and many of the architects of peace that found themselves in Switzerland, in this peaceful and peace loving country; peace and love the values to which I have dedicated my heart and soul."

tin Luther King, Nelson Mandela or more recent books by Paul Green , The Forgotten Hostages, or by Professor Sofaer on my beloved country Iran. They all show how the most disturbing challenges to world peace and security can be avoided through negotiations and dialogue, through sagacity and diplomacy. You can also read President Jimmy Carter's last book and answer his "call for action", a call to end injustice, discrimination and cruelty in the world.

These are dreams and road maps for creating a better world, a world you have the responsibility to lead, the dreams you must make come true for your own sake, for your children and for the whole humanity. You certainly have learned all that was there to learn for your professional life in this prestigious establishment. The kind of books I referred to, and the list could have become much

world my dear friends, our dear graduates, in which arms can fall from the hands, the wars be set aside, and prejudices disappear from our hearts .God Bless you all and may this University continue to thrive."In the next question the interviewer was curious to know why the Ambassador who had lived half of his life in the USA and UK and had English as his second language chose to live in Switzerland and in the French speaking part of the country. Mr Zahedi answered: "For me Switzerland was first of all Geneva, a neutral place in the heart of Europe. My father spent a good many years of his life here as Ambassador to the United Nations and I participated in many international gatherings here as Ambassador or Foreign Minister. Switzerland has always had a special importance for me. The cultural richness, the excellence of its educational system where the great universities