

**Address by the Ambassador Gianluigi Benedetti
on the occasion of the opening of the Exhibition
“Leonardo Da Vinci. Scientist and Engineer”
Madatech Museum, Haifa - May 22, 2019**

Dear General Eli Shermeister, General Director of the Madatech Museum,
Dear Board of Directors,
Distinguished guests,

I am pleased and honored to be here with you today, to celebrate 500 years since the death of Leonardo Da Vinci.

Alongside his utmost celebrated and worldwide famous pictorial activity, Leonardo developed interests in sculpture, mathematics and physics. He was a curious investigator of all sciences, from mechanics to anatomy, to natural sciences.

He never published completed works, but his extensive studies leave us with numerous manuscripts and sketches of animal subjects, human caricatures, and drawings of mechanics, hydraulics, anatomy, as well as short stories and moral reflections.

Although Leonardo did not have a humanistic education and defined himself as an illiterate person, his vision of life harmonized with the dictates of Humanism, in the exaltation of the individual's abilities as a means of recovering from his animal condition. Leonardo embodied the true essence of humanism in the famous Vitruvian man located at the center of the universe and open to all experiences.

The result is an attitude towards nature that translates into an almost religious contemplation of its mysteries and, at the same time, in the desire to investigate them to get to know them thoroughly.

This same attitude is at the foundation of both modern scientific research and technological development which this Museum of Science, Technology and Space outstandingly celebrates and encompasses and that both Israel and Italy strongly promote and push forward through a close bilateral scientific and technological cooperation.

Last week, the Italian-Israeli joint committee, which steers this cooperation, approved eight new joint scientific research projects on telemedicine and technologies for the ecological monitoring of agricultural and natural terrestrial systems, and agreed to launch a new tender for a joint laboratory dedicated to precision agriculture.

On the industrial side, the committee approved five innovative projects on issues related to health, agro-industry and ICT. In addition, the Embassy is working on the selection of 10 Italian startups that will be financially supported to spend three months in Israeli accelerators. On its part, the Israeli Innovation Authority will support demo/piloting and scale-up activities of Israeli mature start-up companies in Italy.

All of this in the spirit of Leonardo, the great genius of the Renaissance whom the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation is commemorating this year with more than 150 exhibitions, lectures, conferences, films and theatrical performances.

Tonight, here in Haifa, we celebrate Leonardo with this impressive permanent exhibit on his engineering projects and with an original series of lectures on the most intriguing aspects of his art.

Thank you Madatech Museum for organizing such an interesting commemorative program and many thanks to the Italian Cultural Institute in Haifa for supporting it.

Toda Raba.