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IFSMA

NEWSLETTER

The Shipmasters' International Voice

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Readers are reminded that the opinions expressed in the IFSMA Newsletter are those of the various authors and providers of news and are not necessarily in accord with IFSMA policy.

Secretary General's Message

On behalf of everyone at IFSMA, we hope that you are keeping well and above all, staying safe.

World Maritime Day was on 24 September. Around the world many maritime buildings were lit up in blue to celebrate the day.

In the days before the World Maritime Day, more ships were attacked and seafarers killed in the conflict zones of the Strait of Hormuz, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

In his official message to mark the day, IMO Secretary General Arsenio Dominguez said: *"This year's World Maritime Day theme: From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence", recognises the reality that regulations will deliver safer, more resilient, and cleaner shipping when they are implemented worldwide. Implementation must make a difference where it matters most – for the people working at sea. Seafarers come first. Always."*

IFSMA strongly agrees that *"Seafarers must come first. Always"* but we also recognise the reality that seafarers have been killed during conflicts, while they are simply doing their job.

This is simply unacceptable.

As reported last month, IFSMA is involved in two pieces of work that impact on our members. One concerns the frequency of bridge alerts on ships fitted with integrated bridge systems and the second project concerns the development of guidelines for onboard training, exercises and drills aimed at addressing the continuing and serious challenge of seafarer fatalities in enclosed spaces.

Through our member associations we conducted two separate surveys so we could understand the experiences of those onboard ships and those responsible for managing ships. Both surveys closed during September and I am very happy to report that we received over 850 responses to the Bridge Alert survey and over 950 responses to the Enclosed Space survey.

This excellent response we received from both surveys will be used to drive change and improvement within the industry.

We encourage you to stay informed about these and other developments affecting the maritime sector by visiting the IFSMA website and following our LinkedIn and Facebook channels, where we share our latest news, initiatives and updates.

In these challenging times, we extend our very best wishes to all our members, colleagues and seafarers around the world.

Stay safe and safe sailing.

Andy Cook, Secretary General

The IMO Digest

Appearing below is a summary of some of the news received with grateful thanks from the excellent IMO Media service in recent weeks.

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Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships (ISWG-GHG 22)

IMO Intersessional Working Group, 1 to 4 September 2026

Highlights

IMO's Intersessional Working Group on Reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions from Ships (ISWG-GHG 22) met for its 22nd session from 1 to 4 September 2026, chaired by Mr. Sveinung Oftedal (Norway).

This meeting had a high level of participation, with nearly 1200 registered participants (in person and online).

During the meeting participants considered:

Consideration of proposals, including documents submitted to MEPC 84 and 85, previous sessions of ISWG-GHG, as well as documents submitted to ISWG-GHG 22, on how to address concerns with the draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI on the Net-Zero Framework, in line with the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy

The Group invited interested delegations to continue to consult inter-sessionally to address remaining concerns with the draft amendments to MARPOL Annex VI, in line with the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy, taking into account views expressed at the Group's session, with a view to submitting concrete proposals reflecting enhanced convergence allowing timely adoption and effective implementation.

Further consideration of the draft guidelines supporting the uniform and effective implementation of IMO's mid-term measures.

The Group held a preliminary exchange of views on this agenda item, although time became a limiting factor and the Group agreed to defer the consideration of all documents submitted to this session under this agenda item to ISWG-GHG 23 (23-27 November 2026).

Further consideration of the development of the IMO Life Cycle GHG Assessment (LCA) framework.

Due to time constraints, the Group was not able to consider the agenda item related to the IMO Life Cycle GHG Assessment (LCA) framework. The Group deferred the consideration of those documents to

ISWG-GHG 23, in conjunction with the report of the fourth meeting of the GESAMP-LCA Working Group expected to be submitted to MEPC 85.

Update on Voluntary Multi-Donor Trust Fund

The Group noted an update provided by the Secretariat concerning the Voluntary Multi-Donor Trust Fund, which is used to facilitate the participation of developing countries, especially SIDS and LDCs, to attend MEPC and ISWG-GHG meetings. The Fund is likely to face a shortfall in 2026 of around £220,000, in view of the substantial increase in travel costs globally.

The Group expressed its appreciation to the donors of the Voluntary Multi-Donor Trust Fund and invited Member States and international organizations to consider making financial contributions to the Trust Fund to allow for future participation at IMO's GHG meetings.

Next steps

The next meeting of the Intersessional Working Group on Reduction of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions from Ships (ISWG-GHG 23) is scheduled for 23 to 27 November 2026, ahead of MEPC 85 (30 November to 3 December).

The second extraordinary session of MEPC (adjourned last October) is scheduled to resume on 4 December, subject to discussions at MEPC 85.

Maritime security

Red Sea and Gulf of Aden

Regional cooperation the key

Regional cooperation is crucial in tackling evolving maritime security challenges in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Here IMO emphasised needs at the fifth Regional Maritime Law Enforcement Dialogue (MLED) held in Nairobi on 24 and 25 August.



Regional and international partners

It was reported by IMO that this event brought together maritime law-enforcement agencies from

Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen, along with regional and international partners, to strengthen cooperation amid rising threats from piracy and armed robbery at sea, geopolitical tensions and organised criminal activity.

Continuing geopolitical issues

IMO's Head of the Maritime Security Section, Mr Jeremy Greenwood, outlined actions the Organization has taken to safeguard ships and seafarers affected by continuing geopolitical issues around the world.

He stressed the importance of regional engagement in IMO policymaking efforts, including on new and emerging maritime policy issues, such as the development of a maritime cybersecurity code and the new Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships Code (MASS Code)¹.

Furthermore, Greenwood presented IMO's technical assistance and capacity-building support to Member States in this area, including on the development of national maritime security strategies, National Maritime Security Committees, and risk assessments.

Other initiatives

Other initiatives to support the implementation of maritime security requirements, including the IMO Model Course on Ship and Port Facility Security, maritime personnel and baggage screening and searching, maritime domain awareness, and operational-level implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code², were also covered.

Strengthening regional cooperation

During the dialogue, country officials focused on practical solutions to address the ongoing challenges in the region, including measures to strengthen information-sharing, maritime domain awareness, incident reporting, vessel tracking and coordinated responses to maritime security incidents.

UNODC and the Red Sea Project

The event was organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) under the EU-funded Regional Programme for Maritime Security in the Red Sea Area (the Red Sea Project)³, through which IMO, UNODC and INTERPOL work together to bolster maritime security cooperation across the region.

Series of five

The fifth MLED built on four previous editions held in Mombasa, Djibouti, Addis Ababa and Nairobi since 2021.

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/4vbf2dd>

² <https://tinyurl.com/uhrwh8zm>

³ <https://tinyurl.com/mr4ybr9m>

Stop attacking merchant ships and seafarers:

IMO Secretary-General's call to Member States

Conflicts must not be used as pretext to attack merchant ships

The Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, Mr Arsenio Dominguez, has called on Member States to refrain from actions that endanger merchant ships and put seafarers' lives at risk.

Addressing the IMO's Sub-Committee on Carriage of Cargoes and Containers, (CCC12) on 16 September the Secretary-General warned of the severe impacts of geopolitical tensions on the shipping industry.



To date, IMO has verified 80 attacks on merchant vessels in and around the Strait of Hormuz, resulting in at least 22 deaths of seafarers.

Secretary-General Dominguez said: 'We are reaching a point where these conflicts are being used as a pretext to attack merchant vessels and innocent seafarers. Do not use these conflicts to attack innocent seafarers.'

'Since the current conflict in the Middle East began on 28 February, IMO has verified 80 attacks on international shipping in and around the Strait of Hormuz, resulting in the deaths of at least 22 seafarers and injuries to many others.

'In the Black Sea and Sea of Azov, dozens of fatalities have reportedly resulted from attacks on international

shipping in recent months, although precise numbers are difficult to verify.

'Attacks in the Red Sea have also resumed, with four fatalities confirmed in the latest attack by the Houthis on a merchant vessel on 11 August.'

Secretary-General Dominguez emphasized that the attacks across these conflicts are not attributable to one single actor.

He continued: *'In the Strait of Hormuz, it is not only one country attacking merchant vessels. In the Black Sea and Sea of Azov, it is not only one country attacking merchant vessels.'*

Furthermore, he underlined that addressing the root causes of these geopolitical conflicts is beyond IMO's remit, but that their impact is increasingly evident across global maritime trade and shipping operations.

In conclusion he urged delegates to raise these impacts on international shipping with their governments and in the appropriate international fora. When shipping operations are disrupted, the consequences extend far beyond the maritime sector, affecting economies, supply chains and everyday lives.

He emphasised: *'I call on you to share these impacts with the relevant bodies in your countries so that this can be dealt with within the United Nations, as appropriate.... It falls to you and your capitals, and relevant bodies of the United Nations, to address the root causes and find solutions.'*

CCC

The Sub-Committee on Carriage of Cargoes and Containers met in London from 14 to 18 September to discuss safety issues related to the transport of dangerous goods, bulk cargoes and containers by sea.

What IMO does

At IMO the Secretariat stands ready to contribute to workable solutions for the shipping industry that Member States can bring forward at the technical and operational level.

IMO and the Middle East

For more on this broad topic readers are invited to use the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/29crfdx6>

Maritime Single Window implementation

IMO seeks feedback

On 21 September IMO announced that it had launched a global survey to assess the implementation and use of Maritime Single Windows (MSWs), inviting feedback from organizations and individuals involved in maritime information exchange.

What is a Maritime Single Window?

A Maritime Single Window (MSW) is a centralised digital platform that enables the streamlined exchange of information among ships and various government agencies during port calls. Its use became mandatory under the IMO Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL Convention) on 1 January 2024.

MSWs are a key component of shipping digitalization: they provide a single electronic entry point for the submission of information required when ships arrive in, stay at and depart from ports. By enabling data to be submitted only once and then shared among relevant authorities, MSWs help reduce administrative burdens, improve efficiency and transparency, and facilitate smoother port operations.

Why a survey?

Two years after this requirement entered into force, the survey aims to provide a clearer picture of how MSWs are being used across countries.

Findings will identify implementation challenges, good practices and capacity-building needs, supporting countries in their efforts to further modernize maritime transport procedures.

This exercise forms part of IMO's ongoing work to support Member States in implementing the FAL Convention and advancing maritime digitalization through technical cooperation.

Who should participate?

The survey is open to maritime administrations, port authorities, customs and border control agencies, port community system operators, shipping companies, ship agents, terminal operators, freight forwarders and other stakeholders using MSW systems.

A follow-up survey is planned for 2028 to assess progress since 2026 and measure the impact of MSWs on users' workload and operational efficiency.

Take part in the survey

IMO encourages all organizations and individuals involved in maritime information exchange to participate and share their experiences. Your feedback will help shape future IMO support and contribute to the continued development of efficient and user-focused Maritime Single Window systems worldwide.

Deadline

The survey is open until 31 October 2026.

Readers are invited to share their experience of MSWs by using the link available here: <https://tinyurl.com/yu86w7n7>

World Maritime Day 2026

From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence

Global regulations will deliver safer, more resilient shipping when they are implemented worldwide



The IMO headquarters illuminated in blue for World Maritime Day, symbolizing the global commitment to safe, secure, resilient shipping.

On 24 September the international maritime community marked World Maritime Day as shipping continues to face the direct impacts of wider geopolitical tensions and conflict.

Merchant ships have been attacked in many conflict zones – from the Strait of Hormuz to the Black Sea and Sea of Azov – resulting in the deaths of dozens of innocent seafarers, and the disruption of global trade and critical supply chains.

Against this backdrop, the IMO continues to highlight the importance of upholding and implementing the international regulatory framework that keeps shipping safe, secure and efficient, while protecting the people who work at sea.



IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez seen here with IFSMA Secretary General at IMO HQ, September 2026.

In his official message to mark the day, IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez said: *'This year's World Maritime Day theme, From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence, recognizes the reality that regulations will deliver safer, more resilient, and cleaner shipping when they are implemented worldwide.'*

'Implementation must make a difference where it matters most - for the people working at sea. Seafarers come first. Always.'

Video-recording

A video-recording is available of the Secretary-General's address by using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/6u7dh2up>

The World Maritime Day theme spans 2026 and 2027, allowing Member States and partners to focus on turning global policy decisions into practical outcomes.

This includes translating IMO regulations into national legislation, strengthening enforcement, and enhancing training.

Closing the implementation gap

A central part of IMO's work is in supporting Member States to implement IMO regulations effectively.

This year, IMO completed the first audit cycle under the IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS). Since the scheme became mandatory in 2016, 168 Member States (94% of the membership) have been audited on how effectively they meet their obligations under key IMO instruments.

The findings revealed that many countries still struggle to translate IMO rules into national law, with shortage of technical expertise and infrastructure, and weak oversight of ships being key challenges.

Based on this information, IMO will target technical assistance where it is needed most – including in

Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States.

Implementation, capacity and technical cooperation

Effective implementation of international regulations ultimately hinges on capacity at national and local levels.

IMO support

IMO supports countries through:

- Technical assistance to draft or update national legislation, establish administrative frameworks, and strengthen enforcement.
- Training programmes for administrations, ports and seafarers, supported by regional centres and partnerships.
- Peer learning and knowledge exchange, through IMO projects, programmes and global networks.

WMD theme

The World Maritime Day theme focuses on practical implementation across key areas of IMO's work, including:

- Safety and new technologies
- Preparing shipping for decarbonization
- Tackling fraudulent ship registration and maritime fraud
- Facilitation, digitalization and resilience
- Cyber security and maritime security
- Marine environment protection beyond carbon

Secretary-General Dominguez invited all Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to also join the initiative by lighting up prominent buildings in blue.

Everyone has been encouraged to share photos or stories on social media, showing how maritime policy is being put into practice, using the hashtags #WorldMaritimeDay and #MaritimePolicytoPractice.

Informative links

To find out more about World Maritime Day 2026-2027 readers are invited to use the link here:

<https://tinyurl.com/ye237kwv>

To read a message issued on World Maritime Day from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, see here: <https://tinyurl.com/5e8dnra5>

Thirty years of oil spill preparedness and response

The IMO-Ipieca* Global Initiative celebrates

This year marks thirty years since the Global Initiative (GI)¹ was established to support the implementation of

IMO's International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation². Throughout that time, the GI has helped to prevent and minimise the impact of spills on the marine environment, protect local communities and ensure the safety of maritime workers.



How the GI works

The GI brings together governments, through the IMO, and the oil and gas industry, through Ipieca, to work together in developing national structures and capability for oil spill preparedness and response. It does this through:

- Preparedness and response exercises, workshops and conferences Supporting the development of marine spill contingency plans.
- Supporting the development of marine spill contingency plans.
- The promotion and implementation of conventions and agreements related to spill preparedness and response.

In the words of Patricia Charlebois, Deputy Director, Marine Environment Division, IMO: *'For thirty years, through the GI, the IMO has stood alongside Ipieca, a partnership built on a simple idea that preventing and responding to oil spills is stronger when governments and industry work together.'*

Brian Sullivan, CEO, Ipieca, added: *'Thirty years is a long time for any partnership to last. What makes the IMO-Ipieca Global Initiative so special is that it has endured because it does something very practical and very necessary. It brings government and industry together before incidents happen, and it helps countries strengthen their preparedness systems.'*

Where the GI operates

There are three GI programmes world-wide, focused on high-risk areas where the environmental and socio-economic impacts of spills could be severe:

- The GI for West, Central and Southern Africa (GI WACAF) <https://www.giwacaf.net/en/>

- The GI for South East Asia (GI SEA) <https://gisea.org/>
- The Oil Spill Preparedness Regional Initiative (OSPRI) for the Black Sea, Caspian Sea and Central Eurasia <https://www.ospri.online/>

Key highlights

- 5,200+ people trained and 22 country national contingency plans supported by GI WACAF.
- GI SEA assisted with the adoption and implementation of the regional ASEAN Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan and subregional Dispersant.
- The ratification rate of four key IMO spill related conventions has risen from 28% to 73% in the OSPRI region.

Collaboration remains key to spill prevention, preparedness and response

Key to the success of the GI is the understanding that spills cross borders and a major response is too big and complex for any one party to handle on its own. Through the GI's convening power and programme of activities marine spill decision makers know each other, understand where responsibilities lie and are ready to work together.

The GI has endured for three decades because spill prevention, preparedness and response are stronger when government and industry work together. The work the GI does remains as important today as when it began thirty years ago.

*International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association.

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/5baysptu>

² <https://tinyurl.com/2fb265we>

Ukraine enhancing maritime safety

Special Maritime Corridor operations

Ukraine is reinforcing its maritime safety, security, trade and environmental protection capacity as it continues to operate the Special Maritime Corridor in the Black Sea.

An inception workshop held in Lviv, Ukraine from 8-10 September launched the implementation of an IMO project funded by the United Kingdom, France and the European Union, in line with IMO Assembly resolution A.1183(33)*.

The project, ***Enhancing Maritime Safety, Security, Environmental Protection and Trade Facilitation as Ukraine continues to operate the Special Maritime Corridor in the Black Sea***, supports Ukraine's implementation of relevant IMO instruments and helps ensure the safe and secure operation of the corridor.

The event brought together representatives of Ukrainian ministries, public authorities and State-owned entities across the maritime and inland waterway sectors, the United Kingdom, France and the European Union, IMO and technical experts.

Establishing technical cooperation to support Ukraine

The project is based on a needs assessment conducted in consultation with Ukraine and contributing Member States, as requested by the IMO Assembly.

The assessment identified three priority areas:

- Assessing priority maritime safety infrastructure and equipment needs.
- Strengthening marine pollution preparedness and response capacity.
- Facilitating maritime traffic.

Together, these three components will contribute to the safe, secure and efficient operation of Ukraine's Special Maritime Corridor.

Aligning priorities for project implementation

Workshop participants reviewed the project's objectives, expected results and implementation arrangements. The discussions clarified roles and responsibilities, expectations and working relationships between the project partners. Participants also developed a risk and mitigation matrix to support the delivery of planned activities.

The workshop laid the groundwork for activities on marine pollution preparedness and response, as well as measures to facilitate maritime traffic.

Comment

In the words of Mr Yaroslav Iliasevych, Head of the Maritime and Inland Water Transport Department of the Ministry of Recovery, Infrastructure and Transport of Ukraine: *'This special maritime corridor requires a higher level of protection of human life and the environment. The direction by the IMO Assembly to assist Ukraine, together with the sincere discussions held in Lviv, provide an effective means of addressing these needs.'*

Mr Jose Matheickal, Director of the Technical Cooperation and Implementation Division of IMO, added: *'This workshop marked an important transition for the practical implementation of the Project's activities. Our discussions over the three days have provided a clear way forward and will guide our efforts towards achieving the objectives of the Project.'*

Next phase of implementation

The next phase will deliver comprehensive capacity-building and technical assistance to support the development of a national contingency plan and marine pollution legislation.

Finally, a workshop will be dedicated to the implementation of the Facilitation Convention and the strengthening of port clearance procedures.

* <https://tinyurl.com/5aexmeu8>

Black Sea and Caspian Sea littoral States

Maritime Single Window implementation

A regional workshop in Batumi, Georgia held from 9-11 September brought together maritime, port and customs authorities from countries bordering the Black Sea and Caspian Sea to exchange experience and identify practical steps for implementing Maritime Single Windows (MSWs).



MSW

A Maritime Single Window⁴ is a centralized digital platform for exchanging information between ships and public authorities when ships call at ports. Since 2024, IMO Member States have been required to operate MSWs in ports, helping to simplify reporting formalities and make ship clearance more efficient.

Sharing experience across the region

The workshop saw nineteen participants, including seven women, from maritime administrations, port authorities and customs agencies in Georgia, Romania, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

Participants shared national experiences, progress and challenges in developing MSWs and Port Community Systems. Country presentations provided an opportunity to compare approaches and identify practical solutions that can be adapted to different national contexts.

Discussions also highlighted the importance of cooperation between maritime, customs and port authorities, as well as the need for harmonized approaches to digital maritime data exchange.

Towards more connected maritime services

Participants explored how the IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business² can support interoperability and harmonization of data exchanged through digital systems.

The workshop examined the wider benefits of MSW implementation, including streamlined reporting, improved coordination between border agencies and port stakeholders, greater operational efficiency and enhanced trade facilitation.

By sharing lessons learned and practical solutions, the workshop strengthened regional cooperation and institutional capacity to support digitalization across the littoral States of the Black Sea and Caspian Sea.

ITCP

The activity was delivered through IMO's Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme³ in close cooperation with the Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia⁴.

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/3yknt3zz>

² <https://tinyurl.com/yax5wym4>

³ <https://tinyurl.com/bdz3xpsn>

⁴ <https://www.mta.gov.ge/en>

Hazardous waste management

Bangladesh advances plans

Government ministers in Bangladesh have welcomed efforts to establish the country's first Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facility (TSDF) for hazardous waste, supported by a comprehensive feasibility study led by IMO's SENSREC Project¹.

The TSDF, planned for the Mirsarai Economic Zone, will be used to safely treat and dispose of hazardous industrial waste, including waste from ship recycling.

Inter-ministerial briefing

During a high-level inter-ministerial briefing organised by SENSREC in Dhaka on 31 August, Bangladeshi Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change Mr Shaikh Faridul Islam and Minister of Industries, Mr Khandaker Abdul Muktadir expressed their strong support for the facility.

They highlighted that safe, compliant hazardous waste-management was essential for a fast-growing industrial economy. The proposed facility would provide critical infrastructure for the many industries operating in the Mirsarai area, even beyond ship recycling.

Meeting obligations

Speaking on behalf of IMO, SENSREC Project Coordinator Mr John Alonso added that without the TSDF, Bangladesh's ship recycling industry would not be able to fully meet its obligations under the Hong

Kong Convention² and the Basel Convention³ — the international treaties governing safe and environmentally sound ship recycling and hazardous waste management.

Technical analysis, stakeholder consultations, and engagement

The feasibility study, presented by expert team lead Mr Sumiyuki Otsuki, was based on nearly a year of technical analysis, stakeholder consultations, and engagement with relevant ministries and government bodies.



It covered the proposed facility's configuration, site selection, waste stream analysis, financing options, and the regulatory pathway to construction and operation.

Government officials attending the briefing agreed that commitment and funding must translate the study's findings into concrete action on the ground.

About SENSREC

The SENSREC Project is implemented by IMO with financial support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It aims to support the safe and environmentally sound recycling of ships in Bangladesh in line with the requirements of the Hong Kong Convention.

1 <https://sensrec.imo.org/>

2 <https://tinyurl.com/rt3fuwxp>

3 <https://tinyurl.com/4u9nvmrf>

IMO Secretary-General mourns seafarers

Killed during rescue of hijacked ship

While three hijacked vessels have been freed after months in captivity, five seafarers have reportedly died in the crossfire of rescue operations.

IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez has expressed his condolences and reiterated his tireless call on the international community to do more to protect seafarers, following reports of the deaths of five crew members during an operation to free the hijacked vessel *Honour 25* in the Gulf of Aden region.

Honour 25 was one of three vessels released in week ending 3 October, along with the *Seamull (Sibu 1)* and *Eureka*, which were held captive by pirates and armed robbers since they were seized between April and August 2026:

Secretary-General Dominguez said: *'It is troubling to have to make these statements so often, and even more difficult to convey in words how distressing it is continuously hear that seafarers are losing their lives simply for doing their jobs.'*

'I am deeply saddened to learn of the tragic loss of five seafarers during the rescue of the Honour 25 on 29 September, in Somali waters. I offer my heartfelt condolences to their families, friends and fellow crew members.'



In total, 44 seafarers were freed from three hijacked vessels: Honour25, Seamull (Sibu 1) and Eureka in rescue operations in the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden region.

'Several seafarers were also seriously injured. I will keep urging all those responsible for their care and welfare to ensure they receive the treatment and support they need as they recover from this traumatic ordeal.'

Vessels and seafarers freed

'There is some relief that the remaining crew of the Honour 25 have been freed. The crews of two other vessels held captive in the same area – the Seamull (also known as Sibu 1) and the MT Eureka– were also released during similar operations.'

'I thank the Government of Somalia for their efforts in securing their release.'

'We must not forget the 22 seafarers who remain in captivity onboard the Asana, which was also taken hostage by pirates and armed robbers earlier this'

year. Every effort must continue to secure their safe release.'

Stop piracy

Secretary-General Dominguez further stated: *'We have come together to stop piracy in this region before. We must do it again – with renewed resolve, targeted cooperation and the required resources – because seafarers should not have to lose their lives for the service they provide for the world. The measures and best practices are there, and remain relevant, let's focus on implementing them.'*

He highlighted discussions he held at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at the end of September and in Brussels earlier this month, where ensuring maritime security was a key topic of shared interest.

He called on Governments to bring new initiatives, such as the *Group of Friends of Safety and Security of Shipping and Seafarers* to IMO for appropriate follow-up and stressed the importance of the EUNAVFOR Aspides and Atalanta operations for safeguarding maritime security in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Western Indian Ocean region.

IMO actions

IMO continues to engage with the relevant authorities, including the flag States of the vessels concerned, to support the safety and well-being of seafarers, including those who remain in captivity.

It is well-known that IMO continues to strengthen the capacity of countries in the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden to boost regional maritime security through the Djibouti Code of Conduct initiative.

Furthermore, IMO urges vessels operating in the region to conduct thorough security risk assessments to avoid exposing crews to avoidable dangers, and implement the Best Management Practices developed by the industry as well as relevant IMO guidance.

The challenges for implementing MASS

A paper delivered by Captain Andrew Cook, Secretary General of IFSMA, at the Global Compass International Maritime Forum held at Varna, Bulgaria on 8 and 9th September 2026.

(IFSMA ©)

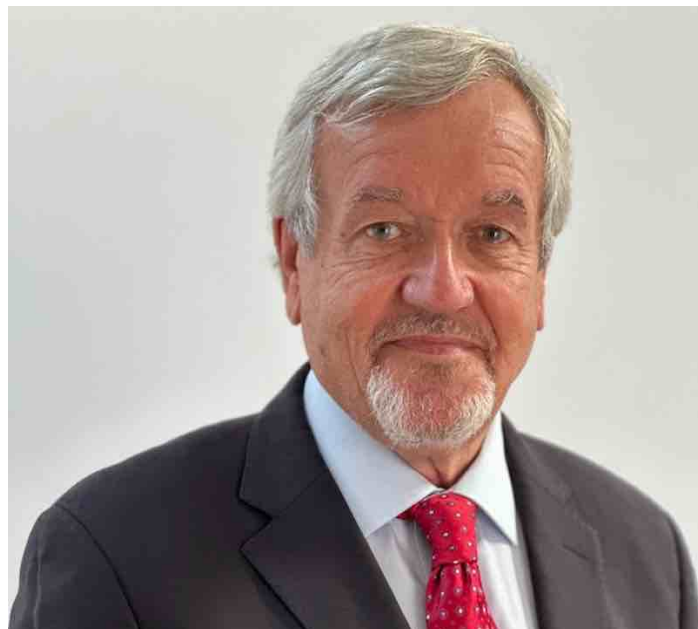
Key Message

Shipping is becoming highly digitalised, automated and connected, but technology does not remove human responsibility. Risk will still need to be managed. The future of safe shipping depends on giving seafarers the competence, authority, situational awareness and support to understand, challenge and intervene when technology does not behave as required.

The Challenge

The maritime industry is changing on several fronts simultaneously. Geopolitical instability and security threats are increasing operational complexity; decarbonisation is introducing new fuels and systems; automation and artificial intelligence are changing how ships are operated; connectivity is creating both opportunity and cyber exposure; and regulatory and administrative demands continue to grow.

The important point from the shipmaster's perspective is that none of these developments removes the human element. They make it more important.



A shipmaster is increasingly responsible for managing a complex socio-technical system in which people, software, sensors, communications, procedures and machinery must work together. The regulatory landscape is also moving rapidly. In May 2026, the International Maritime Organization adopted the first global International Code of Safety for Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS Code), which took effect on 1 July 2026. The Code addresses the safe integration of remotely controlled and autonomous commercial ships and recognises the need to consider roles and responsibilities, operation, training and human involvement. IFSMA sat on the IMO Working Group that developed the MASS Code. (International Maritime Organization)

The challenge, therefore, is not simply how to automate shipping. It is how to ensure that the human being ultimately responsible for safety remains capable of making the right decision when the unexpected happens.

Key Insight

My central observation is straightforward: **automation does not remove risk — it changes where the risk sits.**

The progression from conventional operation through increasing automation, remote operation and ultimately autonomous operation, raises the same fundamental question at every stage: **where does responsibility sit, and does the person carrying that responsibility still have the authority and competence to act?**

The new MASS Code provides an important regulatory milestone. IMO describes it as a goal-based framework intended to support the safe integration of remotely controlled and autonomous commercial ships while maintaining safety, security and environmental protection standards equivalent to those expected of conventional ships. It also requires different modes of operation to be identified and addresses the roles and responsibilities of masters, remote operators and onboard personnel according to the level of autonomy. (International Maritime Organization)

From an IFSMA perspective, this leads to a critical principle: **if we retain the master's responsibility, we must also retain the master's authority, competence, understanding and ability to intervene.**

There is a paradox at the heart of automation. The better an automated system becomes, the less frequently a human may need to intervene. Yet when intervention is finally required, the circumstances may be more complex and the consequences more serious.

Three risks follow

First is **skill degradation**. If a system performs a task successfully almost all the time, how do we maintain the human's ability to perform that task when the system fails?

Second is **automation bias or complacency**. When a machine appears confident, will the human challenge its recommendation when circumstances suggest that it is wrong?

Third is **loss of situational awareness**. Can the person supervising the system genuinely understand what it is doing, why it is doing it and what its limitations are?

This changes the question we should ask about artificial intelligence. It should not simply be whether AI can make a better decision than a human. The more important question is whether the human understands enough about the AI's decision to accept it, reject it or override it.

Competence therefore has to evolve with technology. Shipmasters and Deck Officers need experience not only with traditional navigation but also with decision-support systems, autonomous functions and AI-generated information. Engineer Officers increasingly need knowledge of software, sensors, networks, automation and cyber-physical systems. And all seafarers need stronger understanding of cybersecurity and human factors.

Training must consequently cover automation management, monitoring, intervention and takeover, degraded modes, human-machine interfaces, fatigue, workload and decision-making under uncertainty.

Finally, technological progress must not be confused with human wellbeing. Technology may reduce workload while increasing cognitive workload. Connectivity can reduce isolation while simultaneously creating an expectation of being permanently connected to shore. A technologically advanced ship is not necessarily a psychologically healthy ship.

From Vision to Action

The responsibility for creating a human-centred future for shipping is shared. **Regulators such as IMO and flag state administrations, classification societies, shipowners, operators, technology developers, training organisations and seafarers themselves all have a role.**

Regulators should ensure that new frameworks for autonomous and remotely operated ships are matched by clear definitions of responsibility, authority, competence and intervention. The MASS Code is an important beginning, but its experience-building phase should be used to identify where rules, training standards and operational assumptions need further development. IMO itself describes the current Code as non-mandatory and intends the experience-building process to inform development of a future mandatory framework. (International Maritime Organization)

Shipowners and operators should stop treating training as something that follows technology. Competence needs to be designed alongside the technology. Before introducing increasingly autonomous functions, operators should identify what the human is expected to do during normal operation, degraded operation and emergency intervention — and then train accordingly.

Technology developers have an equally important responsibility. Systems should be designed around the human who has to supervise, understand and, when necessary, override them. Interfaces should communicate uncertainty and limitations rather than simply present an apparently authoritative answer. Automation should support professional judgement rather than encourage passive acceptance.

Training institutions should develop a new competence model for the future shipmaster and chief engineer. Simulator-based training should expose seafarers to automation failures, degraded communications, conflicting information, cyber disruption and situations in which the correct response depends upon recognising that an automated recommendation is wrong.

Finally, responsibility must be matched by resources. It is not enough to tell a

master that they remain ultimately responsible. They must have the people, information, training, equipment, communications and authority required to discharge that responsibility.

The objective should not be to make the human irrelevant. It should be to make the human more capable.

That means designing technology, regulation and training around the reality of maritime operations: when the unexpected happens — and at sea, it always does — someone must understand the situation, understand the consequences and have both the competence and authority to act.

Three Actionable Takeaways

What should change?

Design automation around human capability, not human replacement. Every new system should

explicitly identify the human role, intervention points, failure modes and information required for safe decision-making.

Who should act?

Regulators, shipowners, technology developers and training providers must act together. No single organisation can create a safe autonomous operating environment because responsibility, technology, competence and regulation are inseparable.

What can be achieved?

A future-ready maritime workforce can be created without being anti-technology. With appropriate training, authority and human-centred design, digitalisation can make seafarers more capable, improve safety and support more resilient operations.

About the author

Andrew Cook FNI is Secretary General of the International Federation of Shipmasters' Associations (IFSMA). A former shipmaster, he brings extensive experience in global ship operations, ship management, crew management and crew welfare.

He is a Fellow of the Nautical Institute and has contributed to industry work through the INTERTANKO Human Element Committee. He represents shipmasters globally at IMO and other international forums. (nautilusint.org)

World Trade Organization, Annual Report 2026

Introduction

The overall objective of the Geneva-based World Trade Organization (WTO) is to help its members use trade as a means to raise living standards, create jobs and improve people's lives.

The WTO operates the global system of trade rules and helps developing economies build their trade capacity. It also provides a forum for its members to

negotiate trade agreements and to resolve the trade problems they face with each other.

Document of 150-pages

On 9 September the WTO published its 2026 Annual Report, providing a comprehensive account of the organization's activities in 2025 and the early part of 2026. The Report looks back at recent key events, such as the 14th Ministerial Conference in March 2026, and describes the WTO's work in addressing the challenges and opportunities facing world trade.

To quote from the report's Introduction it is noted that recent conflicts from the war in Ukraine to the Iran war are having major effects on the prices and availability of energy, food and other vital commodities.

In her opening message, Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala commented: *'The global trading system continues to face challenges on a scale*

unseen since it was established 80 years ago in the wake of the Second World War. Alongside rapid technological change and rising geopolitical tensions, the world seems to move from one crisis to the next.

'And yet global trade showed considerable resilience in 2025...World merchandise trade grew by 4.6 per cent, in volume terms...Services trade grew by 5.3 per cent, also in volume terms...WTO rules continue to play an important role in underpinning this resilience: around 72 per cent of global goods trade continues to flow on the core most-favoured-nation tariff terms members commit to at the WTO.'

'In response to the Strait of Hormuz crisis, countries responded more with trade-facilitating rather than trade-restrictive measures...This approach, which stands in contrast to initial responses to other recent crises, shows how an interconnected trading system can help to bring about resilience when the world is tested by conflict. It demonstrates the importance of cooperation among governments, international organizations and the private sector to mitigate the impacts of crises. It also demonstrates the need for information-sharing in fora such as the WTO.'



The Report provides detailed accounts of the WTO's various areas of activity over the past year. It also includes information on the organization's structure, staff and budget.

A copy of the 150-page report is available using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/3dt5sbez>

WTO predictions

WTO economists have predicted that world trade will slow in 2026, and that the conflict in the Middle East could worsen the outlook by raising energy prices and disrupting trade flows. Trade forecasts will be updated by WTO with further analysis, including on the impact of supply disruptions in the Persian Gulf, at regular intervals.

Strait of Hormuz Trade Tracker

For further information readers may be aware of the WTO-AXSMarine Strait of Hormuz Trade Tracker. This offers offers daily, near real-time insight into key commodity flows through, or affected by developments in the Strait of Hormuz, drawing on AXSMarine vessel-tracking data and WTO trade intelligence.

There is a link to be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/yz8ej9t7>

AXSMarine

AXSMarine (Signal Group) is a global provider of maritime and commodity data intelligence with more than 18,000 users worldwide. Its global coverage of seaborne trade, including dry bulk tanker/gas and liner cargoes provides real-time insights into worldwide trade flows, allowing for detailed analysis at the port and terminal level. With an advanced digital ecosystem, it harnesses data to offer cutting-edge solutions for the shipping and commodity industries and public authorities. See also the website here: www.axsmarine.com

Activism the replacement religion

By Michael Grey, Honorary IFSMA Member

The doorbell rang just as I had taken a huge bite of my lunchtime sandwich. I opened the door to find a young man festooned in lanyards and wearing a T-shirt revealing himself to be an environmental activist. Hi-how are you? - he enquired, oblivious to a large sign adjacent to the door designed to discourage cold-callers from our premises. Those soliciting financial donations consider themselves to be superior to your average caller wanting to tarmac your drive, or fix the roof. I don't usually exchange more than a few curt words with folk from this well-known organisation, other than pointing out that as a former professional mariner, I consider the direct action which is their trademark, is just one step removed from piracy or terrorism.

He revealed himself to be a former MN cadet, who had decided that seafaring was not for him, so I was interested to learn more about his transfer into the ranks of environmental activism. His particular compulsion was the degradation of corals through bottom trawling and he seemed well informed on the subject, which is not something anyone should take lightly. For my part, I told him about an incident which had occurred to an old shipmate, when he was master of a very large laden bulk carrier, manoeuvring off a lock on a narrow tidal window. The pilot had asked for

the starboard anchor to be lowered to the bottom to arrest the swing, when the Chief Officer transmitted the alarming news that there were some idiots in a rubber boat under the bow and a maniac in a high-viz jacket had attached himself to the cable. My visitor's brief cadetship was sufficient to permit him to agree that a stunt of this kind, with the ship at risk of grounding and causing massive pollution, was one reason why shipmasters strongly disapprove of his organisation, to put it mildly. My old shipmate said that it had aged him ten years in half an hour, while the police dragged the ecoterrorist to safety.

But you never really convince people so subsumed with their own virtue that reason and common sense are completely absent. Such protests, which risk life and limb, serious accident, vast chaos and confusion are now so frequent that they rarely are more than a nuisance. You can't argue with someone bawling just stop oil! through a loud hailer, just where you want to cross the road. However, extrapolating this noisy zeal to risking the wreck of an 80,000dwt coal carrier is something else, but all seems to have the same miserable equivalence in their warped mindset. If you object to their cause, which has been instilled into their minds from infancy by Leftist teachers, you are undoubtedly evil. You might say that protest is a sacred right in any democratic country, although such a declaration is probably wearing a bit thin through overuse. Goodness, they have just made a film about the Peasants' Revolt, when the protesters butchered the Archbishop of Canterbury to reinforce their claims. But circa 2026, there seem to be an awful lot of them, with scarcely a weekend when London is not blocked up with hate marches, farmers' tractors and thousands protesting about gender causes.

Even during the working week, there are sufficient numbers of activists able to shriek about carbon outside the IMO offices in Lambeth, enthused by the attractive notion that 60,000 merchant vessels can be switched over to some innocuous and sweet-smelling no-carbon fuel, at the touch of a button. Reason seems often in short supply, and it is not an original thought to point out that activists of every stripe are very selective about the causes for which they are willing to be active. It has been observed, for instance, that it is difficult to find a protester outside the IMO building, who will confess to be remotely activated by maritime safety, which was the purpose of the organisation in the first place.

Thousands are galvanised by Gaza and the actions of Israel, but remain unmoved by Sudan, or so many other horrors, all over the world, perpetrated by governments to which democracy is a dirty word. Nobody appeared to be marching in support of the 6000 seafarers who are still immured aboard vessels stuck behind the Strait of Hormuz, or to mourn the lives of those killed and badly injured by missiles and drones. But as it has frequently been pointed out, seafarers are on the waves, but don't make them.

Michael Grey is former editor of *Lloyd's List*.

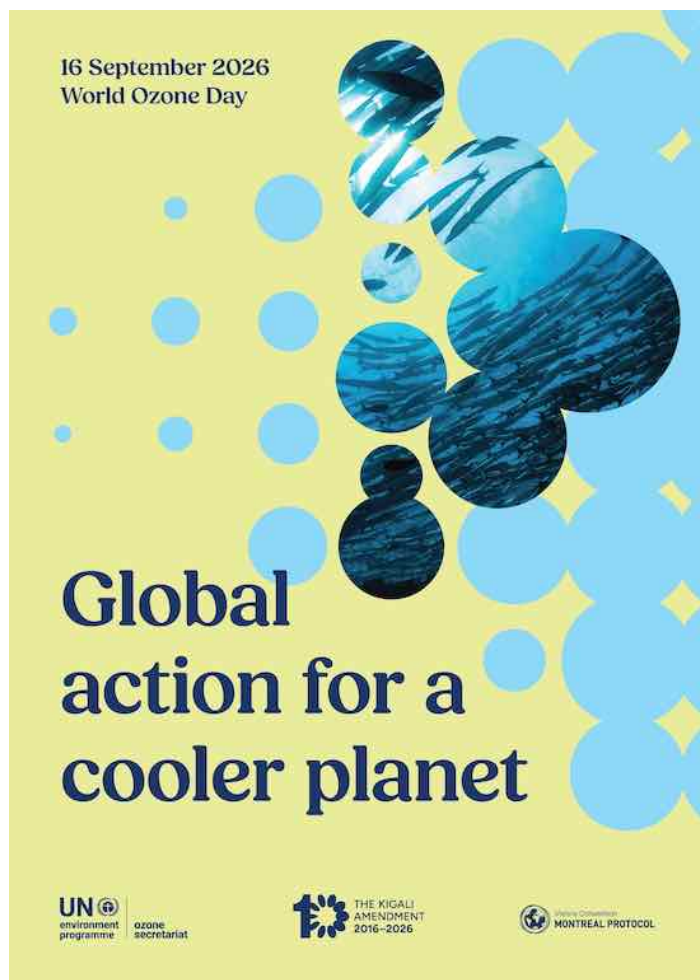
This article was first published in *The Maritime Advocate Online* No 916 of 11 September 2026 and appears here by kind permission of the author and of the editor.

Preservation of the ozone layer

UN action

United Nations International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer fell on 16 September and highlighted its important role in protecting life on Earth from harmful ultraviolet radiation.

The Antarctic ozone hole typically reaches its maximum extent between mid-September and early October.



In 2026, by the end of August, its area was already larger than that of Antarctica. The hole then grew rapidly, reaching about 25 million km² on 12 September, around 5 million km² above the average for this time of the year.

Forecasts from the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS) indicated that the extent of the hole may further growth.

These CAMS visualisations shown here indicate the evolution of the Antarctic ozone hole from 1 August to 12 September 2026.

More information is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/32c2f7fb>

Monitoring of the ozone layer

The ozone layer protects life on Earth from harmful solar ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

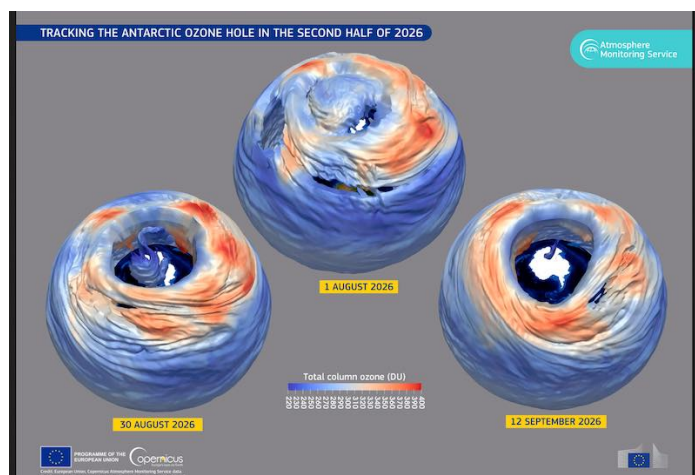
In the late 20th century, human emissions of chemicals known as ozone-depleting substances (ODSs), in particular halocarbons, adversely affected the amount of ozone molecules in the atmosphere, most notably resulting in the dramatic annual ozone hole over the Antarctic region.

Montreal Protocol

The Montreal Protocol, which was signed in 1987 and came into force in 1989, has curbed the amount of ODSs in the atmosphere, resulting in the slow recovery of the ozone layer. CAMS combines measurements from satellite instruments with its numerical models of the atmosphere to provide quality-assured information about the state of the ozone layer.

Complex processes

Reduction of ozone concentrations in the stratosphere and the formation of the Antarctic ozone hole each year are caused by complex meteorological and chemical processes.



The Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service supports continuous monitoring of the ozone layer, providing both observations and forecasts.

For more information

With regard to International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer there

is introductory material to be found using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/yfeaynw9>

Illustration per www.Copernicus.eu

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After the hurricane

USCG restores aids to navigation

Reopens Hawaii harbors

On 17 September the US Coast Guard Oceania District reported from Honolulu that staff had restored critical aids to navigation across the Hawaiian Islands from 9 to 15 September following Hurricane Lowell.

The Service was supporting the reopening of several harbors and the safe movement of maritime traffic.

Hurricane Lowell affected eleven aids to navigation throughout the islands, prompting the closure of Port Allen on Kauai and Kaunalā Harbor on Lanai due to in-water hazards and discrepancies with aids to navigation. Both ports were placed in Port Condition: Recovery.

Coast Guard crews conducted dive operations, repositioned damaged aids to navigation and delivered equipment to restore safe access to affected waterways.

On Kauai, divers from Regional Dive Locker Pacific completed fourteen dives with support from Coast Guard Station Kauai and the crew of Coast Guard Cutter *William Hart*. Crew of Coast Guard Cutter *Juniper* also provided an aids to navigation positioner to support restoration efforts.



Illustration kindly provided by US Coast Guard Oceania District Public Affairs Office. USCG ©.

On Oahu, divers from Regional Dive Locker Pacific completed ten dives with support from Coast Guard Station Honolulu and Coast Guard Cutter *Hollyhock*.

Throughout the response crews recovered, repositioned, marked, and re-established critical aids to navigation. They also conducted side-scan sonar sweeps of Port Allen Harbor to check for submerged hazards.

Multiple HC-130 Hercules crews from Air Station Barbers Point delivered personnel and equipment to Lanai to facilitate dive operations and support efforts to repair Kaunalā Harbor.

Restoration efforts supported the Coast Guard Captain of the Port's official reopening of Port Allen and Nawiliwili Harbor on Kauai and restored safe access for commercial, military, cruise-ship, and other maritime traffic.

Equipment delivered to Lanai supported the official reopening of Kaunalā Harbor, Lanai, while the removal of Honolulu Harbor Lighted Buoy 4 from the navigation channel supported reopening Honolulu Harbor to deep-draft vessels.

To quote Commander Andrew Williams, Coast Guard Sector Honolulu: *'Maintaining aids to navigation, especially after a storm like Hurricane Lowell, is essential for the flow of commerce throughout the Hawaiian Islands'*

'We are proud of the exceptional work of our crews and our partners at the Hawaii Department of Transportation for their work to reopen critical harbors and safeguard the flow of maritime traffic.'

Maritime security and freedom of navigation

ICS S-G addresses UN Security Council

It was announced from New York on 18 September that Secretary General of the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), Thomas A Kazakos, addressed the United Nations Security Council on the critical importance of protecting maritime security, freedom of navigation, and the established international legal framework governing the world's oceans, in New York the previous day, 17 September.

Arria-Formula meeting

The ICS was invited to brief an Arria-Formula meeting of the UN Security Council, convened by the Kingdom of Bahrain and chaired by Bahrain's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Abdullatif Al Zayani. Arria-Formula meetings are informal gatherings that allow individuals and organisations to engage in direct dialogue with members of the UN Security Council (UNSC).

This meeting brought UN representatives and invited guests together to discuss the deteriorating maritime security environment amid heightened geopolitical tensions, with particular focus on the security situation in the Persian Gulf.

Profound consequences

Representing the international shipping industry, Thomas Kazakos outlined the profound consequences that insecurity at sea has for seafarers, ships, global trade, and the wider international economy.

Fundamental principle of freedom of navigation

The ICS Secretary General emphasised the fundamental principle of freedom of navigation and stated: *'The ability of commercial ships to navigate international waterways safely, predictably and without unnecessary impediment, is crucial to international maritime law and to the global trade system... Shipping must not be held to ransom.'*

Disruption has been extraordinary

'The current situation in the Strait of Hormuz and surrounding region demonstrates the importance of this issue. It is one of the world's most critical arteries of international commerce, carrying approximately one quarter of global seaborne oil trade, as well as major volumes of LNG and fertilisers. The ongoing disruption has been extraordinary.'

Navigation must be respected

ICS stressed commercial vessels and their crews must not become collateral to wider political or military disputes, and the established international rules governing navigation must be respected.



ICS Secretary General, Thomas A. Kazakos, addressing an Arria-Formula meeting of the UN Security Council.

Kazakos added: *'Straits cannot become a place where commercial shipping is required to obtain permission, negotiate passage, or accept arbitrary restrictions, simply because geopolitical tensions have escalated. This is not a privilege to be granted or withdrawn according to the political circumstances of the day.'*

Human cost

The meeting also provided an opportunity to highlight the human cost of the deteriorating security environment.

Kazakos continued: *'Seafarers are transporting food, energy, medicines, raw materials and essential goods to communities around the world. They are civilians. They are not parties to geopolitical conflicts, and their welfare is of the utmost importance.'*

In conclusion

In closing his address Kazakos called for a return to freedom of navigation, reaffirmed the stance that international straits must not become toll roads, and that merchant ships and seafarers must not be held to ransom.

Secretary-General Kazakos concluded by saying: *'The International Chamber of Shipping welcomed the opportunity to brief members of the Security Council and reiterated the shipping industry's commitment to working with governments and international organisations to strengthen maritime security and protect the principles on which global trade depends. I would like to sincerely thank the Kingdom of Bahrain and His Excellency Dr Al Zayani for their kind invitation.'*

Recording

A link to the recorded meeting can be found UN Web TV here: <https://tinyurl.com/bdfe2a2m>

USCG conducts complex, long-range medical evacuation

100 miles east of St. Maarten

It was announced from San Juan, Puerto Rico, that Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen aircrew medevaced a 46-year-old mariner on the morning of 19 September from a commercial motor vessel approximately 100 nautical miles east of St. Maarten.

The patient, who was suffering from a rapidly progressing infection, was safely hoisted aboard an MH-60T Jayhawk helicopter and transported to the Centro Médico Hospital trauma center in San Juan, Puerto Rico, for emergency specialized care.

Rescue Sub-Center San Juan watchstanders were initially notified on the night of 16 September when the master of the mv *Kotka*, a 1,083-foot Liberian-flagged container ship, reported that a crew member was suffering from a severe, non-ambulatory infection that was unresponsive to onboard medication.

Vessel beyond operational reach

At the time of the initial notification, the *Kotka* was positioned more than 1,300 nautical miles east of the Lesser Antilles, well beyond the operational reach of land-based rescue helicopters and days away from port.

Phased operational plan; maximum speed transit

To overcome the extreme maritime distance and tight medical timeline, Coast Guard search and rescue coordinators formulated a phased operational plan that involved *Kotka* increasing to maximum transit speed toward a designated rendezvous position east of the Leeward Islands.

Meanwhile, Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen pre-positioned an MH-60T Jayhawk helicopter crew in Sint Maarten on the afternoon of 18 September to shorten the distance for the medevac. A Coast Guard Air

Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry maritime patrol aircraft also launched out of Miami to provide continuous communications relay, navigation assistance, and top-cover air escort.

At approximately 100 nautical miles east of St. Maarten, the Jayhawk aircrew arrived on scene with *Kotka*. A Coast Guard rescue swimmer was deployed to the vessel's deck, and he worked with the ship's crew to prepare and safely hoist the mariner aboard the aircraft.



Illustration per USCG South East District Public Affairs. Reproduced with grateful thanks. USCG ©

Following the hoist, the helicopter crew completed the transit across the northeastern Caribbean, and they landed at the Base San Juan helipad, where awaiting trauma emergency medical service personnel received the patient and completed his transport to the Centro Medico Hospital in San Juan.

Great credit

Lieutenant (JG) Haley Goodfellow, Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen MH-60T Jayhawk helicopter copilot for the case reported: *'This morning was a display of exceptional teamwork by Sector San Juan, several foreign partners, Centro Medico Hospital personnel, and Air Stations Borinquen and Miami to safely transport this mariner patient to a higher level of care.'*

Captain Robert E Stiles, Coast Guard search and rescue mission coordinator for the case added: *'Our team was at its best throughout the complex execution of this multi-day rescue.'*

'We commend our aircrew for getting the aircraft on scene to rescue a ship's crew member and get him to a shoreside medical facility for the higher level of care he required. We are hopeful he will make a full recovery.'

'I am so proud to have the honor of working with the aircrews from Air Station Borinquen and Air Station Miami, as well as our Sector Command Center watchstanders. They are all true search and rescue professionals who make the success of difficult cases like this possible.'

Vital support executed

The operation was executed with vital support from US Customs and Border Protection Office of Field Operations (CBP-OFO), Puerto Rico Emergency Medical Services, Centro Médico personnel, and the shipping agent for mv *Kotka*.

Ocean Network Express (ONE)



Sustainability Report 2026

It was reported from Singapore on 21 September that Ocean Network Express (ONE) has published its Sustainability Report 2026, covering the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

This report highlights ONE's progress and initiatives across four sustainability pillars: Environment, Operational Excellence, Social, and Governance.

ONE's 2026 Report details the actions the group is taking to integrate sustainability across its business and operations, from accelerating decarbonisation and strengthening responsible practices to driving innovation. These initiatives reflect ONE's commitment to creating long-term value and contributing to a more sustainable maritime industry.

Key highlights of the report include:

Environment

ONE achieved a 65% reduction in Scope 1 emissions intensity against its 2008 baseline. ONE also joined the Ship Recycling Transparency Initiative (SRTI), and expanded the scope of its externally assured emissions data this year to cover Upstream Transportation and Distribution (Scope 3, Category 4).

Operational Excellence

Digitalization and innovation efforts drove greater service efficiency and reliability, with 93% of customer bookings now processed through ONE's digital platforms. ONE INNOVATION also set a new industry record, with 22,233 TEU loaded in vessel.

Social

ONE received its first ISO 45001 certification for its Singapore offices, reinforcing its commitment to workplace health and safety. The Company also continued to invest in developing future maritime talent through initiatives such as the MaritimeONE Scholarship Programme in Singapore, supporting the next generation of industry leaders.

Governance

ONE strengthened its supply chain governance, with 98% of new suppliers adhering to its Supply Chain Management Guideline. ONE also maintained its ISO/IEC 27001 certification for information security, and reported no incidents of corruption.



ONE's Sustainability Report 2026 can be downloaded using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/33j82ksh>

About Ocean Network Express (ONE)

Ocean Network Express (ONE), headquartered in Singapore, is one of the world's leading liner shipping companies. It operates a fleet of over 280 vessels with a capacity exceeding 2.2 million TEU.

Through its extensive global network, ONE provides container shipping services to over 120 countries.

An officer writes

In mid-September we received the letter below from a serving officer. In order to protect his anonymity, we have removed his name and contact details

Dear IFSMA Secretariat,

I am writing as a serving Maritime Electro-Technical Officer with a constructive proposal concerning seafarers and the future maritime workforce.

This is not a complaint against any vessel, company, shipowner, administration, institution or individual. I am not requesting investigation, sanction or adverse action against any party.

Reliable internet access in 2026 supports both professional work and crew welfare. Technical manuals, manufacturer documentation, troubleshooting, training, translation, digital reporting, professional communication and AI-assisted technical research increasingly depend on connectivity. The same connection also enables family contact and ordinary social life during long periods at sea.

The policy gap is that social connectivity is recognised in broad terms but lacks a measurable practical floor. Expressions such as "appropriate" and "reasonably practicable" can lead to widely different outcomes in practice.

I would respectfully suggest that shipmasters' organisations consider whether future maritime discussions should support a technology-neutral minimum social-connectivity service level. The exact benchmark should be developed through professional and tripartite consultation. Possible elements include a measurable personal data or fair-use entitlement, minimum usable communication capability, transparent throttling rules and periodic review.

A clearer baseline could also help masters by reducing uncertainty over what constitutes meaningful provision while preserving operational priority, cybersecurity and safety-critical traffic.

The aim is not unlimited entertainment bandwidth. It is a consistent and practical minimum for seafarers across the global maritime industry.

Respectfully,

Name and address supplied.

Navigating the Future of Maritime Trade

DPW White paper

It was reported from Dubai, UAE, on 24 September that more than 80% of world merchandise trade by volume is transported by sea.

The networks carrying an estimated \$14 trillion worth of containerised goods are being tested by geopolitical disruption, climate pressures and changing trade policies.

To mark World Maritime Day

A new white paper published by DP World's Marine Services business to mark World Maritime Day 2026, examines how these forces are reshaping global cargo flows, and why more connected, adaptable trade corridors are becoming critical to keeping goods moving.

As established shipping routes come under increasing pressure, businesses need greater choice in how cargo moves between markets. These shifts are creating a growing role for feeder, coastal and shortsea shipping solutions in connecting emerging production centres and regional ports to major international trade lanes. Integrated with inland rail, road and river networks, these services can give businesses more gateways and alternative routes when established corridors are disrupted.

Global trade is being reconfigured

In fact, research suggests that global trade is being reconfigured rather than reversed. DP World's 2026

Global Trade Observatory found that 94% of more than 3,500 supply chain and logistics executives expect trade growth in 2026 to match or exceed 2025 levels.

Ganesh Raj, Global COO, Marine Services, DP World, commented: *'With more than 80% of world merchandise trade by volume transported by sea, agility and the ability to adapt are becoming essential to business confidence and growth.'*

'A key part of this is optimising what we call 'Connected Trade Corridors', building more choice and adaptability into the system by linking ports, marine services and inland logistics so cargo has alternative routes when conditions shift. The first generation of global trade connected markets. The next must connect those markets through smarter, more adaptable networks.'

The white paper, *Navigating the Future of Maritime Trade*, finds that disruption is no longer episodic.

Structural shifts in cargo movement

Tariffs and redistribution of manufacturing are contributing to structural shifts in how cargo moves around the world. Manufacturing patterns are also moving faster than ever, – and becoming more geographically dispersed with India, Southeast Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa taking larger roles in global production and creating new regional shipping patterns.

This ripple effect is the resulting growth in South–South trade: merchandise exports between developing economies increased nearly 20-fold from approximately \$500 billion in 1995 to \$8.8 trillion in 2025. Today, more than half of developing-country exports are destined for other developing markets.

Regional and global connectivity

Giving businesses more gateways and transport options can help supply chains respond more effectively as trade patterns and operating conditions change. This type of regional and global connectivity is already visible across DP World's Marine Services network, which connects more than 200 ports across Northern Europe, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and the Americas, supported by a fleet of more than 500 vessels.

The next generation of global maritime trade will be defined not only by established routes, but increasingly by the strength, agility and adaptability of networks linking regional and global Connected Trade Corridors.

To download

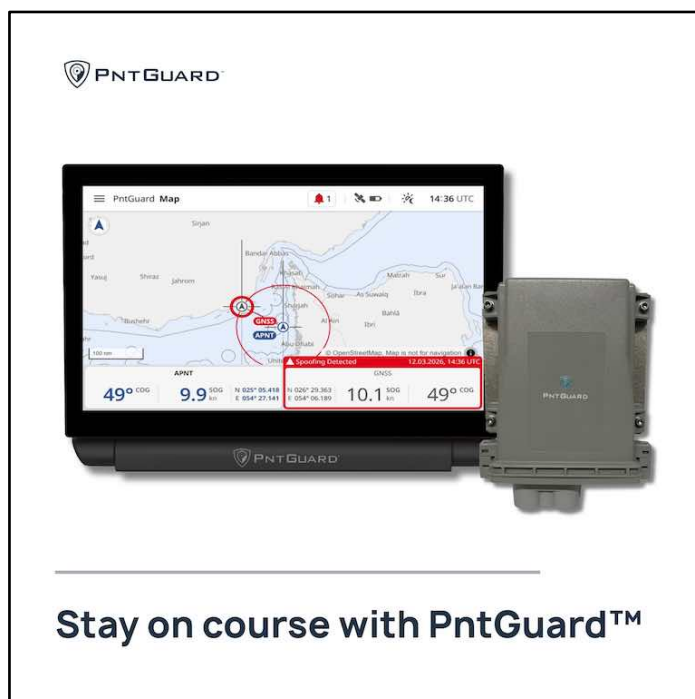
To download the *Navigating the Future of Maritime Trade* white paper readers are invited to use the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/56k3f888>

Authenticating ship position signals

The PntGuard™ platform

NorthStandard has entered a partnership with SGM Technology to offer its members the innovative PntGuard™ platform for authenticating ship position signals in real time on preferential terms, to help them overcome incidents of GNSS jamming and spoofing.

This agreement entitles NorthStandard members to access PntGuard at a 15% discount, in line with the global marine insurer's commitment to offer groundbreaking Loss Prevention solutions that address emerging operational challenges. PntGuard also joins NorthStandard's growing GetSET! portfolio of Safety & Efficiency Technologies (SET), which leverage digitalisation to support best practice in maritime operations.



The PntGuard™ Product.

Increasingly prevalent across shipping, GNSS jamming and spoofing compromise safety by interrupting, impairing and even invalidating the information crews rely on for navigation and situational awareness. They also create compliance and claims risks for owners and operators.

PntGuard is built on NAL Technologies' (Naltec) assured positioning, navigation and timing (APNT) solution which utilizes Iridium® PNT satellite service, to deliver continuous, authenticated and reliable ship positions independent of GNSS. Proven for improving navigation resilience, the self-contained PntGuard system detects spoofing, overcomes jamming, and keeps vessels safely on track. Naltec's industry leading APNT technology has been proven by commercial and defence organisations for over 10 years with thousands of devices in the field today.

Colin Gillespie, Global Head of Loss Prevention, NorthStandard, commented: *'At a time when GNSS integrity is threatened as never before, PntGuard enables early warning of interference events,*

upholding navigational resilience and situational awareness. Its use will reduce member exposure to navigation-related incidents.'

Alexander Wiik, Chief Commercial Officer, SGM Technology representing PntGuard, added: *'PntGuard reports the true ship position when GNSS fails, which ensures certainty, safety and control for every voyage. GNSS interference is no longer confined to conflict zones, with spoofing and jamming disrupting commercial shipping globally, sending ships off course and compromising crew safety. That has far-reaching consequences for revenues, compliance and insurance. By comparing the ship's GNSS feed with a fully authenticated signal, PntGuard gives instant visual and audible alerts when GNSS fails.'*

In an era of unprecedented advances in maritime technology, NorthStandard's GetSET! portfolio is claimed to offer vessel-based solutions to improve safety and efficiency by enhancing crew skills and situational awareness, as well as ship-shore collaboration. It includes the GlobeView maritime intelligence platform, ECDIS Training Assessment (ETA) continuous professional development, Orca AI's FleetView situational awareness platform, Shipin's visual fleet management FleetVision™, and real-time quality Fuel Insights, powered by VPS.

Few novelties in marine accidents

By Michael Grey, IFSMA Honorary Member

According to my calendar, this is being written on World Peace Day, which could occasion a hollow laugh, but might be joyfully celebrated by a few folk who live "off-grid" and don't get out much. It takes place in the same week as the IMO's annual World Maritime Day, which this year has, as its theme: "Policy to Practice – Powering Maritime Excellence." It might lack the power of a gritty slogan, or even a loyal toast, but is surely well meaning, in its hope for a more effective implementation of all the regulations and recommendations that are similarly so. One hopes that your WMD was a happy one.

A realistic assessment of where marine safety is in the world might be gleaned from the US National Transportation Safety Board's Safer Seas Digest 2025. This is an excellent compendium of the investigations undertaken by their diligent operatives and gives a first-class overview of the sort of incidents that have occurred within their ambit, in a defined timescale.

But as with all these summaries which gather together a selection of such accidents, (one can think of the UK's Marine Accident Investigation Branch annual reports, and those of the European Maritime Safety Administration), there is a depressing recitation of recurring problems which lead to all these losses and damage. It is really quite rare that there is something that has never been met with before, in the field of maritime human endeavour.

We just keep making the same mistakes. We may, within the last few years have

suddenly been faced with battery fires which are almost impossible to extinguish, or navigational accidents which were largely contributed to by some new piece of kit which encouraged bad habits – think of editing functions in electronic chart devices, or even radar itself. But, by and large, the same sort of little and large accidents recur, year after year.

You can imagine the editor of Safer Seas, considering with a weary note of resignation this litany of repetitive accidents, wondering which to choose to include in the 1995 edition. The purpose, after all, is to inform and to generally sharpen the awareness of professionals afloat and ashore of accident trends, and to "power maritime excellence" to steal the IMO's phrase. And maybe the point is not that there is repetition in the content, edition after edition. Does not the overall message emphasise that we need to try harder because of their repetitive nature, even though few will be seen as what we hacks like to define as a "marmalade-dropper?"

The current edition offers us incidents caused by maintenance issues, with apparently small omissions causing catastrophic consequences and accidents caused by inadequate voyage planning. There are problems with fire detection and containment that have lessons for both ship and shore, problems of watertight integrity in which the closure of a door has been the route to disaster. Accidents caused by distraction, whether from a mobile phone or just trying to do too much at once with too few hands or brains feature. Fatigue has appeared as a cause, increasingly over the years and maybe it is at last being properly recognised as not something that is inevitable in a 24/7 operation. There have been awful consequences from losses of electrical power at a crucial moment and evident lack of emergency preparedness. There are yet no satisfactory answers to the problems caused by lithium-ion batteries, although the consequences of fires involving them are becoming more apparent. The fact that little failures, of procedures, people, or equipment, can lead to awful consequences, is a home truth that these hard lessons endlessly emphasise.

There is no doubt that the identification of casualty trends and the repetition of lessons from individual accident investigations is a valuable service. There will be those who are oblivious to the need for improvement or change and blunder on as usual, so the words will fall on stony ground. But more thoughtful professionals will look at these pages and apply them to their own operations. They may even think - "there, but for the grace of God...."

This article was first published in The Maritime Advocate Online No 917 of 25 September 2026 and appears here by kind permission of the author and of the editor.

Michael Grey is former editor of Lloyd's List.

World Maritime Day

Smart Seafaring. A Safe Return

The Seafarers' Charity releases new abandonment films

To coincide with World Maritime Day the Seafarers' Charity launched the remaining films in its **Smart Seafaring. A Safe Return** campaign. The charity's goal is to help seafarers and their families understand the risks of abandonment.



It has commissioned these films to help seafarers and their families identify potential warning signs of abandonment, to take practical steps to protect themselves, and to know where to seek help if things go wrong.

This year's World Maritime Day theme is **From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence** and that is why The Seafarers' Charity is highlighting the importance of practical, accessible support for those working at sea.

All three animated films are now available alongside downloadable guidance* in six languages common among seafarers and in English.

What is abandonment

Abandonment occurs when shipowners fail to pay wages for at least two months, cease providing food, fuel or essential supplies, or simply disappear, leaving crews stranded.

ITF record

According to the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), 2025 was the worst year on record, with a reported 410 vessels abandoned and 6,223 seafarers affected, an increase of more than 30% compared with 2024.

Smart Seafaring. A Safe Return was launched in June to coincide with the 2026 **Day of the Seafarer**. This campaign uses short animated films and practical guidance to make a complex and often difficult subject easier to understand.

The completed resources cover the key stages of a seafarer's journey, from considering a new job and checking the legitimacy of an employer or vessel,

through to understanding what to do if wages are not paid or a seafarer is left without the support they are entitled to.

Alongside the animations, downloadable guidance is now available in English and in Arabic, Bahasa, Mandarin, Hindi, Russian and Tagalog, helping to remove language barriers and make the information more accessible to an international workforce.

Widespread encouragement by the charity

The Seafarers' Charity is encouraging maritime employers, training providers, welfare organisations, unions, charities and other organisations working with seafarers to share the resources with them.

To learn more

The films can be seen using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/sfcnejp4>

*Downloadable guidance is available in English and six languages using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/yjuarjy7>

Precautions against liquefaction when loading iron ore fines in India

By Siddharth Mahajan

GARD Team Leader, Loss Prevention Asia

Gard once again alerts its Members and clients to the significant risks associated with bulk cargo liquefaction. The recent tragic loss of life of crew on a bulk carrier in the Bay of Bengal has renewed concerns regarding the safety of some iron ore fines shipments, particularly from ports on the east coast of India.

While the cause of the capsizing and sinking has not yet been established, authorities have reported that the vessel was carrying iron ore fines from Paradip. Gard is also aware of further cases involving iron ore fines loaded in the region where liquefaction is suspected, and separately, a recent case involving the liquefaction of iron ore fines loaded in Brazil.

Group A cargoes: A perennial problem of liquefaction risk

Liquefaction of mineral cargoes, leading to cargo shift and loss of vessel stability, has been a recurring cause of bulk carrier casualties for decades. As highlighted in Intercargo's Bulk Carrier Casualty Report 2015-2024, the consequences can be catastrophic, resulting in loss of life, loss of vessels, and significant environmental and commercial impacts. Despite extensive international regulation and industry guidance, Gard continues to encounter cases where cargo is loaded in a dangerously wet condition, often linked to inadequate moisture management practices and concerns regarding the reliability of cargo sampling and testing arrangements on which shipper declarations are based.

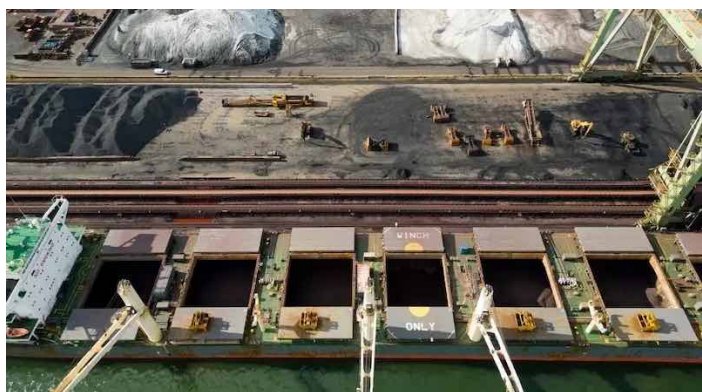
Overview of Group A shipments from India

Gard's correspondent, James MacKintosh & Co., has prepared an overview of major Group A cargoes exported from India, including key loading regions and seasonal weather patterns.

In many ports, stockpiles are stored in open yards, sometimes with only limited protection from tarpaulins, and may remain exposed to the elements during transportation by road, rail, or barge. These conditions can increase moisture content beyond the Transportable Moisture Limit (TML). The correspondent has also highlighted concerns that, where cargo is delivered to ships by barges, samples taken from shore stockpiles may not always be representative of the cargo ultimately loaded on board.

Regulatory requirements and local precautions

Our understanding is that NT/ENG Circular No. 2 of 2017 remains in force and should be read together with other notices (M.S. Notice No. 9 of 2010, M.S. Notice No. 31 of 2009, and M.S. Notice No. 34 of 2009). In addition, the Mercantile Marine Department (MMD) Kolkata has reportedly introduced further precautions for the carriage of Group A cargoes, although these have yet to be formally published through a circular.



This may affect the validity of the shipper's moisture content certificate. In particular, the certificate may become invalid following rainfall affecting the stockpile or cargo, requiring the shipper to carry out re-testing before loading can continue.

Gard also understands that references to TML testing onboard should not be interpreted as requiring owners to undertake laboratory testing of cargo samples. However, masters may be expected to conduct can-tests. It should be emphasized that can-tests are only a very basic screening tool and are not foolproof. They are not a substitute for independent laboratory testing, and cannot provide a confirmation of cargo being safe.

Members should also note that the Merchant Shipping (Carriage of Cargoes and Oil Fuels) Rules 2026, published in India on 2 September 2026, set out requirements for the approval of marine laboratories conducting testing under the IMSBC Code. The Rules also reaffirm that the shipper must provide the master with cargo information sufficiently in advance of

loading in accordance with Section 1.3 of the IMSBC Code.

Members are encouraged to contact their local agents for the latest requirements and guidance applicable to specific loading ports. It is worth noting that some Indian ports may have issued local circulars and requirements that differ from guidance issued by the Directorate General of Shipping (India). Guidance can also be obtained from the local correspondent. In consultation with the Club, Members should consider appointing their own surveyor to assist the master.

Gard's geofencing

Gard's geofencing alerts are limited to owned vessels entered with Gard, and do not detect vessels for charterer Members. It is therefore important for charterers to notify Gard every time they fix their vessels for loading such cargo. The main purpose of the geofencing alert is not to monitor Gard's Members' activity, but to provide support by highlighting the risks involved when carrying cargoes that can liquefy and the precautions that can be taken to mitigate those risks. For further information, please refer to the Gard article '*Geofencing – targeted and timely loss prevention advice to Members.*'

Key recommendations

Members with vessels scheduled to load iron ore fines or other Group A cargoes in India should exercise heightened caution and ensure that shippers fully comply with their obligations under the IMSBC Code. Particular attention should be paid to cargo declarations and certificates for moisture content and the transportable moisture limit, and to evidence that approved moisture management, sampling, and testing procedures are being followed and are code compliant.

The IMSBC Code states that bilges should be sounded and that the appearance of the surface of the cargo shall be checked regularly during the voyage. Risk indicators include cargo shift or movement of the stow with the vessel, a flattening of the cargo profile, softening at the periphery or surface water and slurry. If there are concerns that liquefaction may be occurring, the master should seek third party expert support and take action to reduce the energy input into the cargo (e.g. avoiding beam seas). Early intervention can be critical in preventing a deterioration of the vessel's stability condition.

Members should consider how they might protect themselves contractually before agreeing to carry Group A cargoes - for example, by including the

BIMCO Solid Bulk Cargoes that Can Liquefy Clause for Charter Parties 2012

Editorial note

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For GARD's latest news readers are invited to see here: www.gard.no

El Niño, Panama Canal restrictions, and routing off Cape Horn

By Siddharth Mahajan

GARD Team Leader, Loss Prevention Asia

The Panama Canal remains the preferred route for vessels trading between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. However, recurring drought conditions associated with the El Niño phenomenon have repeatedly reduced water availability in the Canal's watershed, forcing the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) to introduce operational restrictions to the locks' transit capacity. These developments highlight the continuing vulnerability of global supply chains to climate-related disruptions.

Draft restrictions and reduction in number of daily transits

Despite the arrival of the rainy season in Panama and the water-saving measures implemented by the ACP, lower-than-expected rainfall in the Canal watershed continues to affect water levels and transit capacity. As a result, the ACP has introduced additional restrictions, including draft limitations, a reduction in the number of daily transits, and adjustments to the availability of auction slots.

The ACP has noted that weather conditions are evolving more rapidly than anticipated and has indicated that it will provide advance notice of any further operational adjustments where possible.

Commercial impact

For shipowners and operators, Panama Canal restrictions can have commercial consequences. Draft limitations may require vessels to sail with reduced cargo intake, directly affecting voyage economics. At the same time, transit restrictions and congestion can create delays, disrupt schedules, and increase overall transportation costs.

During previous periods of severe restrictions, some operators faced lengthy waiting times without a secured reservation and began evaluating alternative routes around South America rather than transiting the Canal. While these routes may avoid canal delays, they introduce a different set of navigational, operational, and weather-related risks that must be carefully assessed before any routing decision is made. We are seeing owners considering the southern route today.

For vessels seeking to avoid Panama Canal restrictions, the principal alternatives are the Drake Passage and the Strait of Magellan, both located at the southern tip of South America.

The Drake Passage, situated between Cape Horn and Antarctica, exposes vessels to harsh weather. As a result, operators may face excessive vessel motions, slamming, cargo shift, heavy-weather damage, green seas on deck, and machinery challenges associated with prolonged heavy-weather operations.

The Strait of Magellan offers a relatively more sheltered route by avoiding much of this open-ocean exposure, but at the cost of increased navigational complexity. Transits involve narrow channels, strong currents, restricted waters, pilotage requirements, and greater reliance on local navigational expertise.

Balancing safety, pilotage, and commercial and legal considerations

Routing decisions around Cape Horn can sometimes give rise to competing commercial and safety considerations. While the Drake Passage offers the most direct route between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, adverse weather forecasts may prompt Masters to favour the more sheltered and shorter Strait of Magellan. However, such decisions are not always straightforward, as the Strait introduces additional navigational challenges and potential pilotage costs.

A further consideration is that pilotage requirements within the Strait of Magellan vary depending on the section of the voyage. For vessels undertaking an ocean-to-ocean transit, pilotage is not required in the section between Punta Arenas and Felix Lighthouse, provided the vessel is not calling at Chilean ports or navigating internal waters. If a Master elects to retain pilots beyond Punta Arenas for safety reasons, additional costs are likely to be incurred.

Claims experience:

- Most disputes handled by Gard have been between owners and charterers concerning pilotage costs incurred between Punta Arenas and Felix Lighthouse, where pilotage was not compulsory but was retained for safety reasons.
- In some cases, Masters have preferred routing via the Strait of Magellan because of concerns about forecast weather conditions in the Drake Passage and the safety of the vessel, cargo and crew. Charterers, on the other hand, have been reluctant to agree to the alternative route because of the additional pilotage expenses involved.
- There have also been cases where Chilean authorities have imposed compulsory pilotage for the vessel's transit through the Strait due to technical deficiencies, such as ECDIS failures or main engine problems. In certain instances, tug escorts have also been required.

Legal considerations:

While charterers may request that a vessel follow a particular route, the Master retains ultimate responsibility for the safety of the vessel, crew, and cargo. If the Master considers the nominated route unsafe due to factors such as severe weather, they are entitled to take a reasonable alternative route to safeguard the vessel and those on board. Accordingly, where conditions in the Drake Passage are assessed as unsafe, the Master may decide to transit via the Strait of Magellan instead. In such circumstances, owners should ensure that the basis for the decision is well documented and supported by evidence, such as weather forecasts, routing advice, and voyage records.

Where owners or operators elect to use the Strait of Magellan, careful consideration should also be given to the allocation of pilotage costs under the charterparty. As noted above, pilotage is not compulsory for the section between Punta Arenas and Felix Lighthouse. Consequently, if the charterparty provides that charterers are responsible only for compulsory pilotage costs, pilotage expenses incurred within this non-compulsory section may fall to the owners. Parties should therefore review the relevant charterparty provisions carefully and, where possible, discuss the matter in advance to avoid disputes over the cost of any non-compulsory pilotage services.

Gard has also come across charterparties containing specific clauses dealing with transits via the Strait of Magellan and the Drake Passage. Owners and charterers may wish to consider incorporating such clauses, where appropriate, to provide greater clarity regarding routing decisions, pilotage costs, and the allocation of risks associated with alternative southern routes.

Technical and operational considerations

Operators should also consider the technical challenges associated with southern routes. Claims experience has shown that vessels transiting these waters during winter may encounter bunker-related problems, where vessel designs are not well suited to prolonged operations in colder climates.



The Southern alternatives: Drake Passage and Strait of Magellan.

Limitations in fuel heating arrangements can create operational difficulties, especially for vessels not originally intended for service in such conditions. Owners should therefore ensure that bunker management procedures, machinery limitations, and cold weather practices are carefully reviewed before undertaking such voyages.

Another consideration is that vessels seeking shelter from severe weather in the Pacific along the Southern Chilean coast may enter confined waterways and channels. While this may reduce exposure to heavy weather, navigation becomes considerably more demanding. Restricted waters, close proximity to hazards, and limited manoeuvring room increase the potential consequences of navigational error. In the

event of a grounding or major casualty, suitable salvage assistance for larger vessels may not be immediately available.

Conclusion

Owners and managers should maintain close contact with their local agents to obtain the latest information, as operational restrictions may be amended in response to changing weather and watershed conditions.

While alternative routes around South America can help operators avoid congestion and transit limitations, they introduce a different set of navigational, operational, commercial, and weather-related risks that must be carefully managed.

The decision to transit the Panama Canal, the Drake Passage, or the Strait of Magellan should therefore be based on a comprehensive assessment of:

- weather conditions,
- vessel characteristics,
- cargo considerations,
- crew experience, technical limitations,
- pilotage requirements,
- and contractual obligations.

Careful voyage planning and a balanced consideration of both safety and commercial factors remain essential.

Reference:

Provisions, regulations and general information on pilotage in Chile (The Directorate General of Maritime Territory and Merchant Marine, Chilean Navy) can be found using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/3wzyxbzy>

Editorial note

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Digital skills in maritime education and training

Lloyd's Register, Lloyd's Register Foundation and World Maritime University partnership

A global extensive study into people, skills, and readiness for change. A new report, published by the Lloyd's Register Foundation, focuses on one of the most pressing challenges facing the sector: ***whether people are prepared for a rapidly digitalising maritime industry.***

This study adopted a mixed methods approach that blended quantitative evidence with qualitative insight. This design allowed perspectives from policy, education, industry and seafaring practice to be examined together, ensuring a well-rounded and credible evidence base. By triangulating multiple data sources, the study strengthened the robustness and reliability of its findings.

Executive summary

The report examines the development of digital skills among seafarers, addressing the challenges that arise from the growing adoption of digital technologies and increasing automation in the maritime sector.

Technologies such as automated navigation systems, smart shipping solutions, digital logistics platforms, and online training tools are reshaping how ships are designed, operated and regulated.

At the centre of this transformation is a critical and often underexamined question: are today's maritime education and training systems equipping seafarers and maritime professionals with digital skills needed to navigate a sustainable future?



It also examines how digital skills are understood, developed and applied across maritime institutions from policymakers and education providers to the industry players and seafarers themselves.

Rather than treating digitalisation as a purely technological challenge, the study positions it as a human capability imperative, where skills, competencies and institutional readiness determine whether digital innovation delivers environmental and operational gains.

Drawing on a robust mixed methods approach, the report connects global policy ambitions with operational realities at sea and in training institutions. It surfaces gaps between regulatory intent and on-the-ground implementation, highlights emerging good practices and identifies leverage points where targeted action can accelerate progress. In doing so, the report offers maritime stakeholders, including decision-makers a clear, evidence-informed perspective on how strategic investment in digital skills development can strengthen maritime education and training, enhance workforce resilience and

support the sector's transition towards a more sustainable and future-ready maritime industry

Data were collected through five complementary streams:

1. Literature review:

The study drew on an extensive review of literature relevant to the maritime sector, focussing on maritime digital skills. **More than 300 academic publications**, policy documents, institutional and industry reports were reviewed to explore four themes:

- The role of digital transformation in maritime operations and sustainability, including key drivers and enablers.
- Emerging digital skills required in the maritime sector.
- Current approaches to Maritime Education and Training (MET) for developing digital skills.
- Challenges and opportunities associated with integrating digital and sustainability principles into seafarer training.

Insights from the literature and the Technology Adoption (TechAdo) model informed the design of the stakeholder analysis and survey tools.

2. Document analysis:

This identified patterns in country and regional engagement in international policymaking. The documents submitted to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) and the Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW) Sub Committee between 2018 and 2025 were studied, because the year 2018 marked the beginning of significant discussions on Maritime Autonomous Surface Vessels (MASS) and the full implementation of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 (STCW) Manila Amendments. A total of 2,092 MSC submissions and 336 HTW submissions were analysed to gain a better understanding of the discussions relating to seafarers' digital skills and maritime digitalisation, and which countries are actively contributing to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) discussions.

3. Key informant interviews:

These helped to identify and understand the roles, interests and influence of stakeholders in the development of digital skills within the sector. The stakeholders for these interviews were maritime administrations, industry players and Maritime Education and Training Institutions (METIs). The analysis draws on **110 interviews** across the stakeholder groups: 47 from METIs from 18 countries, 37 government officials from 11 countries, and 26 industry experts from 13 countries.

4. Seafarer survey

This provided evidence of current skill levels, challenges, and training needs. The survey was

conducted online using QuestionPro and distributed through professional seafarer networks, training institutions and maritime organisations. It examined current levels of digital skills among seafarers, access to and experience with digital training resources, perceptions with digital transformation and its implications for maritime sustainability, and barriers and enablers to digital skills development. **A total of 532 responses** were received and the participant profile reflects a broad and globally diverse cross-section of the maritime workforce.

5. Validation workshops

These tested and refined findings, and also offered expert perspectives on pathways for digital transformation within MET. **Three validation workshops** were held with 23 participants drawn from shipping companies and industry organisations, seafarers, maritime administrations, regulators and academia. Each workshop involved between five and ten participants and was facilitated using a semi-structured discussion guide to encourage open dialogue, after a presentation of the preliminary findings by the research team

The report

The 93-page full report is to be found using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/hr95wut5>

Editorial note:

Text here based on material kindly made available at www.lrfoundation.org.uk

South Asia Wellness at Sea Conference

The fifth annual Sailors' Society's Wellness at Sea Conference for South East Asia proved to be the most successful so far, bringing together cadets, ratings and trainees from across the region for a unique event focused on the real-life skills today's seafarers need to ensure a healthy and resilient career at sea.

Regional events

The virtual conference, one of four regional events designed especially for the next generation of maritime professionals, explored the key elements that feature in the Society's acclaimed Wellness at Sea training and complement the region's main academic syllabus and initial training at sea.

A range of maritime experts

After a welcome from Arsenio Dominguez, Secretary-General of the IMO, participants heard from the keynote speaker, Bryan Passigna, Dean of the College of Maritime Education at the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna, as well as a range of maritime experts in the field of social, mental and physical health at sea.

Comment

Khim Jay Manos Cadungog, a cadet at MAAP, said: *'As I prepare to begin the next chapter of my maritime career and join my first vessel, this conference was particularly meaningful for me.'*

Sara Baade, CEO of Sailors' Society, said: *'These young people are the future of our industry, and we need to make sure they have the knowledge, confidence and support to thrive at sea.'*

'It is fantastic to see so many of the next generation of seafarers benefiting from this event that focuses on something just as important as their technical training – looking after themselves and each other.'

'Sailors' Society is particularly grateful to TK Foundation, whose funding made the conference possible, and our sponsor Britannia P&I Club, who also provided an insightful podcast as part of the day.'

'We also want to thank the maritime schools, colleges, training institutions and companies that made time for their cadets, ratings and trainees to attend this free event.'



The conference also included the voices of cadets from across the globe and allowed participants to give their opinions via a live poll. Their participation and feedback will help Sailors' Society understand the issues and priorities facing the next generation of seafarers.

Data and insights gathered during the conference will contribute to the charity's 2026–27 Cadet Report, providing an important snapshot of the experiences, concerns and aspirations of tomorrow's seafarers.

This South East Asia event forms part of the 2026 Wellness at Sea conference programme, with events in the UK and Europe on 18 November.

Previously, more than 4,000 cadets, ratings and trainees attended the first event in the series for the Indian Subcontinent.

For more information

More information on the events, the agenda and other speakers can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/ydfmcx6x>

About Sailors' Society

For more than 200 years, international maritime charity Sailors' Society has been transforming the lives of seafarers and their families. The charity works to provide practical, emotional and spiritual welfare support around the clock, day in, day out to today's 1.9 million seafarers, supporting wellbeing across every area of their lives and giving them the best opportunity to enjoy a fulfilling – and productive – career at sea.

For more information on the charity's work, please visit www.sailors-society.org

Strengthening Allied maritime readiness

Exercise Northern Viking 26

Recent weeks saw Exercise Northern Viking 26, a US-led joint and Allied live exercise, underway in Iceland, bringing together Allied forces as they demonstrate NATO's ability to operate together in defence of both Iceland, and the strategically vital sea lines of communication across the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) Gap.



Standing NATO Maritime Group One (SNMG1) and Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group One (SNMCMG1) operate alongside Allied navies in the High North, strengthening interoperability across surface, subsurface, and mine-countermeasures operations and reinforcing NATO's readiness in the North Atlantic.

Northern Viking 26 formed part of NATO's broader Arctic Sentry activity, supporting the defence of Iceland and the protection of critical national and NATO infrastructure in the High North.

Important role of mine countermeasures

Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group One (SNMCMG1), currently under Lithuanian command, contributed to the exercise alongside Allied maritime and joint forces. Its participation highlighted the important role of mine countermeasures (MCM) in maintaining freedom of movement and safeguarding critical maritime routes.

Multinational MCM capability

The group brought together a multinational MCM capability, with minehunters from Canada, Germany, Lithuania and Poland, supported by a Danish Mine Countermeasures team and a Portuguese Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team. Together, these forces provide a diverse range of specialist capabilities while strengthening Allied interoperability and readiness in the challenging waters of the North Atlantic.



Standing NATO Maritime Group One (SNMG1) joined the exercise, bringing together NATO's standing maritime forces in the High North. Operating alongside Allied navies, the two task groups strengthened interoperability across surface, subsurface and mine countermeasure operations, reinforcing NATO's readiness and its ability to safeguard security in the North Atlantic through integrated multinational training.

Integrated air and maritime capabilities

Bringing together the United States and Iceland with NATO Allied forces from Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Lithuania, Germany, Norway and Poland, the exercise integrated air and maritime capabilities in a realistic operational scenario to strengthen interoperability, enhance readiness, and improve the ability to plan and conduct joint multinational operations.

Demanding maritime environment

For Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group One (SNMCMG1), participation provided an opportunity to employ and further develop MCM capabilities in the demanding maritime environment of the North Atlantic and High North.'

Comment

Commander SNMCMG1, Lithuanian Navy Commander Donatas Gečas commented: 'Exercises such as Northern Viking demonstrate the value of bringing together Allied mine countermeasures forces with other maritime and joint capabilities. By training together in a demanding operational environment, we strengthen interoperability, share operational

experience and improve our readiness to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic.'

Strategic importance of the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom Gap

The exercise also underlined the strategic importance of the North Atlantic and the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) Gap. The waters between Greenland and Iceland, and between Iceland and the United Kingdom, form a critical maritime corridor connecting North America and Europe. Operating in this challenging environment allows Allied forces to build familiarity with the unique conditions of the region while strengthening their ability to operate together in support of NATO's collective defence.

SNMG1 and SNMCMG1 are two of NATO's four Standing Naval Forces, maintained at high readiness to provide persistent maritime security, assure freedom of navigation and respond rapidly to emerging threats across the Alliance.

Editorial note:

Text based on material kindly provided by NATO MARCOM Public Affairs Office.

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The Future of Maritime Trade

A white paper from DP World

Maritime trade is the engine of global commerce. Networks of routes carrying an estimated \$14 trillion worth of containerised goods are being tested by geopolitical disruption, climate pressures and changing trade policies.

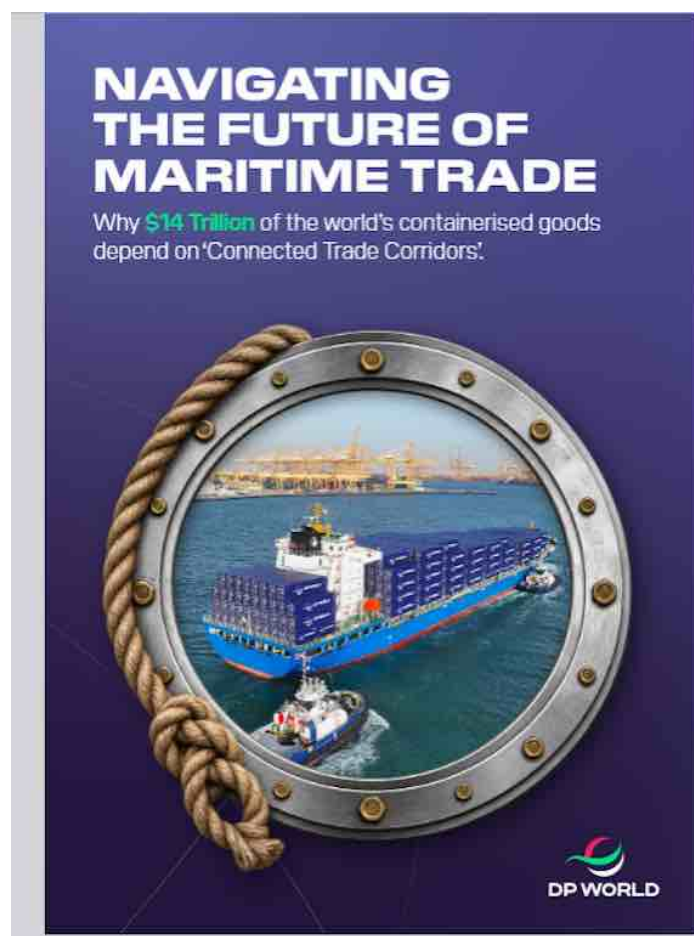
Every day thousands of vessels connect manufacturers with markets, move critical raw materials, support industrial production and enable consumers to access goods from around the world.

More than 80% of world merchandise trade by volume is transported by sea. But the networks carrying an estimated \$14 trillion worth of containerised goods are being tested by geopolitical disruption, climate pressures and changing trade policies.

With the subtitle *Why \$14 Trillion of the world's containerised goods depend on 'Connected Trade Corridors'* this document by DP World examines how global cargo flows are being reshaped, where new trade connections are emerging and why more connected, adaptable corridors are becoming critical to keeping goods moving.

In his foreword Ganesh Raj, Global Chief Operating Officer, Marine Services at DP World Maritime, indicates that: *'Trade is the foundation of the global economy. Conditions that shaped global trade over the past three decades are changing more rapidly now than at any point in recent history.'*

'Geopolitical tensions, evolving trade policies, climate-related disruption and shifting manufacturing footprints are reshaping how cargo moves around the world. These are not isolated challenges. Together, they represent a structural shift in the way global trade is organised.'



Five chapters over twenty-one pages introduce trade lanes, for example South-South, Asia, Middle East, Africa Gulf and Asia-Latin America. The evolving map of maritime trade is described along with how markets shape new routes along with the relevance of manufacturing hubs and supply chains.

The document *Navigating the Future of Maritime Trade: Why \$14 Trillion of the world's containerised goods depend on 'Connected Trade Corridors'* is available using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/2fmkcxat>

Ocean drones set to brave the Southern Ocean for science

On 24 September the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) reported that the first of a new fleet of uncrewed surface vehicles (USVs) had set off from CSIRO Hobart as part of a mission monitoring the Southern Ocean to better understand how much carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere is absorbed by the ocean surface.

Five-year circumnavigation

The USVs, made by Saildrone, will be deployed every quarter over five years to circumnavigate Antarctica,

operating through the challenging conditions of the Southern Ocean.

Such USVs are an autonomous mobile research platform, powered by wind and solar energy. They will operate in remote waters for months at a time, recording data in real time to better understand ocean carbon sinks.

International collaboration

This project is part of an international collaboration between CSIRO, Australia's national science agency and partner of the Australian Antarctic Program Partnership, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), South Africa's Southern Ocean Carbon-Climate Observatory (SOCCO), CSIR, Columbia University, University of Washington, and Schmidt Sciences, through the Virtual Institute for the Carbon Cycle (VICC) program, and Saildrone, to capture data on ocean carbon sinks.

Ocean sinks

Ocean sinks store about a third of CO₂ absorbed from the atmosphere each year, with the Southern Ocean accounting for 40% of global ocean CO₂ uptake, but more information is needed to better estimate how much CO₂ is absorbed.

Comment

CSIRO's Dr Elizabeth Shadwick said this project is the first multi-year campaign to deploy USVs in the Southern Ocean specifically to acquire data in seasons and regions where ship traffic is limited.

She commented: *'The Southern Ocean is central to the uptake and storage of CO₂ from human emissions.'*

'The Saildrone USVs are expected to travel around 22,000 kilometres for each deployment, giving us unprecedented coverage of regions that we can't get to with research vessels or commercial ships.'

'This will help fill critical gaps on how much carbon is being absorbed by the Southern Ocean, and what influences it.'

Dr Adrienne Sutton from NOAA said using a range of innovative technologies, like USVs, will enable scientists to capture data on what is driving CO₂ variability.

She added: *'The Southern Ocean is one of Earth's harshest environments and notoriously difficult to observe.'*

'This project brings together new tools to overcome this challenge and tackle long-standing questions about the ocean's carbon sink.'

'We will have a fleet of four Saildrone Explorers operating at different points around the Southern Ocean. As a USV completes a circumnavigation of Antarctica, it will come back into Hobart where sensors will be replaced and the USV will be

redeployed to start another circumnavigation. This pattern will continue for the duration of the five-year project.'



Image showing deployment of CSIRO drones around Antarctica.

Professor Galen McKinley from Columbia University said instead of sailing pre-set routes, the USVs could conduct targeted data collection.

He reflected: *'We will be able to make adjustments over the course of the five-year mission to target data collection in the regions that are most needed to better understand the ocean carbon sink.'*

'We will also apply advanced, model- and AI observing tools to investigate carbon cycling in the Southern Ocean.'

Dr Sandy Thomalla from CSIR concluded by saying that this research project is of international significance.

'The Southern Ocean plays an important role in the global climate system. Understanding the processes controlling CO₂ uptake are central to having accurate projections of the Southern Ocean carbon sink in the future.'

'By targeting Southern Ocean CO₂ measurements, including over winter, this fleet of sailing USVs will help close one of the most persistent data gaps in global observations.'

Constraining Ocean Carbon with Optimized Observing project

This research, as part of the Constraining Ocean Carbon with Optimized Observing (COCO2) project, will feed into the annual Global Carbon Budget, which quantifies the sources and sinks of CO₂ emissions, with the 2026 budget due to be released in November.

Collecting continuous atmospheric and oceanographic observations

A Saildrone Explorer previously completed a 196-day circumnavigation of Antarctica in 2019.



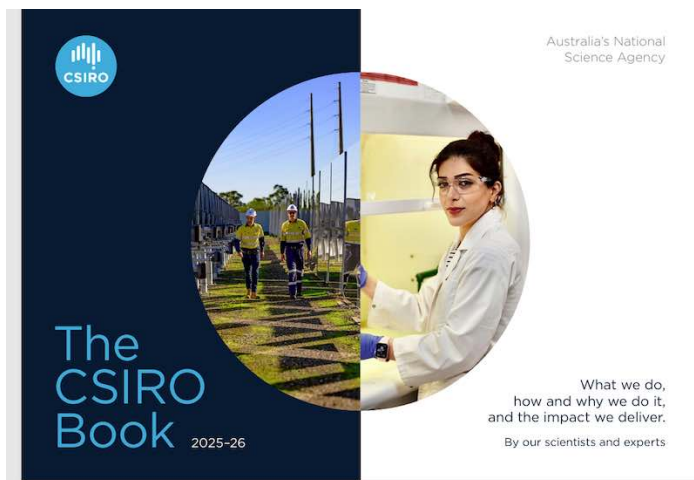
CSIRO wind- and solar-powered drone under tow to release point.

For this project, the USVs will be collecting continuous atmospheric and oceanographic observations, including:

- Atmospheric measurements: wind speed and direction, barometric pressure, relative humidity, air temperature, and atmospheric CO₂.
- Oceanographic measurements: sea surface temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, and seawater CO₂.

The CSIRO Book 2025-26

This book, written by CSIRO's researchers and supporting teams, brings the organisation's science to life. It shows how CSIRO is looking to the future and focusing on the global challenges confronting Australia and the region



The CSIRO Book 2025-26 at 103-pages is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/hscejapf>

Illustration per www.csiro.au with grateful thanks.

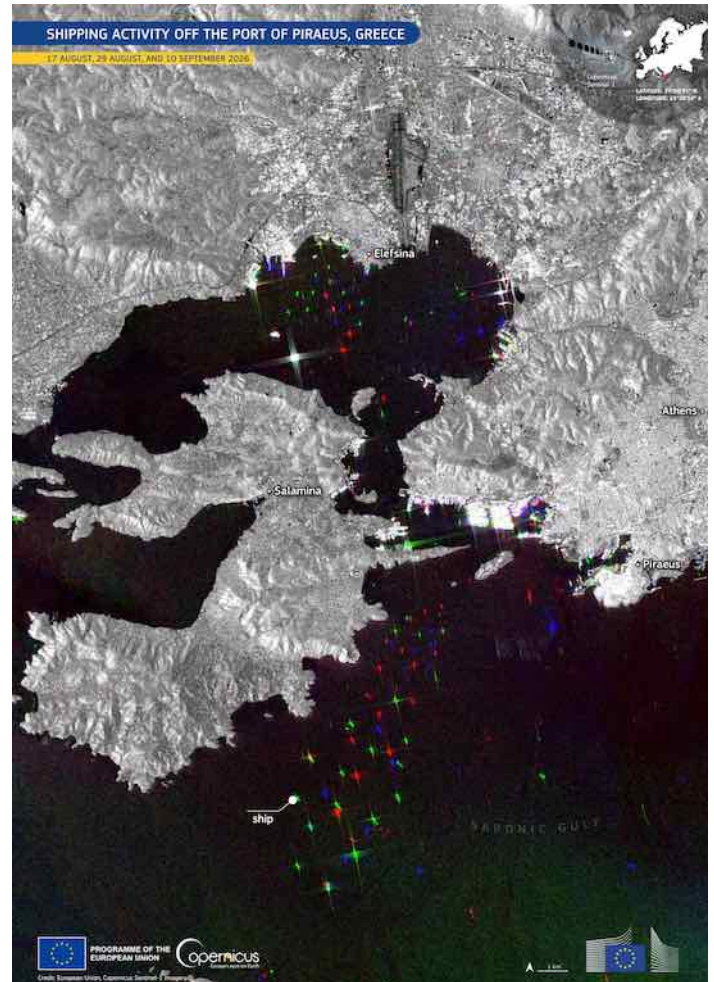
On World Maritime Day

Copernicus over Piraeus

Every year, on 24 September, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) marks World Maritime Day, which celebrates the global maritime sector.

The 2026-2027 theme: **From Policy to Practice: Powering Maritime Excellence***, highlights the implementation of international standards across maritime operations.

The Saronic Gulf, south-west of Athens, is a key maritime area in Greece. It is home to the Port of Piraeus, the country's largest port and an important hub for passenger transport, cruise activity, and international trade.



European Union, Copernicus Sentinel-1 imagery EU ©.

This multitemporal image combines data acquired by one of the Copernicus Sentinel-1 satellites on 17 August, 29 August, and 10 September 2026. The coloured points are vessels in the waters off Piraeus and off the port of Elefsina, further north-west.

Copernicus Sentinel-1 radar data support reliable monitoring of maritime environments, vessel activity, and coastal change, even under cloudy conditions.

* <https://tinyurl.com/ye237kwv>

Copernicus Climate Change Service

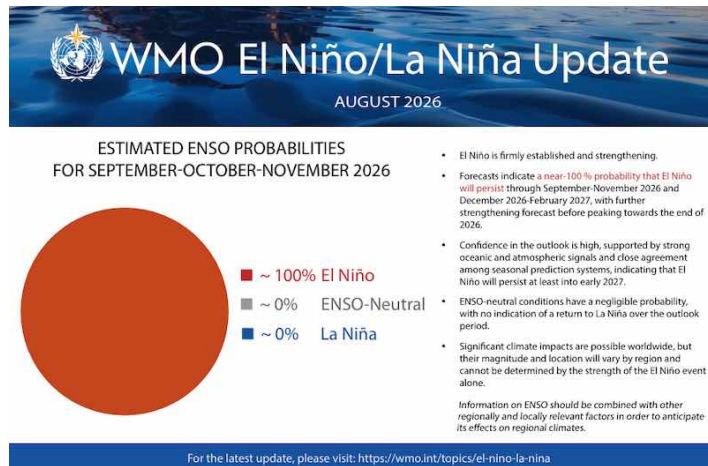
World Meteorological Organization reports

This year's El Niño effects

The Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) has just published its latest monthly Climate Bulletin, which focuses on key climate trends for August 2026.

The summer of 2026 has been the warmest on record for western Europe (defined as land areas within 11°W–15°E and 37°–55°N), surpassing the long-standing record set in 2003, with an average surface air temperature from June to August of 21.69 °C, 2.54 °C above the 1991–2020 average.

A succession of exceptionally early, persistent, and intense heatwaves across the region characterised the season.



This data visualisation, produced using C3S data, shows anomalies and extremes in surface air temperature across Europe during June and August 2026. Much of the west and the south of the continent falls within the warmer-than-average, much-warmer-than-average, and warmest categories.

By contrast, near-average and cooler conditions have been recorded across parts of northern and eastern Europe.

More information on the topic is available using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/y87uajme>

The WMO view

Earth has hottest August on record

Earth just had the hottest August on record, according to monthly reports from the European Union's Copernicus Climate Service, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and NASA. The Northern Hemisphere experienced its warmest summer (1 June to 31 August 2026), while the Southern Hemisphere had a near-record warm winter.

El Niño conditions

Global sea surface temperature reached an all-time observed high in August, with El Niño conditions fuelling record temperatures across vast areas of the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. The Arctic and Antarctic each had below-average sea ice extent in August.

El Niño was one of the drivers of the climate in August. It is now firmly established and will intensify into a very strong event in the coming months, with big impacts on rainfall and temperature patterns well into 2027, according to WMO's latest El Niño Update.

El Niño influenced global tropical cyclone activity in August, as well as heavy rainfall and floods in some countries. Other countries were impacted by drought with El Niño conditions favouring the intensification of seasonal wildfires across Indonesia, as reported by the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS).

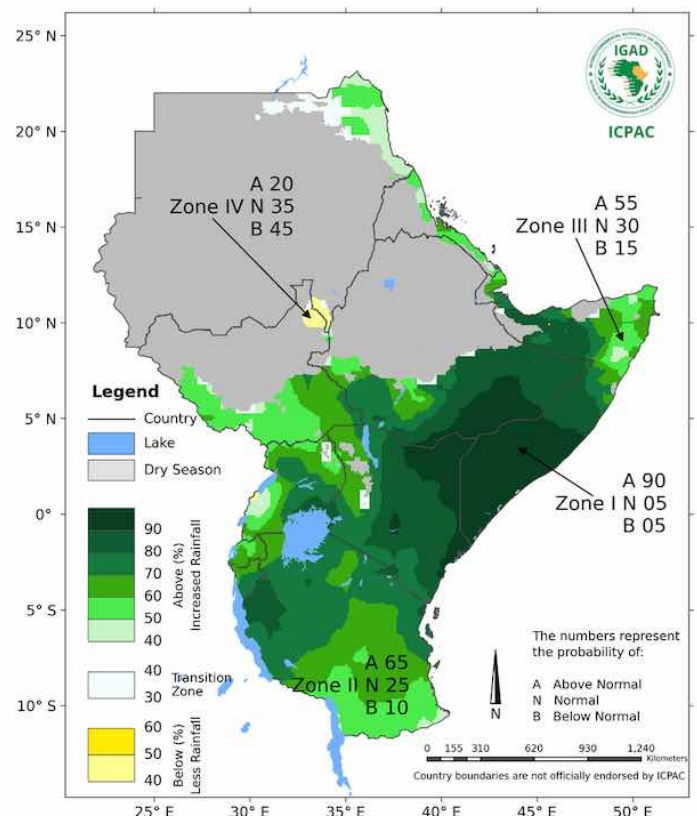
Wide collection of data

WMO uses the datasets from Copernicus Climate Change Service, NOAA, NASA (and others) for its State of the Global Climate reports. It will present an update on this year's climate for COP31 to be held in Antalya, Turkey, in November.

The Greater Horn of Africa

WMO reported that the Greater Horn of Africa is expected to be warmer and wetter than usual in the last quarter of 2026 as El Niño strengthens.

October to December is a critical rainfall period for the equatorial and southern parts of the Greater Horn of Africa, contributing up to 70% of total annual rainfall in parts of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia and up to 40% of total annual rainfall in parts of Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda.



There is an increased likelihood of wetter-than-normal conditions in the last quarter of 2026 in the region, according to a new seasonal climate outlook released by the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC), together with National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) in the region.

This is due to the El Niño event which has developed, and it is expected to strengthen further during the

remainder of the year (2026). Furthermore, a positive phase of Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) was also expected to develop through August to October 2026. These conditions normally lead to enhanced rainfall over the region during the rainy season.

Seasonal outlooks from the extensive network of WMO Regional Climate Centres and WMO Regional Climate Outlook Forums form an integral part of El Niño monitoring and prediction and are also used by the WMO Coordination Mechanism for humanitarians (WCM) to provide information and expert advice to the humanitarian sector to support anticipatory action and protect the most vulnerable.

The regional downscaled rainfall forecast indicates an increased likelihood of wetter-than-normal conditions in the Greater Horn of Africa, with a 90% chance of enhanced rainfall over southern Ethiopia, central to southern Somalia, and north-eastern Kenya, according to ICPAC, which acts as a WMO regional climate centre.

The forecast also indicates a high chance of seasonal rainfall exceeding 400 mm in parts of central to southern Somalia, central parts of Kenya, the Lake Victoria Basin region, Burundi, western Rwanda and western Tanzania.

The above-average rainfall is expected to improve pasture and water availability for livestock. However, excessive rainfall substantially raises flood risk, which could lead to loss of life, crop destruction, damage to critical infrastructure, elevated risk of water- and vector-borne disease outbreaks, and disrupted access to health and nutrition services, according to an accompanying report from the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group.

The timing of the rains is expected to vary across the region. Early to normal onset is more likely across much of the eastern and southern parts of the region, including Somalia, central and eastern Kenya, southern Ethiopia, and most parts of Tanzania.

About El Niño / El Niña

El Niño and La Niña are opposite phases of a naturally occurring climate pattern known as the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), involving fluctuating ocean temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific, coupled with changes in the overlying atmosphere.

These opposites are well-introduced on the WMO website here: <https://tinyurl.com/zdvwetsc>

The Marine Professional Council of the United Kingdom (MPC)

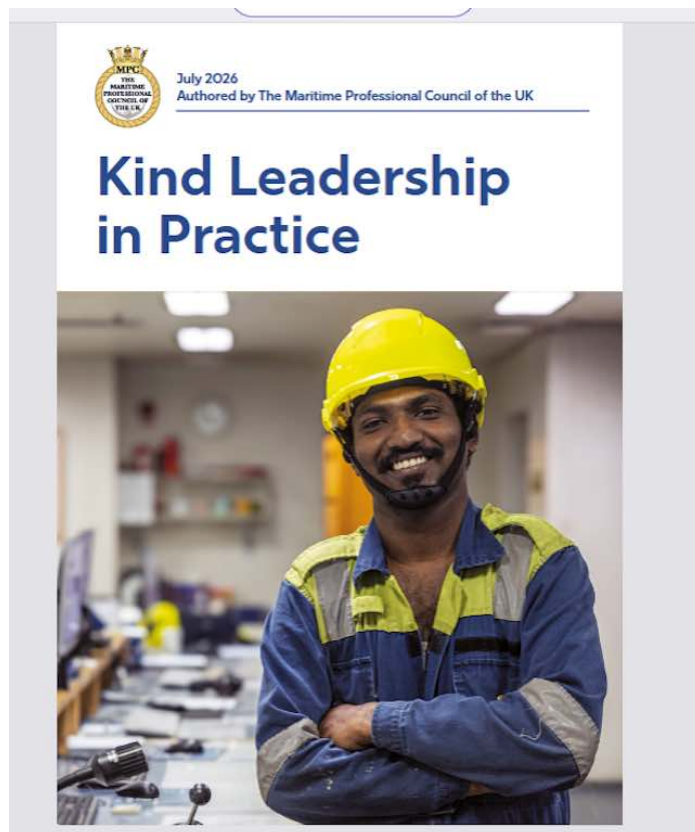
Kind Leadership publications

The London-based Marine Professional Council of the United Kingdom (www.mpc-uk.org) aims to promote professionalism and esteem within the British Merchant Navy and to those organisations directly concerned.

Furthermore, it exists to provide a central point from which professional opinion on maritime matters can be offered to the maritime community, industry, government and the media.

In addition it provides independent expert advice and guidance based on its combined professional knowledge and experience unhindered by any financial or commercial interests.

Also the Council provides guidance to regulators and employers on the professional training standards adequate for the nation's maritime professionals.



In doing so the Council will provide unity to member organisations where their professional concerns can be enhanced by the joint voice of a formal council.

In addition the Council will:

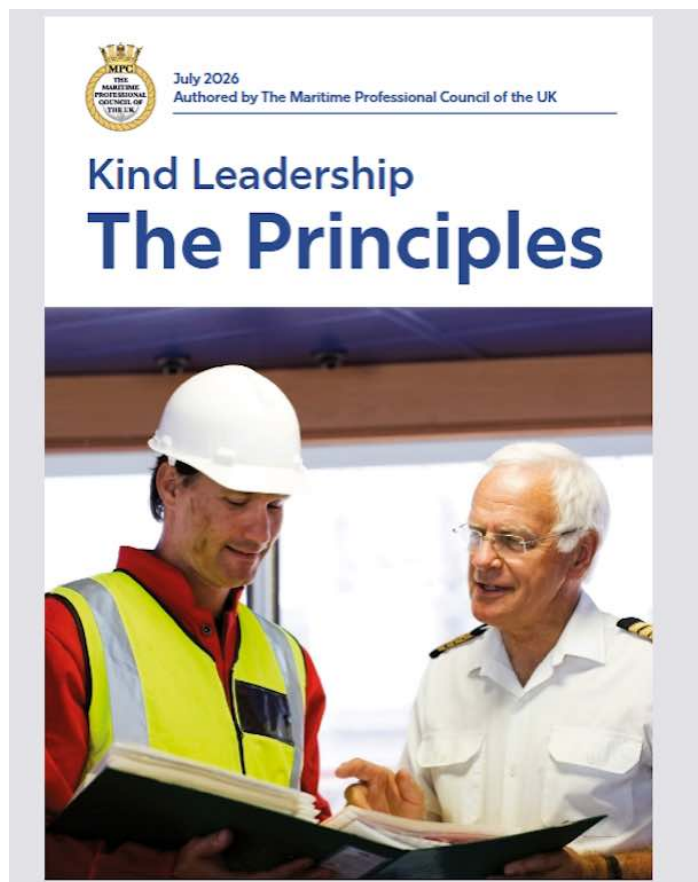
- Bring to the attention of its respective stakeholders any navigational or safety issues that are of concern.
- Enhance the exchange of professional matters between member organisations.
- Provide a focal point to those at sea on any particular professional issue they identify as important.

The Council is made up of senior individuals and representatives from its member organisations, who meet periodically. These include representatives from such bodies as CHIRP, Inter-Manager, Trinity House, the Honourable Company of Master Mariners, the Nautical Institute and the Royal Institute of Navigation

Kind Leadership

Some weeks ago MPC compiled a report on Kind Leadership with the title *MPC Summery Report on Kind Leadership*.

In the document's introduction it is stated that research was carried out on its behalf and was triggered by the recent treatment of seafarers highlighted by the media, and the need to promote the professional standards required of leaders, both at sea, and ashore.



MPC hopes that the report stimulates industry debate and commitment on how training is transformed to focus on leadership skills and their ethos, rather than on what are claimed as today's mostly technical focused training

A copy of the document is available using the link here: <https://tinyurl.com/2u7adufu>

Foundational publications

Following the Workshop hosted by The Nautical Institute in November 2025 the Council introduced two foundational publications forged from collective vision and collaboration.

These are:

Kind Leadership The Principles

Kind Leadership in Practice

In defence of free shipping:

Global trade, stability and prosperity require a level playing field at sea

A public statement by the Consultative Shipping Group (CSG)

The Consultative Shipping Group (CSG) is an informal cooperation between the maritime authorities of

eighteen shipping nations in Europe, Asia, and North America.

The following countries are members of CSG: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

'Free shipping' is a familiar promise to online shoppers; a small but powerful incentive that goods will arrive at no extra cost. But in the global economy, 'free shipping' has a very different and far more consequential meaning. Not a mere convenience, it is what keeps the shelves stocked and the global economy moving by allowing effective maritime transport between the world's continents.

Maritime transport is not just a service – it is the critical infrastructure underpinning the global economy and safeguarding food and energy security. It is why 'freedom of navigation' constitutes one of the core prerequisites in the resilience of supply chains and global trade.

More than 89% of global trade is transported by sea, from electronics, clothing and cars to grain, metals, oil and gas. Without maritime trade, supply chains would fragment and the global economy as we know it would come to a sudden halt. Pragmatic cooperation and problem solving amongst diverse trading partners keeps these vital trade networks flowing.

Global shipping under strain

Recent events demonstrate how fragile our system of maritime trade can be. From the COVID-19 pandemic to the war in Ukraine, drought in the Panama Canal, and conflict in the Middle East, maritime supply chains have faced repeated disruptions that raise uncertainty and add friction to global supply chain efficiency.

Discriminatory trade measures reinforce these developments. Global shipping works best when rules are clear and consistent around the world. Uncertainty about future access to ports or routes can affect long-term commercial planning. When countries begin to pursue diverging approaches, regional initiatives or stalled multilateral processes weaken the coherence of the system. Fragmentation in rules leads directly to fragmentation in markets and ultimately to higher costs for businesses and consumers.

These are not episodic shocks; they are signals of a structural shift in the operating environment of global trade. Shipping routes are increasingly instruments of leverage and risk. Sovereignty, resilience and prosperity rely on partnerships and practical cooperation and coordination to preserve an open global trade system.

Further fracturing global supply chains is the expansion of the number of vessels engaging in operations that circumvent sanctions, an unregulated shadow fleet (see IMO Resolution A.1192(33)) of hundreds of ships operating outside of standard insurance, safety and transparency frameworks. This creates parallel systems within global shipping,

increases risk, and bypasses environmental and safety standards, undermining trust and predictability in maritime markets. The result is a two-tier system, one governed by rules, the other by opacity, ultimately weakening both.

Protecting global trade starts with rules at sea

The answer to these challenges is not necessarily more rules nor to rely on a patchwork of unilateral actions, but rather better alignment of existing international rules. The foundation for stable and rules-based global shipping – and thus for global trade – is already in place. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides a comprehensive legal framework governing activities at sea, including the rights of innocent and transit passage for ships. Furthermore, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) is the central forum responsible for developing global standards to ensure freedom of navigation while maintaining safety, security and fair competition. Its strength lies in its universality. Geopolitical volatility negatively affects confidence and demand across economies and markets. No single country or supply-chain actor can address these challenges alone.



This global rules-based framework provides the predictability the sector depends on. It allows shipping companies to plan, invest and operate across oceans with a clear understanding of their rights and obligations. Crucially, it also creates a level playing field by subjecting all operators to common standards, regardless of which country's flag a ship flies. When these rules are applied universally, competition is driven by efficiency, innovation and quality, not by regulatory evasion.

Defending freedom of navigation therefore requires a focused and coordinated response grounded in globally recognized rules. It is essential that trading partners work together to maintain network resilience, manage risks consistently, and prevent fragmentation from becoming embedded in global shipping networks when international trade rules are not functioning as intended. This cooperation and trust-building contributes to keeping markets open, competitive and resilient under stress.

First, existing international rules must be enforced consistently across jurisdictions. Uneven application distorts markets and ultimately weakens confidence in global shipping as a reliable backbone of international trade. Effective enforcement also depends on

adequate transparency and information exchange between relevant authorities.

Secondly, political support for developing and upholding common standards is paramount. Strong international cooperation is not a constraint on sovereignty; it is a prerequisite for effective governance in an interconnected world. Consistency, transparency and pragmatic cooperation facilitate open, predictable, reliable, and non-discriminatory maritime shipping that serves the world.

Commitment to rules-based shipping and pragmatic cooperation will strengthen fair competition, protect global trade and support economic stability and foster prosperity. This will reduce volatility and reinforce confidence in global supply chains.



We call on all maritime nations to actively support and uphold the core principles governing shipping, from freedom of navigation to the international legal frameworks governed by multilateral institutions such as the IMO. We commit to work together to ensure a level playing field by applying rules more consistently and transparently across global shipping.

Sovereignty and resilience depend on cooperation, coordination and practical problem-solving among trusted partners in the world's maritime supply chains. Allowing fragmentation to deepen, undermines the global rules-based maritime framework and increases the risk of disruptions at key maritime chokepoints. As the closure of the Strait of Hormuz demonstrates: When shipping supply chains fragment, the global economy fragments with it.

Illustration per Danish Maritime Authority www.dma.dk/news with grateful thanks. DMA ©

Previous Newsletter issues may be found here:

<https://ifsma.org/newsletter-archive/>