COMITE MARITIME INTERNATIONAL

PRESIDENT

12th February 2026

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Dear Friends.

I write to you today with some sad news and some good news.

Paul Gill RIP

I am hugely saddened by the news I received last week which I must pass on to our membership, of the passing of Paul Gill, past President of the Irish Maritime Law Association, and founding partner of Dillon Eustace. I am attaching hereto an email circulated by the Irish Maritime Law Association with this news.

I have exceptionally fond memories of Paul, usually the heart and sole of CMI gatherings and meetings, always the perfect host and forever welcoming. On a personal level I have lost a true friend and I look back at our hours of convivial, interesting and deep conversations. Paul supported the CMI to the hilt and I shall always remember him for his unstinting support and encouragement to me personally during my Presidency and in our collective efforts related to the Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships with Paul being amongst the first to be present in Malta for our initial colloquium in 2018. He will be sorely missed and our heart felt condolences go out to his dear wife Jackie and daughter Elizabeth.

Rio 2026.

The preparations for Rio are well underway. The speakers for the panels are being lined up and the final speaker list will be out shortly. Rio promises to underline why the Comite Maritime International remains the leading forum for the deliberation of important maritime law issues leading the way to the unification of international maritime law in so many areas which are proving to be particularly challenging in today's geopolitical scenario.

May I remind you dear friends to take advantage of the early bird registration. As always circa 3 months before our big event, it is very useful and helpful to the organisers to have an idea of numbers. It is therefore very important to the organising committee that those who have not registered and who plan to come, do so as soon as possible. May I therefore ask you to encourage your members to register their attendance.

Furthermore we are delighted to confirm that our Rio organisers have succeeded in getting an extension from the hotel in relation to the very favourable hotel rates up until March 10th. This is all the more reason for registering for the conference and securing your hotel accommodation at these favourable rates as soon as possible.

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Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships.

Next week is a very special week for the CMI. On the 17th of February we will see the coming into force of the Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships.

The trajectory of this Convention has been remarkable. In 6 years and 8 months we have gone from the first meeting of UNCITRAL's Working Group V1 held in New York in 2019, on to its adoption by the General Assembly in December 2022, on to the first signing ceremony in Beijing in September 2023, the second signing ceremony in Malta in June 2024 and in 2025 we had the third ratifying state triggering the application of article 21 and the commencement of the running of the 180 days for the coming into force of the Convention.

On this very special occasion I would like to thank a number of people who played a key role in this project.

Past President Stuart Hetherington who persevered and took the project to UNCITRAL together with Kate Lannan and Renaud Sorieul who were the two persons at UNICTRAL who guided Stuart Hetherington in the initial stages and approaches to UNCITRAL, Alex von Ziegler Past Secretary General of CMI who on behalf of the Swiss government presented the proposed CMI Beijing Draft and was actively present throughout and Ryan Harrington from the UNCITRAL secretariat who came to Malta and supported the Malta Colloquium in 2018 convened in record time, which gathered the industry and presented conclusions which effectively persuaded UNCITRAL to take on the project.

The progress registered during the sessions of Working Group V1 including virtual sessions held during Covid was significant and would simply not have happened if it were not for the determination of all and of the Chair of the Working Group Prof Beate Czerwenka who kept a very firm grip on proceedings, Jose Angelo Estrella Faria - Principal Legal Officer and Head, Legislative Branch International trade Law Division, who expertly provided solutions to several delegations holding divergent views, Alex Kunzelmann, the producer of a number of reports including the explanatory notes on which so much emphasis has been placed by so many delegations throughout the six sessions and of course the Secretary General of UNCITRAL Madame Anna Joubin Bret and the Secretariat of UNCITRAL and to all the staff both in Vienna and in New York.

Thanks go to Rear Admiral Fred Kenney then Director Legal Affairs and External Relations at the IMO and his successor Dorota Lost Sieminska and past Secretary General of the IMO Kitak Lim and current Secretary General Arsenio Dominguez and the Legal Committee of the IMO for agreeing to host a special module on the IMO GISIS platform making it the repository for all Notices of Judicial Sales and Certificates of Judicial Sales.

Thanks go to the state delegations present during the deliberations who understood the importance of the Convention to international trade and worked hard to find consensus. It was a pleasure to work with the European Commission head of delegation Angele Sears Debono with her very constructive approach as well as industry delegations who supported our work including BIMCO, ICS, ITF, International Association of Judges, Law Asia, IBA, IUMI, the International Law Institute, Institute of Arbitrators, FONASBA, and the Institute of Shipbrokers.

I would also like to thank in particular the panellists who answered our call to speak at our Colloquium in Malta in 2018 who came to explain the need for the Convention and thanks to whom we were able to gather over 150 attendees from all over the world and across the maritime industry: Charles Buss from the UK, Peter Laurijssen from Belgium, Camila Mendes Viana Cardoso from Brazil, Brooke Shapiro from the United States, Tilman Stein from Germany, Jason Korbetis from Greece, Lawrence Teh from Singapore, Jan Erik Poetschke from Hamburg, Alexander von Zeigler from Switzerland, Stuart Hetherington from Australia, Ryan Harrington from UNCITRAL, Ann Fenech, Norman Martinez, Cornelia Zammit German and Ivan Sammut from Malta. A big thank you of course goes to the attendees who came from a cross section of the international maritime industry and whose views and deliberations had tremendous persuasive value in convincing UNCITRAL to take on the project.

Last but not least the members of the two, CMI IWGs on Judicial Sales. I speak about 2 IWGs – in the plural. The first IWG, under the Chairmanship of Henry Li worked tirelessly to produce the Beijing Draft. The members of this group were: Henry Li, Jonathan Lux, Andrew Robinson, Frank Smeele, William Sharpe, Lawrence Teh, Frank Nolan, Louis N. Mbanefo, Benoit Goemans, Dr. Klaus Ramming, Aurelio Fernandez-Concheso and Luc Grellet.

The second IWG took the convention to and through the UNCITRAL process and post adoption maintaining the tempo and pressures on various governments to sign and ratify the Convention. The members were and are: Henri Li and I as Co-Chairs, Stuart Hetherington, Frank Nolan, Peter Laurijssen, Jan Erik Poetschke, Tomotaka Fujita, Andew Robinson, Petar Kragic Paula Backden, Eduardo Albors, Beiping Chu and recently Harmen Hoek and Jose Angelo Estrella Faria.

As the CMI co-ordinator for the project at UNCITRAL I can vouch for the fact that all members worked tirelessly during the deliberations at UNICTRAL with intensive preparation in advance of every session, by contributing and preparing the Handbook on Judicial sales ably edited by Peter Laurijssen, in promoting the Convention after its adoption by the United Nations in December 2022 by speaking on the Convention in fora across the globe, by approaching their governments, approaching other administrations, contributing to articles and books, as well as lectures, speeches, public engagements, webinars and podcasts all aimed to publicize the importance of the Convention to international trade and its ratification.

Finally I would like to thank the Ministries of Transport, Foreign Affairs and Justice of Malta, for having supported the CMI and its efforts to promote the Convention starting with the Malta Colloquium of 2018, going on to the further Colloquium in April 2023 and on to a 2nd signing ceremony of the Convention in Malta in 2024.

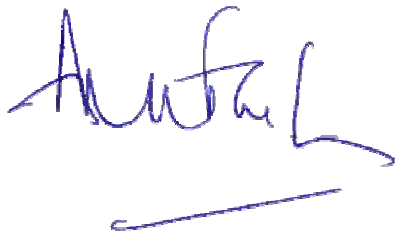
On this note it is with great pleasure that I announce that the Maltese Government in liaison with the UNCITRAL secretariat and the CMI plans to organise an event in Malta in the first half of 2026 to celebrate the ratification by Malta of the Convention and the coming into force of the Convention. Malta like so many other EU Member States plans to ratify the Convention as soon as all the EU processes are completed. More information about this will be circulated in due course.

As I said in my last letter dear friends, the coming into force of the Convention is NOT the end of the road for our IWG. Whilst it is encouraging that three states have ratified the Convention triggering article 21, the strength and success of the entire process lies in getting as many states to ratify – so the work goes on and we will continue to encourage you to get your governments to ratify this Convention important to international trade.

In the meantime we will enjoy the moment and I encourage you to share the posts which will be appearing on Linked in to commemorate this important event.

See you all in Rio and please register as soon as possible.

Best regards
Yours sincerely



Ann Fenech
President