



COMITE MARITIME INTERNATIONAL

PRESIDENT

6th January 2026

Executive Councillors

Presidents National Maritime Law Associations

Consultative Members

Titulary Members

Dear Friends

A very happy new year to all of you and your families and dear ones.

This my 25th letter to you but my first letter for 2026 to all of you comes against the backdrop of a rather challenging international political climate – one in which it becomes all the more important for us mere mortal citizens of the world – the members of our NMLAs - to find what is common to all of us rather than what is not, with a view to achieving unity in what is becoming a rather complex world. Now more than every before, our very raison d'être, the unification of international maritime law, takes on additional significance. May we all during 2026 find what unites us rather than what divides us.

Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships

On that note of course 2026 is a particularly important year for the CMI because our Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships will come into force. The great day is the 17th of February 2026 and I am aware of a number of States already working on their internal processes and laws with a view to being able to ratify the Convention as soon as possible. We have seen over the past months the usefulness of the decision of Working Group VI at UNCITRAL to go for the minimum number of ratifying states to bring the Convention into force. It would appear that this approach has beaten the “Convention Fatigue Syndrome”. It is already becoming apparent that the coming into force of the Convention following the ratification by the 3rd ratifying state is indeed encouraging other states to ratify because they know that as soon as they ratify the Convention will be in force.

Let us all go that extra mile in convincing our Governments to sign and ratify this convention which promises to bring uniformity as well as certainty and clarity to international trade at no political cost.

Mobile offshore renewable Units.

As you are fully aware, we have an extremely active IWG dealing with Mobile Offshore Renewable Units. Notwithstanding that it was set up relatively recently Co-Chairs Frank Nolan and Alexander Severance and members have been working very hard indeed and have already prepared the attached Draft Convention to Facilitate the Registration and financing of Mobile Offshore Renewable Units together with an Annex.

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Frank and Alex have requested that these two documents be circulated well in advance of the Rio Colloquium so that they can be fully discussed and deliberated at the open session dedicated to MORU on Tuesday 12th May 2026. Frank and Alex ask NMLAs if they plan to attend the session and that they be notified ahead of time so that flags or place cards identifying the delegations could be prepared ahead of the session. They also add that they would be happy to receive from you any comments you may have to the draft. Please send your replies to Frank Nolan and Alexander Severance on frank.nolan1949@gmail.com and alexander.severance@dk.dlapiper.com.

IWG on Decarbonisation Questionnaire

Our IWG on Decarbonisation has been working very hard with significant participation by the Green Fuels work stream in the IMO correspondence group preparing a position paper for Legal Committee 113.

The Green Contracts workstream on its part has prepared the attached questionnaire and we would be grateful if NMLAs would respond to this questionnaire by the 1st March 2026 so that the replies can be taken into account for the purposes of the Colloquium in Rio. Replies are to be sent to Daniel Farrugia a member of the working group at daniel.farrugia@fenechlaw.com.

Positions of Secretary General and Administrator

As you all know Rosalie Balkin and Lawrence Teh will be stepping down from the positions of Secretary General and Administrator in Rio in 2026. Rosalie steps down from her position as Secretary General after a serving for a period of 9 years and Lawrence steps down after serving for a period of 13 years.

On my own behalf and on behalf of the Comite Maritime International I would like to thank them both for their years of sterling service, commitment and dedication to the CMI and its cause. Their significant contribution to the cause of the CMI has been noteworthy and much appreciated by all. Dear Rosalie and Lawrence you will be missed.

Finding the appropriate persons to occupy these very important roles and to take the place of Rosalie and Lawrence within the CMI is not an easy task.

Our organisation is currently experiencing significant growth, development and outreach with new and exciting projects which the CMI has identified and intends to lead in key sectors; it is attracting more and more younger maritime lawyers and has strengthened its relationship with industry who and which are excited about forming part of a dynamic organisation which drafts the international regulations which they use in their day to day practice or which effect their day to day operations in an ever challenging environment. In the meantime the CMI must continue to lead with people who have the necessary gravitas, integrity and experience.

For those of you who missed this announcement in our end of year Newsletter ([newsletter 2/2025 link](#)) it is therefore with great pleasure that I announce that EXCO has nominated Jose Angelo Estrella Faria as the next Secretary General of the Comite Maritime International and Mr. Peter Laurijssen as the next Administrator of the CMI.

José Angelo Estrella Faria is the immediate Past Principal Legal Officer and Head, Legislative Branch, at the secretariat of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). He played a key role during the negotiations and deliberations on the Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships at Working Group VI at UNCITRAL.

He was the Secretary-General of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) between 1 October 2008 to 31 July 2017.

A staff member of the United Nations since 1992, he was responsible for UNCITRAL work on privately financed infrastructure projects and electronic commerce. He also supervised the work of Working Group III (Transport Law) between 2005 and 2008, during the negotiation of the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Carriage of Goods Wholly or Partly by Sea (the “Rotterdam Rules”)

Mr. Estrella Faria is a national of Brazil. He graduated from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (Porto Alegre, Brazil) and holds a Master of European Law from the Europa Institut der Universität des Saarlandes (Saarbrücken, Germany). He has published various articles and books on legal harmonisation, commercial law, cultural property law and international law. He has lectured at various universities and is an honorary professor of the University of International Business and Economics, China. He is a member of the Curatorium of the Xiamen Academy of International Law, the American Law Institute, the European law Institute and is an Associate member of the International Academy of Comparative Law.

Peter Laurijssen is a Belgian national and the President of the Belgian Maritime Law Association and Legal Director of CMB Group, Antwerp. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers and owner member of BIMCO Documentary Committee.

He has been the Editor of the European Transport Law Journal and Director of Fondation Albert Lilar for many years.

Peter was the representative of the ICS as well as BIMCO in working Group VI during the deliberations and negotiation of the Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships, was and is a member of the CMI IWG on Judicial Sales and was responsible for the editing and publishing of the Commentary on the Beijing Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships as a special edition of the European Transport Law Journal of Law and Economics.

He has degrees in law, shipping & freight forwarding and philosophy and is the author and lecturer on issues of maritime & transport law.

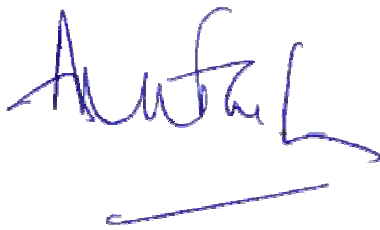
I am equally pleased to announce that both Jose Angelo and Peter have accepted the nominations.

Of course these nominations will be circulated in the usual fashion by the Chair of the Nominating Committee to ensure that all procedures are followed as per our Constitution leading to their election by the General Assembly in May 2026 in Rio de Janeiro.

Finally may I encourage you all to register for the Rio Colloquium as quickly as possible so you may take advantage of the early bird registration.

May I wish you a good start to the year dear friends.

Warm personal regards



Ann Fenech
President CMI