



COMITE MARITIME INTERNATIONAL

PRESIDENT

4th June 2023

President's report to the General Assembly
October 2022 – June 2023.

1. General Introduction

I prepare this President's report as preparations for the Montreal Colloquium are in full swing. It is only eight months ago that we celebrated our 125th Anniversary and when I was elected President of the CMI.

At the outset I would like to thank the members of the organising committee of the Montreal Colloquium for their hard work in putting together what promises to be a wonderful colloquium in beautiful Montreal. Work started in earnest as soon as Antwerp was over and here we are today.

2. Developing our outreach

One of the items on my to do list when I became President was to focus on developing further our outreach and our connectivity with our members. To my mind this could be done in a number of ways.

Social media and Publications.

We needed to continue to refine our social media and publications vehicles and we needed to reach out more to our national maritime law associations and consultative members.

We started by redesigning our Publications and Social Media Committee. It is a committee made up of the Chair Massimiliano Musi, Evelien Peeters, Daniel Luc Farrugia, Maria Borg Barthet, Maja Radunovic, Rosalie Balkin and Lawrence Teh and Taco Van Der Valk and myself. We have convinced

MOB: +356 9947 4536 E-MAIL: ann.fenech@fenechlaw.com

**REGISTERED OFFICE CMI, AISBL: Ernest Van Dijckkaai 8, B-2000, Antwerp, Belgium
Enterprise n° 0867 385 381
www.comitemaritime.org**

Taco van der Valk to remain as the consultant of the committee and he has been of great assistance.

Newsletter

In November we introduced a new format to our newsletter. The new format is a user friendly electronic version similar to those being produced by most law firms and international organisations. It is short and to the point and easy to scroll through enabling the reader to catch the headlines of each news item and to home in on items which are of particular interest to the reader. This format has been very well received.

It is my wish that the newsletter is one of the platforms through which national maritime law associations share their news, articles and items of interest.

It is work in progress and the aim is to continue to refine the Newsletter as we go along. The second electronic version, the first for 2023 has just been sent out and the comments we have received have been very encouraging.

You would have noticed that there has been a marked increase in contributions from national maritime law associations as well as the creation of a new section being “meeting our consultative members.” We hope to feature more and more consultative members this way.

Linked In

As far as our social media is concerned, a very substantial and concerted effort has been made and continues to be made to increase our presence on Linked In. This is the most powerful tool to enable the CMI to spread the word and to make us more visible.

I would like to thank those who regularly contribute to our Linked In Group, however I am sure that with a bit of encouragement there are many others who can join this platform which is the perfect opportunity for national maritime law associations and consultative members to broaden their reach.

I am pleased to report that our efforts have indeed borne fruit as can be seen from the Linked In Private Group Analytics attached hereto.

Linked In “Private Group” and Linked “In Page” explained.

We need to explain that what has been available on Linked in so far is the **Linked In Closed Group**.

A “ Closed Group” allows persons, provided they have specifically requested to form part of the Group, to post directly in the Group. This is what is happening at the moment. It is visible ONLY to members who are part of the Group.

The advantage is that such persons can directly post in the Group.

The disadvantages and limitations however are 2 fold:

1. The posting is limited to private persons so other organisations such as Maritime Law Associations and our Consultative members who have a corporate presence on Linked in cannot post on a group page.
2. Such posts cannot be shared
3. Such posts are only visible to those who are members of the group.

Thus the time has come to have an additional presence on Linked In. This additional presence will be in the form of a Linked In Page.

The benefits of the Linked in Page are:

1. Substantially increased visibility.
2. Posts appearing here can be shared

The Linked In Page will be administered by Daniel Luc Farrugia. He will look out for posts appearing on Linked In relevant to CMI work (for instance NMLA and consultative member pages) and then share them on the CMI Linked In page accordingly. You are encouraged to follow the Page and #CMI in your posts.

However and importantly, please continue to actively post on the existing closed Group and in addition, please start to follow the newly created Page.

Website

The website has been cleaned up and contains extensive amounts of news and information. We will be working towards making it better and it is also very much work in progress

Year Book

In the meantime of course the important Year Book continued to be produced and here in Montreal we will have the 2021 – 2022 Yearbook which has been very ably edited by Massimiliano Musi. Thank you Massimiliano.

Outreach through the international maritime press

Another area we have focused on is outreach through the international maritime press.

This started in earnest in Antwerp where we were very happy to welcome Rob Rust from **Trade Winds** who covered the Antwerp Conference in a very extensive manner.

In addition we have over the past few months been engaging extensively with **Lloyds List**. David Osler followed the CMI efforts during the IMO Legal Committee 110 in Marcy with very substantial coverage. He also attended the Malta symposium in Malta in April 2023 and he put together numerous articles which all showcased the work of the CMI in relation to the Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships.

On being elected President I was interviewed by **Ship Management Magazine** which provided great coverage of the CMI and its work and similar coverage was provided in the South American journal “**MG News Maritime News letter**” focusing on women in the maritime sector which was produced around the IMO International Women’s day celebrated on the 18th of May 2023.

In December 2022 as President of the CMI I was listed in the “**Lloyds List One Hundred People 2022 Thirteenth Edition** The shipping industry’s most influential people. “

Judicial Sales Bible

The IWG on the Ratification of the Convention on Judicial Sales of Ships considered it of utmost importance to produce a single publication gathering within it the most salient documents related to the Convention including the Convention, a comprehensive article explaining the convention, the UN Secretariat Explanatory Notes and several testimonials. A big thank you to Peter Laurijssen who put the Bible together and this will be launched and distributed in Montreal. The Bible is in fact a joint publication between the CMI and the European Transport Law Journal of which Peter Laurijssen is the Editor. CMI is very grateful to ETL.

Stuart Hetherington’s Last 25 year History of the CMI

We are indebted to Stuart for a magnificent account of the last 25 years of the CMI. Thank you Stuart – this is available on the CMI Website.

All of this enhances the profile of the CMI and broadens our outreach – copies attached .

3. Visits to National Maritime Law Associations and Consultative Members

I believe it is crucial that for our organisation to continue to go from strength to strength, that we interact as extensively as possible with our membership. This will enable us to maintain our connectivity, understand what is going on in various parts of the world and in various sectors and receive feed back. This in turn enables us to deliver a better product and our NMLAs can continue to get the benefit of being members of the CMI.

In addition the three year experience in Working Group V1 at UNCITRAL has really taught me how important are our consultative members to our various causes. Our consultative members represent various facets of the maritime industry and maritime service providers and it is crucial for the CMI to hear their views, to ask them to participate in our projects and to contribute to the work we embark on.

We must nurture the relationships we have with our consultative members and develop them.

I was therefore rather determined to meet as many of our NMLAs and consultative members as possible, and have over the past 8 months made a concerted effort at accepting as many invitations as possible. These have included the following:

October 2022: Invited by and spoke at (virtually) Dalian Maritime University – China, Seminar on Judicial Sales

November 2022: Invited by and spoke at (in person) the Swedish MLA autumn meeting in Stockholm

November 2022: Invited by and spoke at (in person) the European Maritime Law Organisation meeting in Denmark.

December 2022: Invited by and spoke at (virtually) Hong Kong Maritime week

December 2022: Attended Malta Maritime Law Association Annual General Meeting during which I resigned as President in view of my election at President of the CMI

January 2023: Paid courtesy visit on Mr. Kitak Lim Secretary General of the IMO and Mr. Fred Kenney Director, Legal and External Affairs at IMO

February 2023: Management committee in Antwerp

March 2023: Attended and spoke at the Real Acedemia de Jurisprudencia Y Legislacion de Espana (virtually) in Madrid

March 2023: Attended and spoke at the International Maritime Law Institute Malta

March 2023: Attended and spoke at the IMO Leg 110 at the IMO London

March 2023: Paid courtesy visit on CMI consultative member, the International Chamber of Shipping in London.

March 2023: Attended and spoke at the annual dinner of consultative member, International Salvage Union

March 2023: Attended and spoke at the spring meeting of the British Maritime Law Association in London

April 2023: Attended and spoke at the 4th International Scientific Conference on Maritime Law in Split Croatia

April 2023: Attended, spoke and moderated at the Malta Symposium on the Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships hosted by the Maltese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in conjunction with CMI and UNCITRAL

April 2023: Met with Stinne Taiger Ivo representing consultative member BIMCO in Malta.

May 2023: Attended and spoke at the USMLA spring meeting in New York and delivered the Healy Lecture

May 2023: Attended and spoke at the International day for Women in Maritime at the IMO in London

May 2023: Attended and spoke at the annual meeting in London of consultative member, the European Maritime Law Organisation

May 2023: Met with Secretary General of the European Community Shipowners Association Mr. Sotiris Raptis in Malta

May 2023: Attended and spoke at the Malta symposium celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Maltese Merchant Shipping Act.

I can already tell that the next 8 months are going to be equally demanding.

4. New working groups

There can be very little doubt that the enthusiasm garnered by the CMI project on the international effects of judicial sales, the work at UNCITRAL and the adoption of the Convention by the UN General Assembly has once again underlined the importance of the CMI to continue to think of and

produce draft conventions with the aim of unifying international maritime law.

The project at UNCITRAL and its current aftermath in which period we are waiting for the signing ceremony and subsequent ratification by as many member states as possible, has also shown however that the CMI clearly has another mission. It is very evident indeed that the CMI is well placed to continue to be a very active partner and facilitator when it comes to the ratification of conventions AFTER the drafting exercise is completed and adoption of conventions is achieved.

We have therefore turned our international working group on Judicial Sales into an **“International Working Group on the Ratification of the Convention on Judicial Sales of ships.”**

Similarly we have created under the Chairmanship of Stuart Hetherington an **“International working group on the ratification of the Rotterdam rules”**. There is a new impetus in encouraging states to ratify the rules and of course we are all looking at the United States.

In addition to these we have also put the wheels in motion for a new working group which will be focusing on **“Decarbonisation”** under the Chairmanship of Harris Zografakis also to include Prof. Charles Debattista and Jolien Kruit.

Furthermore the current international working group on **Acts of Piracy and Maritime Violence** will be also focusing on fraudulent registries and fraudulent activity. This is in direct response to the concerns echoed and expressed during IMO Leg 110 about the frightening rise of fraudulent registries and fraudulent and criminal activity surrounding vessels. Andrew Taylor has asked to be relieved from the Chairing of this committee and the Chair of this committee will be taken over by Richard Neylon from Holman Fenwick and Willan. I would like to thank Andrew for the sterling work he has done in steering this committee.

A new international working group dealing with **“Revision of 1910 Collision Convention and related instruments”** has been formed under the Chairmanship of John O’Connor and the first questionnaire has already been issued. Furthermore thoughts are being expressed on the creation of an international working group on **Mobile Offshore Renewables** which is going to be the subject matter of an entire session during the Montreal Colloquium.

I would like to encourage our members to come forward with any ideas they may have in the creation of new IWGs.

5. New Memberships

In the meantime we have received an applications for membership from Bangladesh and there are a number of other applications from other countries in the pipeline and we hope to be able to confirm these in Gothenburg next year.

Over the past few months we have also been approached by numerous important international industry bodies enquiring about consultative membership of the CMI and we are of course encouraging such membership. Again I hope to be able to report on this further in Gothenburg next year.

6. Administration of the CMI.

We have decided that it would be better if we were to have three rather than two Exco meetings per annum. Two will be virtual and one will be in person to coincide with our General Assembly. We have already held two this year. One was in March, one will be held in Montreal and the third will be held in September. I think this experiment has worked firstly because we see each other more frequently, we can take more timely actions, the organisation becomes smoother and furthermore Exco meetings do not last so long. It also keeps us on our toes more!

We have also held our in person management committee in Antwerp. These in person meetings in Antwerp are important particularly because we can be there in Antwerp to offer Evelien in person support.

7. Preparations for Montreal

Very shortly after the conclusion of the Antwerp conference we started to hold the Montreal Colloquium Meetings. These meetings have all been virtual through the Teams platform. Initially they took place every three weeks, then every two weeks and during the past month every week.

I would like to thank very much indeed all the members of the organising committee, who have worked very hard indeed to bring us a fantastic colloquium here in beautiful Montreal. The Canadian Members of the committee were Paul Harquail President of the Canadian MLA, Shelley Chapelski, John O'Connor, David Colford, Eric Machum, Jean-Marie Fontaine, William Sharpe, Rui Fernandes and David Jones; and Lawrence

Teh, Rosalie Balkin, Evelien Peeters and Dieter Schwampe and I from the CMI Management side and last but not least, Amanda Curtis and Kristy Joplin the wonderful conference organisers that were engaged.

The preparations for Montreal were not without their heart stopping moments including the change in the date of the Montreal Grand Prix meaning that room rates quadrupled, however we were able to hang on to the prices as promised for an acceptable period of time!

Thank you all for all your hard work which is much appreciated.

8. Frank Lawrence Wiswall Jnr 21st September 1939 – 31st May 2023

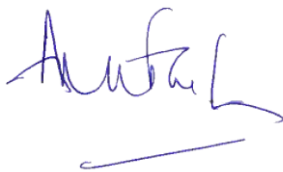
As I was about to conclude this report, I received the very sad news of the passing of one of the Giants of CMI – Frank Lawrence Wiswall Jnr on 31st May 2023 in Bangor Maine. Those fortunate enough to have known him speak as highly about his intellect and accomplishments and passion for maritime law as warmly as they speak about the international friendships he has forged over the years. He is survived by his beloved wife Libby and his daughter Anne Wiswall Kowalski and Frank L. Wiswall III.

His son Frank provided us with a detailed Obituary which we have put up on our website and Linked In.

On behalf of the CMI, our most sincere condolences to Libby, Anne and Frank.

In Conclusion, I have to say that it has been a very busy 8 months with numerous commitments and it does not seem that there is going to be much let up! We will almost certainly have even more to report in the next President's report seeing that this will come in 12 months time, which is 4 months more than the time between Antwerp and Montreal.

Finally my most sincere thanks go to Evelien Peeters – Head Office Manager and Rosalie Balkin our Secretary General for their continuous support and patience, and all the officers and the whole of Exco for working together so well during the past 8 months.



Ann Fenech