

WELCOME TO GOTHENBURG

Bienvenue a Göteborg

Bienvenudo a Gotemburgo

Huānyíng lái dào gēdébǎo

Yōtebori e yōkoso

Merħba għal Gothenburg

VÄLKOMMEN TILL GÖTEBORG

It is my proud honour to, on behalf of the Swedish Maritime Law Association, welcome you all to the City of Göteborg, a city where we, for generations, have lived not just by the sea but from the sea.

In 1923, the CMI held its fourteenth conference here in Göteborg, and had it not been for the pandemic this colloquium would have been marked the 100th anniversary of that conference. However, on the other hand this year marks the 100th anniversary of the Hague Rules, which has given us the opportunity to devote parts of the program to the remarkable work of lawyers before us that has lasted for a century!

Given the two centennials that frames this colloquium, I would like to take the opportunity to reflect on how this organization has evolved since 1923. In the report of the CMI conference that was published in a Swedish law journal in 1923, a Swedish delegate stated that the “CMI has during the last decenniums exercised significant influence in the field of international maritime lawmaking”. Conventions such as the Collision convention and the Salvage convention had been drafted by the CMI and had proven to become internationally accepted law. Although the Hague Rules were first drafted by the International Law Committee, it was only after the CMI had put its touch to it that it was accepted at a diplomatic conference in 1924.

Over the hundred years to come the CMI has, *as an organization*, grown in strength. Back in 1923, the CMI had 16 member-maritime law associations, and the president of the organization was the Belgian minister of the Colonies. Today, CMI has an incredible 52 member-maritime law associations, each representing a free and sovereign state.

Back in 1923 there were 38 delegates attending the conference and attending an international conference was not without severe obstacles. Today, although a flight from Japan, South America or Australia is indeed long, the travel time is nothing compared to the boat trip one hundred years ago. Therefore, we have today 269 delegates from 43 of our member associations. Delegates that are here to share knowledge and experience which is far wider than what could have been the case between the 38 delegates in 1923.

The increased number of member associations has broadened the cultural diversity of the CMI. It means that today, more than ever, our organization can claim to be **international**.

Also, while reading the 1923 yearbook and the transcripts from the Göteborg conference, it did strike me that the speakers address the audience as Ladies and Gentlemen, which shows that there

in fact were women in the audience. However, I think also in this respect our organization has become a lot more diverse.

My conclusion is that today, one hundred years since the last Göteborg conference, the CMI has gained inner strength through its increased and more diverse membership. The knowledge and experience contained in this very room covers all continents of the world, various legal systems and especially various legal traditions as well as varying cultural experience. For the two days to come, this knowledge and experience will be liberally shared and this is something that our organization does so well: to share knowledge freely with our peers.

However, I want to end by citing Mr FRANCK, the then president of the CMI, from his welcome speech here in Göteborg in 1923 where he warned the delegates that “No doubt we have some reasons to congratulate ourselves on our past success, but we must certainly not be self-content with admiration over what we have done we must look forward to what we are doing and to what we are going to do.”

Again, a warm welcome to my city of Göteborg!
