

YMLA Conference 2026 in Hamburg, Germany

Three days of insightful discussions, fresh perspectives and international exchange once again demonstrated that the future of maritime law is shaped through dialogue across borders.

From 11 to 13 June 2026, the German Maritime Law Association had the privilege of hosting the Young Maritime Lawyers Association (YMLA) Conference 2026 in Hamburg. Once a year young maritime lawyers from Belgium, France, the Netherlands, UK and Germany come together to discuss current developments in their national and in international maritime and transport law, exchange experiences, and strengthen their network within the international CMI community. In the past years, the group has grown and it has become a tradition to invite delegates from other European countries as well. This year, lawyers from Denmark, Italy and Spain attended the conference.

The conference began on the evening of 11 June 2026 with a welcoming Get-Together for which Skuld kindly opened their office in the city centre of Hamburg, providing an excellent opportunity for participants to meet in person and engage in inspiring conversations. Before the seminar started on the 12 June, the participants had the chance to experience a "Riddle Hunt" on the historic vessels "Cap San Diego" and "Rickmer Rickmers" which offered a unique setting to deepen professional connections while exploring one part of the city's rich maritime heritage together.

The academic programme on 12 June showcased an impressive range of topics presented by the participants. The presentations covered many of the key challenges and developments in contemporary maritime law, including the 2025 Amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention, Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) and Flag State Enforcement, Force Majeure and Frustration under English Law, cargo claims, negotiable cargo documents, security interests in containers, war risk insurance, sanctions and the so-called "Phantom Fleet", as well as the Hong Kong Convention on Ship Recycling.

Saturday, 13 June, carried the headline "Sustainability Saturday" and the content of the seminar was provided by expert speakers from legal practice and industry. Jenny Schmigale of Scandlines gave insights into the company's ESG and Sustainability Management in the Ferry Sector, Dr. Ximena Hinrichs Oyarce (the Registrar of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Seas) reported on the ITLOS Advisory Opinion on Climate Change, Britta Schulz of Bureau Veritas spoke about GHG reporting for

shipowners, and, last but not least, a guest speaker from France, Prof. Dr. Philippe Corruble, shared interesting thoughts on Sustainability Agreements in Ports from a Competition Law Perspective. Their contributions demonstrated how profoundly sustainability considerations are now shaping maritime law.

The social programme was equally memorable. The Friday evening event at ÜberQuell on the banks of the River Elbe was made even more enjoyable by a fantastic live performance from the band WELL*. The President of the German Maritime Law Association, Prof. Dr. Klaus Ramming, is a member of the band and showed that he is not only a well-respected lawyer but also a talented musician.

Our sincere thanks go to all organisers, sponsors, speakers and participants whose commitment, enthusiasm and expertise made the conference such a success. The YMLA Conference 2026 in Hamburg once again highlighted the immense value of international collaboration for the continued development of maritime law. At a time of global challenges, strong international networks, mutual understanding and the promotion of the next generation of maritime lawyers remain essential for the future of our profession.

YMLA 2026 Hamburg Organising Committee

Dr. Eva-Maria Harm

Ms Katharina Pietsch