ZEFI KARAMANLI

Paralegal | Maritime, Commercial Litigation, Regulatory & Legal Technology Experience
London | Email: zefikaramanli@gmail.com | LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/zefi-karamanli/

PROFILE

Knowledge Management Paralegal at HFW with expertise in multi-jurisdictional legal research, legal analysis and knowledge strategy across shipping, commodities, insurance, corporate, finance and international disputes. Holds an LLM in Maritime Law with Distinction and contributes to legal innovation, AI and data governance initiatives, including representing the Knowledge Management team on the firm's Data Stewards Council. Also supports the firm's pro bono practice across a diverse range of matters. Combines strong analytical, technical and commercial skills with a particular interest in maritime law, international dispute resolution and emerging technologies.

KEY STRENGTHS

Legal research and analysis: UK, EU and international legal research; comparative analysis; Admiralty Court and arbitration award summaries.
Maritime and commercial focus: LLM Maritime Law; shipping, commodities, insurance, corporate, finance and regulatory work.
Commercial awareness: Operations management, supplier negotiations, procurement, budgeting, and contract administration.
Disputes and litigation support: Evidence requests, document review, mediation, employment tribunal and insolvency investigation exposure.
Drafting and communication: Client-facing updates, legal memoranda, briefings, client training materials/presentations, and clear written advice.
Technology and initiative: AI Ambassador experience, Copilot-enabled workflow improvement, Excel automation and legal tech testing.

EDUCATION

City, University of London | LLM Maritime Law, Distinction | Dissertation: Maritime Cybersecurity: Is the Legal Framework Sufficient?
University of Strathclyde | LLB (Hons) Scots and English Law, 2:1 Upper Division | Dissertation: Are International Laws Governing Cyber Warfare Sufficient?
Glasgow Clyde College | HND Practical Journalism, Grade A

LEGAL AND COMMERCIAL EXPERIENCE

Knowledge Management Paralegal | HFW *January 2025 - Present*

International law firm role supporting lawyers across shipping, insurance, commodities, corporate, finance, regulatory, sustainability and disputes-related matters.

- Draft clear, commercially focused legal memoranda, legal updates and briefing notes, supporting fee earners on active matters through legal research, document review, contractual analysis and evidence requests.
- Conduct in-depth UK, EU and international legal research, including comparative research into class action regimes in the UK, France and the United States in support of AXA XL.
- Produce structured research notes, arbitration award summaries and case analyses across shipping, commodities, insurance, corporate, EU, sustainability, finance and regulatory matters, including maritime and Admiralty Court decisions.
- Monitor legal and industry developments through sources such as BIMCO and the IMO, preparing shipping case summaries for the monthly Shipping Legal Developments Update and leading the Corporate and Finance Industry Update.
- Support high-profile and sensitive matters by analysing legal advice, regulatory materials, intelligence reports and international sources in connection with geopolitical developments including the Strait of Hormuz crisis.
- Act as the dedicated paralegal for the firm's Cyber initiative, building a specialist resource bank from inception and supporting lawyers with cyber-related legal resources.
- Review, redact and prepare documents for GDPR compliance, profile know-how for knowledge systems, and maintain accurate records, trackers and databases.
- Support international offices, including Hong Kong, Australia, the EU and BVI, by responding to legal research and know-how requests across jurisdictions.
- Deliver training sessions to trainees on corporate legal research tools and support legal technical training through materials, logistics, stakeholder liaison and follow-up administration.
- Participate as a pilot member of HFW's AI Ambassador Network and Steering Committee, testing legal AI tools, identifying use cases and developing process improvements, including Copilot-enabled Excel automation and data extraction workflows.

- Assist with updating the Insurance and Reinsurance Latin America Interactive Map, liaising with stakeholders to develop relevant questionnaire content, identifying appropriate partners to engage, and maintaining accurate records of existing data.
- Represent the Knowledge Management team on HFW's Data Stewards Council, helping to shape firmwide data governance strategy, drive improvements in data quality and taxonomy management, and support initiatives aimed at improving the accessibility, integrity and value of legal knowledge assets.

Operations Manager | Oceanic Group *February 2020 - July 2024*

Commercial role combining operations, contract administration, supplier management and stakeholder engagement across a growing international business.

- Drafted and reviewed commercial documents, including terms and conditions, cease and desist notices, confidentiality agreements and non-disclosure agreements.
- Negotiated with suppliers and service providers across the UK, United States and Canada, maintaining service quality while reducing annual costs by 20%.
- Managed budgets, bookings, procurement, supplier relationships, contract administration and operational planning, developing a strong commercial and client-service mindset.
- Built and maintained relationships with customers, partners and colleagues, acting as a primary contact for enquiries and helping resolve issues efficiently.
- Used operational data and analytics to support business decisions, contributing to a 15% revenue increase through expansion into Canada.
- Planned and organised business-to-business virtual conferences using AI software, demonstrating adaptability and an interest in technology-enabled delivery.

Charity Formation and Governance Officer | Voluntary role *October 2020 - August 2023*

Governance and regulatory role supporting the formation and administration of a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

- Worked with trustee-lawyers on charity formation and legal structuring, including drafting and refining the Constitution to support OSCR registration.
- Led communications with OSCR, prepared documents, responded to regulator queries and contributed to the successful granting of SCIO status.
- Streamlined administrative processes, supported funding applications, audits and managed procurement of goods and services with a focus on value for money.

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS AND LEGAL EXPOSURE

- Participated in a successful mediation on behalf of Oceanic Group, helping resolve a dispute without court involvement and securing a favourable settlement.
- Participated in an Employment Tribunal matter that secured a favourable £20,000 award in Scotland.
- Assisted a creditor in liquidation proceedings and prepared a report for the Insolvency Service that triggered an investigation into directors' misconduct and potential liabilities.
- Provided Greek translation support for confidential and highly sensitive matters, including court submissions, statements and supplementary filings such as a 60-page preamble submitted to court.
- Supported pro bono initiatives involving international NGOs, including research and initial advice on EU and US sanctions regimes and secondary sanctions developments.
- Author, "From Oil to Uranium: Should Nuclear-powered Merchant Ships be Governed by a Special International Liability Convention?" (2026) – Essay submitted to the Comité Maritime International (CMI) Young Legal Professionals Essay Competition, examining the adequacy of the existing international liability framework for nuclear-powered merchant shipping.
- Research Assistant, "Maritime Arbitration in Numbers: Chartering the Leaders and Challengers in Global Maritime Arbitration" (HFW, 2025) – Assisted with legal research, data analysis and drafting for HFW's comparative study of major maritime arbitration centres and developments in global maritime dispute resolution.
- Member, Young European Federalists (JEF Greece) – Actively participated in JEF Greece initiatives and panel discussions on European defence and strategic autonomy, engaging with youth leaders and civil society representatives on contemporary international policy, security and regulatory issues.

TECHNOLOGY, LANGUAGES AND INTERESTS

Technology | Microsoft 365, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Access, Microsoft Copilot, legal databases (Westlaw, PL, LexisNexis), knowledge systems, and AI-assisted workflow tools

Languages | Greek native; English fluent; German intermediate; French basic

Interests | Commercial litigation, maritime law, cyber security, AI and legal technology, sanctions, international disputes and sustainable finance