**New ICS Chairman Designate named and Secretary General takes the helm as industry faces critical global challenges**

* John Denholm CBE appointed as Chairman Designate, to succeed Emanuele Grimaldi at the ICS AGM in June 2026.
* Thomas Kazakos succeeds Guy Platten as Secretary General following a formal handover at the AGM witnessed by the President of the Republic of Cyprus
* Malta becomes a full member of ICS, reflecting the nation's critical role in international shipping.

**13 June, Athens** – Following the conclusion of the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) Annual General Meeting and Board Meeting in Athens, which was opened by The Hon. Vassilis Kikilias, Minister of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy, Hellenic Republic of Greece, the organisation announced several major developments, marking a pivotal moment for global maritime leadership.

The board of ICS unanimously recommended John Denholm CBE as the successor to current Chairman, Emanuele Grimaldi. Mr Denholm will take up the role following the conclusion of Mr Grimaldi’s term at the ICS AGM in June 2026. Mr Denholm currently serves as Board Member for the UK and Vice Chair of ICS. He is also the Chairman of J. & J. Denholm Limited, a family-owned business with interests spanning shipping, logistics, seafoods, and industrial services.

ICS also confirmed the appointment of 3 new Vice Chairs, Dr Gaby Bornheim (Germany), Mr Carl-Johan Hagman (Japan) and Mr Claes Berglund (Sweden).

In a further transition in ICS leadership, Thomas Kazakos has formally succeed Guy Platten as Secretary General. Formally Director General of the Cyprus Shipping Chamber, Mr Kazakos joined ICS in April for a preparatory handover period, ensuring a smooth transition for the Chamber. The President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Nikos Christodoulides joined the AGM for this significant moment, welcoming Mr Kazakos into the role and recognising Mr Platten’s seven years of service.

The Board also confirmed the full membership of the Malta International Shipowners Association. Formerly an Associate Member, Malta now joins as a Full Member of ICS. This advancement reflects Malta’s expanding influence in maritime affairs and comes at a time when global trade is undergoing substantial transformation.

Board discussions took place against a backdrop of mounting geopolitical uncertainty. There was a strong emphasis on the need for clear, unified leadership across the shipping industry as it navigates complex and evolving challenges.

Key topics of discussion included the new GHG reduction measures, which are due for formal adoption at the IMO’s extraordinary session in October, and which are expected to reshape the structure of the global shipping industry for years to come. While the final agreement is more complex than anticipated, ICS played a central role throughout the IMO negotiations. Also on the agenda were the impact of protectionism, supply chain security and seafarer welfare.

Emanuele Grimaldi, Chairman of the International Chamber of Shipping said: “With all that is going on in the maritime space at the moment the industry needs strong governance and strong leadership. John has been involved with ICS for years and I am pleased that I will be able to pass the rains to such a knowledgeable leader who, with the support of the Vice-Chairs and Board will ensure shipowners interests are understood as we seek to be an organisation that provides solutions. I also welcome Thomas as our new Secretary General. Thomas inherits a wonderful team and I know he will be a force for good as we continue to represent our industry on the world stage.

Finally I must thank Guy Platten for all he has done over the past seven years. Guy has led ICS and our industry during a period of significant challenge, whether through COVID, responding to the Ever Given incident or navigating the intricacies of the decarbonisation agenda. Guy has increased the impact of ICS and helped our industry to navigate the challenges that we have faced.”

The Board discussed concerns over the ongoing threat of global protectionism and increasing trade tariffs. These developments have led to notable disruptions in global trade flows, maritime transport, and supply chains. The Board acknowledged a growing trend towards economic bifurcation and decoupling, which may significantly reshape international trade dynamics.

ICS conveys our great thanks to Mr Themis Papadopoulos (Cyprus) and Ms Caroline Yang (Singapore), who are both stepping down as a Vice Chairs after four years of service, Metin Düzgit (Türkiye) was elected in 2023 and continues to serve his first two year term.

The ICS Board remains committed to advocating for a resilient, inclusive and forward-looking maritime sector, underpinned by collaborative leadership and global representation.

**About ICS**

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) is the principal global trade association for merchant shipowners and operators, representing all sectors and trades and over 80% of the world's merchant fleet – www.ics-shipping.org