  

**Governments and industry reaffirm commitment to trade and global stability at high-profile Athens Summit**

* Over 350 senior delegates from governments and industry convened to address global risks to shipping and trade at the Shaping the Future of Shipping Summit.
* Summit highlighted need for regulatory cohesion, seafarer training and secure trade routes amid geopolitical uncertainty.
* At the Summit it was announced that China and Malta are joining the Clean Energy Marine (CEM) HUBS initiative.

**13 June 2025, Athens** – the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy of the Hellenic Republic, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) and the Union of Greek Shipowners (UGS) co-hosted the high-level *Shaping the Future of Shipping Summit* on the 11 June in Athens, Greece.

The Summit brought together over 350 senior delegates from more than 30 countries, including ministerial representatives and chief executives from the global maritime and energy sectors. Discussions addressed the complex and evolving geopolitical landscape, regulatory developments, and the critical need for enhanced seafarer training and recruitment to safeguard the future of global trade.

The high-profile event included Ministerial attendees from key maritime states, including:

* The Hon. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic (via video message)
* The Hon. Vassilis Kikilias, Minister of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy, the Hellenic Republic
* Apostolos Tzitzikostas, European Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism
* Fu Xuyin, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Transport, People’s Republic of China
* The Hon. Chris Bonett, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Public Works, Republic of Malta
* The Hon. Marina Hadjimanolis, Deputy Minister for Shipping, Republic of Cyprus
* The Hon. Nehad Shahin Ali Shahin, Deputy Minister of Transport, Arab Republic of Egypt
* Arsenio Dominguez, Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization (via video address)

The summit fostered a high-level exchange of views between policymakers and industry leaders. With maritime transport underpinning over 90 per cent of global trade, the discussions centred on the mounting challenges posed by a shifting geopolitical order, including rising strategic competition, the proliferation of unilateral trade measures, and increasing regulatory complexity.

Participants examined the immediate and long-term risks facing the global shipping sector, including the economic impact of regional instability, the implications of climate policy divergence, and the need for unified regulatory approaches that support both decarbonisation and trade efficiency. A strong consensus emerged around the urgent need to maintain open markets and ensure the interoperability of global shipping regulations to protect supply chain resilience and economic security.

**The Hon. Vassilis Kikilias, Minister of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy of the Hellenic Republic, said:**

“Only through teamwork will we ensure the future of shipping. Governments and shipping communities need to work side by side in order to achieve this. With Greek shipping constituting a strategic pillar of the national, the European and the world economy, we are in constant dialogue with our shipping community. And I invite all stakeholders involved in the future of shipping to continue the dialogue in a spirit of openness. Because shipping is not just a sector of economy. It is the backbone of global stability and prosperity. Shipping needs global rules and the level playing field it deserves.”

**In a keynote address, International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) Chairman Emanuele Grimaldi stated**:

“We find ourselves in a period of phenomenal upheaval. The world around us is shifting in profound and sometimes disconcerting ways. Global trade patterns are becoming increasingly fragmented. Geopolitical upheaval, be it through armed conflict, strategic competition, or growing regulatory divergence, is no longer a distant backdrop. It is a force that is reshaping our operating environment in real time. And amidst this uncertainty, the expectations on shipping are undiminished. We are still relied upon to deliver goods, growth, and, most critically now, solutions.

**Melina Travlos, President of the Union of Greek Shipowners, said:**

“With over a century of institutional experience, the Union of Greek Shipowners remains committed to informing global policy, championing free trade, safety of life at sea, and environmental sustainability. The shaping of the future of shipping can only take place with respect for the industry’s deep know-how. Decision and policymakers must not regulate for shipping without shipping. Collaboration is the key to adopting and implementing pragmatic solutions to every challenge we face. Let’s focus on what unites us, not what divides us. Let us continue to lead —united—in vision, responsibility and unwavering commitment to the sustainable future of global shipping… of the world.”

The Summit also provided a platform for reflection on the essential role of seafarers, emphasising the urgent requirement to invest in recruitment and training. Discussions further explored the regulatory framework surrounding greenhouse gas emissions, with a focus on implementation of the International Maritime Organization’s (IMO) GHG strategy, developments from the recent MEPC83 meeting, and pathways towards equitable carbon pricing.

Particular attention was given to the Clean Energy Marine (CEM) HUBS initiative and its potential to accelerate zero-emission fuel deployment in developing regions. During the Summit it was announced that the governments of China and Malta have joined the [Clean Energy Marine (CEM) HUBS](https://www.cleanenergyministerial.org/initiatives-campaigns/hubs/), an initiative of the [Clean Energy Ministerial](https://www.cleanenergyministerial.org/). China (the first country in Asia to join the initiative) and Malta (the second European country to join the initiative following Greece in 2024) will bring unique expertise to the initiative to align the energy-maritime value chain and share best practices globally. Nine countries are now part of the initiative.

The Summit concluded with a shared commitment to continued dialogue and practical cooperation, with participants recognising the necessity of industry and governments working together to ensure that maritime transport can continue to deliver sustainable growth in an increasingly fragmented world.

A follow-up Summit will take place in Hong Kong in November 2025, providing a further opportunity to review progress and maintain momentum on the key priorities established in Athens.

**Notes to Editors:**

Attached to this release is also the full speeches of Ms Melina Travlos, President of the Union of Greek Shipowners and Mr Emanuel Grimaldi, Chairman of the International Chamber of Shipping.

Photos from the event can be accessed [here](https://www.flickr.com/photos/internationalchamberofshipping/albums/72177720326807316/).

**About ICS**

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) is the principal international 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](https://www.ics-shipping.org/).

**About UGS**

First established in 1916, the UGS represents Greek-owned and managed from Greece vessels over 3,000 gt under Greek and other European and third country flags. Despite current challenges, Greek shipping represents more than 60% of the EU-controlled fleet and more than 20% of the world deadweight capacity - <https://www.ugs.gr/en/>.