

*Shaping the Future of Shipping Summit*

*Ms. Melina Travlos, President of the Union of Greek Shipowners*

Your Excellencies Ministers,

Distinguished guests,

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the world's leading maritime nation.

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.

We are grateful to the International Chamber of Shipping and its President, Emanuele Grimaldi, for making this Summit happen in Athens. And to our Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Insular Policy, for placing it under its auspices.

This Summit provides an invaluable opportunity for an open and meaningful dialogue between policymakers and industry leaders, an opportunity that should not only be seized, but replicated.

The shaping of the future of shipping can only take place with respect for the industry's deep know-how.

Shipping is a silent facilitator that ensures, in the most economical way, the security of global supply chains, as well as the food and energy autonomy of countries around the world.

Our industry has proved to be the lifeline of humanity on many critical occasions, when the latter's viability has been put to the test. Covid-19, wars, geopolitical tensions, humanitarian crises, climate change.

Shipping has always delivered.

Our actions have always spoken louder than our words.

However, despite its so tangible contribution to our everyday life, shipping largely remains out of sight, out of mind—, for both policymakers and the wide public.

Our industry's irreplaceable role is often overlooked – not due to lack of appreciation, but primarily due to lack of understanding.

This needs to change.

Not because we seek praise, but for achieving effective policymaking.

Policies and legislation must not undermine the work and sustainability of shipping: a strategic sector that is complex, distinct, and deeply interconnected with many other industries, not to say all.

And today, this sector faces multiple challenges that we need to address both collectively and individually:

An energy transition, with unrealistic set goals.

Increased regionalism, which threatens the very foundation of an efficient international regulatory regime.

Fierce international competition, which challenges sustainability.

Maritime security issues, which put life at sea under direct threat.

On this last critical issue, I had the rare opportunity just a few days ago to brief the United Nations Security Council during a high-level open debate.

The debate was held under the Presidency of Greece, and I would like to thank from this podium, too, our Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, for offering a platform to our industry, at the heart of the United Nations. His welcome statement today is also a vivid illustration of his recognition of shipping's strategic importance.

Dear All,

The expert input of the industry must be fully reflected in maritime policy making at national, regional and global level.

This stands also for our industry's global regulator, the IMO. The decisions taken at the IMO should be more than a mere balancing act among the interests of its Member States. They should be rooted in a real understanding of how the industry truly operates. What is feasible and what is not.

And to do that, they must incorporate the industry's institutional voice... which, unfortunately, was not the case during the recent IMO deliberations on the Green House Gas emissions reduction measures.

Let us not forget: the IMO regulates only ships. It cannot directly regulate the other stakeholders, whose contribution to decarbonization is, however, a *sine qua non*.

Without safe, scalable, and globally available alternative fuels, decarbonization will remain a theoretical goal.

Funds raised must be directed back to the industry to support its decarbonization.

Our sector consistently strives for more efficiency and invests in new, safe and available alternative technologies.

But policymakers around the world must remember: no transition and no growth are possible on the back of stranded investments.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Shipping needs a global regulatory framework that reflects its nature. A framework that is built on realism, that enables fair competition and fosters innovation.

In this endeavor, the role of ICS, the institutional international voice of our industry, is invaluable.

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.

I'm confident that no challenge is beyond our reach, if we face it together.

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.

Thank you