

CRONACHE

VII ADRIATIC MARITIME LAW CONFERENCE

IZOLA (SLOVENIA) 9-11 APRIL 2026

From 9th to 11th April 2026, in the historic centre of Izola (Slovenia), the VII Adriatic Maritime Law Conference carried on a well-established tradition of regional cooperation among maritime law associations from the Adriatic basin. Jointly organised by the maritime law associations of Slovenia (DPPS – Društvo za pomorsko pravo Slovenije), Italy (AIDIM – Associazione Italiana di Diritto Marittimo), Croatia (HDPP – Hrvatsko društvo za pomorsko pravo), and Montenegro (MMLA – Crnogorsko udruženje za pomorsko pravo), the conference welcomed for the first time representatives of the recently established Albanian Maritime Law Association – marking an important milestone in the evolution of the conference: the event offered an intellectually stimulating occasion for discussion on contemporary challenges in maritime law.

Thursday, 9th April 2026

1st Session: Keynote Speeches

Chaired by Dr Mitja Grbec (University of Primorska and attorney-at-law in Koper), the keynote session featured five distinguished speakers offering historical, institutional, and jurisdictional perspectives.

Giorgio Berlingieri, President of AIDIM and Vice President Honoris Causa of the CMI, delivered a presentation entitled “*Maritime Liens: An Historical Overview on the Centenary of the 1926 Brussels Convention*”. He traced the historical evolution of maritime liens, highlighting their peculiar nature as secret, non-consensual charges on ships enforceable even against third-party purchasers in good faith, and reflected on one of the foundational instruments of maritime law.

Dr Vesna Tomljenović, former Judge at the General Court of the European Union and current member of the Article 255 TFEU Panel, addressed key judgments relating to competition law, state aid, port state

control, the freedom to provide services, the interplay between EU law and international treaties, and the legal status of seafarers, underscoring the crucial role of EU courts in shaping the application of horizontal provisions within the maritime context.

Maja Radunović-Ćulafić, lawyer and President of the Montenegrin Maritime Law Association, outlined recent legislative reforms and analysed Montenegro's intended accession to the 1996 Limitation of Liability for Maritime Claims Protocol, examining strengths and shortcomings of the new framework in light of the country's ambition to become the 28th European Union Member State.

Professor Marko Pavliha (University of Ljubljana) delivered a comprehensive review entitled "*Quarter-Century of the Slovenian Maritime Code*", enriched with personal anecdotes in memory of his former colleague and *magister* Marko Ilešič. He traced the 25-year history of Slovenia's Maritime Code since 2001 and identified critical future challenges, including the loss of a national shipowner and shortages of maritime personnel.

Professor Norman Martinez Gutiérrez, Director of the IMO International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI), concluded the session with a panel on "*IMO and the Global Ocean Governance*", examining the interplay between UNCLOS and the IMO and emphasising the IMO's quasi-legislative function in developing international standards.

2nd Session: Recent Developments in the Unification of Maritime Law

Chaired by Professor Igor Vio (University of Rijeka), the session addressed procedural and substantive challenges in the implementation of international maritime conventions.

Professor Jasenko Marin (University of Zagreb) examined whether Croatian law's requirement of demonstrating *periculum in mora* is consistent with the 1952 Arrest Convention. The presentation solicited engaged debate on the differences affecting ship arrest among Adriatic coastal states.

Petar Djurović (ABACO), presenting "*A Way Forward for Ship's Register in Montenegro*", proposed strategic recommendations for reforming the Montenegrin Ship Register, including modernisation, digitalisation, and the introduction of competitive fiscal frameworks.

Martina Kos (Undersecretary at the Slovenian Maritime Administration), with the presentation of "*The Implications of the Entry into*

Force of the Ballast Water Convention in the Republic of Slovenia", discussed Slovenia's recent ratification of the Ballast Water Management Convention, emphasising the need for national legislation to clarify institutional responsibilities – particularly given the highly sensitive Adriatic ecosystem.

Alberto Bregante (Siccardi Bregante & Co.) addressed the entry into force of the Hong Kong Convention for ship recycling, pointing out the crucial role of regulatory instruments in a branch often characterised by illegal work and poor environmental standards.

Lawrence Dardani (Dardani) closed the session by outlining the relevance of the CMI working group – driven by the propulsive input of AIDIM – tasked with evaluating the modernisation of the 1910 Collision Convention.

3rd Session: New Technologies and Challenges in Maritime Transport

Chaired by Professor Daniele Casciano (University of Udine and Studio Antonini), the session examined liability and regulatory issues arising from autonomous systems and digital innovation.

Professor Fiorenza Prada (University of Macerata and Studio Antonini) presented "*From Drones to MASS: Liability Issues*", analysing the challenges of allocating liability in autonomous systems and underlining the relevance of the IMO MASS Code, expected to be fully in force by 2032.

Zoran Tasić (Croatian Chamber of Commerce and Global Offshore Engineering) addressed risk allocation in shipbuilding contracts involving innovative technologies and alternative fuels, highlighting the crucial role sustainability plays in the field and the indispensable certifications now required for new vessels.

Professor Patrick Vlačič (University of Ljubljana and CargoX), examined recent progress toward interoperability among electronic bill of lading platforms, with a central focus on whether the *eBL* can produce *erga omnes* effects comparable to traditional paper bills.

Professor Ilaria Tani (University of Milano-Bicocca), finally, addressed emerging gaps in the legal regime governing undersea activities – including the regulatory vacuum surrounding civilian submersibles, as evidenced by recent fatal incidents – in a presentation entitled "*The Underwater Dimension and New Legal Challenges*".

Friday, 10th April 2026

4th Session: Adriatic Seaports – Regulatory Framework for Sustainability and Connectivity

Chaired by Professor Iva Tuhtan Grgić (University of Rijeka), the session explored the role of Adriatic ports as strategic nodes within the European transport network.

Elson Thana (Transport Community Permanent Secretariat) offered an insightful interactive assessment of Western Balkan Adriatic ports – Durres, Bar, Ploce, Split, Rijeka, and Koper – within the TEN-T corridors.

Dr Boris Jerman (President of the Maritime Law Association of Slovenia and Head of Legal at Luka Koper) analysed the evolution from the Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD) to the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), underlining the crucial role of sustainability reporting in demonstrating the green credentials of port infrastructure to stakeholders.

Dr Adriana Vincenca Padovan (Catholic University of Croatia), with *“FuelEU Maritime Regulation with a Focus on Seaports”*, provided an overview of Regulation (EU) 2023/1805 (FuelEU Maritime) examining onshore power supply obligations and its interplay with the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation.

Dr Jana Borić Kassal (officer at Croatian Ministry of Maritime Affairs) spoke on *“Implementing FuelEU Maritime in Seaports: Challenges from the Perspective of the Croatian Maritime Administration”*, addressing practical difficulties in designating competent authorities, developing national implementing legislation, establishing ship inspection protocols, and defining penalties for non-compliance with Regulation (EU) 2023/1805.

Tamara Đukić (VRD Legal), through the presentation *“Green Transition of Seaports: Challenges Faced by Small Ports”* examined the financial and operational challenges confronting smaller ports such as Bar and Kotor.

Professor Vittorio Torbianelli (University of Trieste) with *“The Model for Governance of Adriatic Ports”* concluded with a concise overview of governance models in the Upper Adriatic, focusing on the three port models of Rijeka, Koper, and Trieste and the differences between private, public, and public-private partnership agreements.

5th Session: Protection of the Marine Environment and Exploitation of Resources

Chaired by Dr Mitja Bricelj (Slovenian environmental expert and hydro-geographer), the session addressed marine protection, spatial planning, and resource management.

Judge Marko Starman (Constitutional Court of Slovenia) outlined a scenario for expanding marine protected area coverage in the Adriatic-Ionian region, stressing that restoration should change the legal agenda by adding responsibility on a larger scale.

Dr Guglielmo Bonacchi (Turcilex) analysed Italy's declaration of Exclusive Economic Zone by Presidential Decree No. 193 of 26 September 2025, emphasising the paradigm shift in the environmental framework applicable to ships and offshore infrastructures in the Adriatic.

Professor Marija Pijaca (University of Zadar) and Dr Božena Bulum (Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts) jointly examined the regulatory challenges facing Croatian fishermen and aquaculture producers under EU legislation governing Atlantic Bluefin tuna, focusing on the three-tier regulatory framework (ICCAT, EU strategic guidelines, and national norms).

Zlatko Imamović (ABACO LLC) concluded the session outlining the Montenegrin legal framework for marine protected areas and their relationship with the Barcelona Convention.

6th Session: Decarbonisation in Shipping and Alternative Fuels

Chaired by Maja Radunović-Ćulafić (MMLA), the session examined regulatory and practical challenges in the maritime sector's transition to low and zero emission fuels.

Marco Manzone (Dardani), with *"The Path to Decarbonising Shipping: Regulatory Developments at IMO and EU Level"*, provided an overview of IMO and EU decarbonisation measures, highlighting the EU's willingness to act ahead of IMO prescriptions in pursuing the sustainable transition.

Dr Zuzanna Peplowska-Dąbrowska (University of Torun), Ante Vojković (Stanić & Partners), and Aleksa Martinović (Komnenic & Partners) jointly examined the adequacy of existing international liability regimes to address pollution caused by alternative fuels.

Margita Selan Voglar (Triglav Insurance Company), with *"Decarbonisation in the Shipping Industry and Alternative Fuels: An Insurer's*

View", discussed the implications of alternative fuels for vessel operations, risk assessment, and marine insurance underwriting.

Professor Petra Amižić Jelovčić (University of Split) concluded by examining the need for specialised competencies in handling fuels such as hydrogen, ammonia, and methanol, the revision of the STCW Convention, and the responsibilities of maritime educational institutions.

7th Session: Yachting Industry in the Adriatic – Legal Issues

Chaired by Professor Massimiliano Musi (University of Bologna and CMI Executive Councillor), the final session addressed legal issues affecting marinas, concessions, and nautical tourism.

Dr Mitja Grbec (University of Primorska) analysed the Slovenian legal framework governing marinas and concessions, recognising an effective lack of an organic ports law and underlining the need to fill this gap.

Dr Gordan Stanković (President of HDPP) and Agata Dajčić (University of Rijeka) examined the legal and political challenges surrounding concession extensions in Croatia and Italy, with reference to the Bolkestein Directive and Directive 2014/23/EU.

Dr Cristina Pozzi (University of Parma) presented "*Marinas, Concessions and Competition in the Adriatic under EU Strategy*", examining the legal and economic interplay between concessions, competition law, and the Directive 2006/123/EC within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR).

Finally, Andrej Jelenković and Petra Marijanović (Ilej & Partners) concluded the session with a case study from a Montenegrin marina – a boat fire incident raising issues of collision liability, ship arrest, limitation of liability, and maritime liens.

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