18th Annual Capital Link Shipping & Marine Services Forum
Tuesday, September 15, 2026
116 Pall Mall, London

PRESS RELEASE

18th Annual Capital Link Shipping & Marine Services Forum

KEYNOTE ROUNDTABLE

GOVERNMENT & INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES: TRADE, REGULATION & MARITIME COMPETITIVENESS

Photos

Forum Agenda:

https://capitallink.com/forums/18th-annual-capital-link-shipping-marine-services-forum/?section=agenda

Wednesday, October 7, 2026

Capital Link hosted the **18th Annual Capital Link Shipping & Marine Services Forum** on **Tuesday, September 15, 2026**, at **116 Pall Mall** in **London**. The Forum offered investors a comprehensive review and up-to-date outlook on the various shipping markets, while also covering key topics of critical interest to industry participants, financiers, and stakeholders.

Bringing together a high caliber audience of shipping professionals, financiers & investors, the Forum offered insights into the current state of the shipping and marine services industries, regulatory updates, the implications for investments, and a focused look at the opportunities and challenges ahead.

One of the highlights of the day was the Keynote Roundtable "Government & Industry Perspectives: Trade, Regulation & Maritime Competitiveness", which brought government and industry together on the same stage for a candid discussion on trade policy, sanctions, supply-chain resilience, decarbonization, and the role of regulators in a turbulent geopolitical environment.

The discussion featured **Minister Keir Mather MP**, Minister for Aviation, Maritime and Logistics – **Department for Transport, United Kingdom**; **Minister Marina Hadjimanolis**, Shipping Deputy Minister to the President – **Republic of Cyprus**; and **Dr. Nikolas P. Tsakos**, Founder & CEO – **TEN Ltd. (NYSE: TEN)**; Chairman – **INTERTANKO (2014-2018)**. The roundtable was moderated by **Ms. Dora Mace-Kokota**, Partner, International Head – Maritime, Trade and Offshore and Managing Partner, Greek Office – **Stephenson Harwood**.

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KEYNOTE ROUNDTABLE: GOVERNMENT & INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES: TRADE, REGULATION & MARITIME COMPETITIVENESS

Moderator:

- **Ms. Dora Mace-Kokota**, Partner, International Head – Maritime, Trade and Offshore and Managing Partner, Greek Office – **Stephenson Harwood**

Speakers:

- **Minister Keir Mather MP**, Minister for Aviation, Maritime and Logistics – **Department for Transport, United Kingdom**
- **Minister Marina Hadjimanolis**, Shipping Deputy Minister to the President – **Republic of Cyprus**
- **Dr. Nikolas P. Tsakos**, Founder & CEO – **TEN Ltd. (NYSE: TEN)**; Chairman – **INTERTANKO (2014-2018)**

Opening the discussion, **Ms. Dora Mace-Kokota** explained that the session would focus on the regulatory and policy dimensions of maritime flows, alongside decarbonization, the energy transition, and geopolitics. Drawing on a forthcoming report by Maritime London, she noted that London has a significant opportunity to become the hub of the maritime transition, particularly in relation to energy transition and digitalization. At the same time, she pointed to the fact that over the past decades, London has lost many of the stakeholders with real decision-making power, such as shipowners and charterers, whose presence keeps the industry moving.

Throughout the session, Ms. Mace-Kokota guided the discussion from the different paths taken by the United Kingdom and Cyprus as maritime nations, to investment in people and seafarer education, the new Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries, geopolitics, and, as a ship finance lawyer, the question of how policy can help channel capital into the solutions the industry needs. Summarizing one of the key themes of the discussion, she observed that the UK continues to have the software of a maritime nation, its services, expertise and institutions, but not necessarily the hardware anymore.

Minister Keir Mather MP, Minister for Aviation, Maritime and Logistics – **Department for Transport, United Kingdom**, explained that, as Maritime Minister, he is always trying to do two things at once: retain what the UK is known for, stability, consistency, a clear rules-based regulatory framework and the financial services strength of the City of London, while not being complacent about its status in a highly competitive sector. Referring to his recent visit to Singapore Maritime Week, he noted that there is more to do in the UK to explain the contribution of the maritime sector, which he described as one of the biggest contributors to the national economy. He added that the UK must continue to play an ambitious role at the IMO, while being competitive in areas that will define maritime innovation, such as autonomous shipping, new fuels and nuclear-powered shipping.

Turning to specific initiatives, Minister Mather noted that the government announced **£48 million** of funding for the **UK SHORE program** for co-investment with private sector companies, which he described as the single largest ever investment in domestic maritime by the UK government. He emphasized that the UK wants to achieve decarbonization in a way that is pro-business, sparks innovation and creates value for investors and working people. He also highlighted the new **National Policy Statement for Ports**, which aims to speed up the consenting regime for port projects, as well as the importance of getting the basics right, from keeping the tonnage tax regime competitive to ensuring an excellent, responsive service for UK flag customers from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Speaking about the **Memorandum of Understanding** signed between the UK and Cyprus, Minister Mather said that it offers an unprecedented opportunity for the two countries to work more closely on common challenges, both at the IMO and at a European level, and to go further on shared priorities such as seafarer training. He stated

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that the UK will continue to push for progress on the IMO Net-Zero Framework, while stressing that governments must not box in an industry facing delicate decisions on future fuels, noting that the UK has committed to reviewing the UK ETS should a global measure be adopted at the IMO, to avoid double payments.

Referring to the recent situation in the Strait of Hormuz, he noted that an unprecedented number of nations came together through the IMO to restate their commitment to international law and free-flowing commerce, allowing greater progress on protections for seafarers than at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On ship finance, Minister Mather highlighted that closer collaboration with the private sector is essential to ensure that capital flows into the system, and invited the industry to share the barriers to doing business and investing in the UK, adding that his door is very open. In closing, he stated that London is already a great maritime and shipping center, but that there is always room to go further.

Minister Marina Hadjimanolis, Shipping Deputy Minister to the President – **Republic of Cyprus**, thanked Capital Link for the invitation and described shipping as part of the history and identity of Cyprus. She explained that, over more than 60 years, Cyprus has built a complete maritime ecosystem centered on people, a ship registry that is among the largest in the world, the largest ship management center in Europe and one of the five largest worldwide, and a broad cluster of shipping-related companies, so that any shipowner visiting Cyprus can find everything they need. Shipping contributes more than **7% of the country's GDP**, excluding the wider blue economy, and Cyprus has created a dedicated ministry solely for shipping.

The Minister underlined the importance of a strong relationship between the public and the private sector. As she explained, governments make the regulations, but to do so they need to understand what the industry needs, especially regarding decarbonization and how future regulations will affect it, since ultimately it is the people who pay. With energy prices high and 90% of world trade moving by sea, she shared that Cyprus has raised its voice more strongly at the IMO and in the European Union in favor of a **global, pragmatic and realistic measure** that gives stability to shipowners. She divulged that investment in decarbonization will come from the private sector, and that governments must provide a stable regulatory framework that gives companies confidence that the decisions they take today will not change tomorrow.

Turning to investment in people, Minister Hadjimanolis believes that shipping cannot work without seafarers. During the **Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union**, people were placed at the center of its priorities, and for the very first time a common declaration on the skilling and reskilling of seafarers was signed by all 27 EU Member States. Referring to recent events in the Strait of Hormuz, she noted how much is expected of crews facing situations that have never happened before. She also highlighted the government's support for private initiatives in maritime education, explaining that, together with the Tsakos family, the Republic of Cyprus approved the first private merchant marine academy in Chios, giving local students the opportunity to continue their studies and prepare for careers on vessels around the world.

On policymaking, the Minister added that everyone involved should be treated as a partner and act responsibly. Cyprus supports global measures, having seen how regional measures have affected the maritime sector over the years, and has been elected to the IMO Council since 1987. She welcomed the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the UK, noting the long-standing relationship between the two countries and their shared common law tradition, and elaborated that countries do not need to agree on everything, but have to find a solution that works for all on matters of such importance.

Closing with a positive message, Minister Hadjimanolis recalled that, when she was appointed four years ago, there was a gap between the public and the private sector. Four years later, she is confident that this gap has

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started to close, thanks to governments and industry sitting together at the same table. She thanked Capital Link for providing a platform where governments can engage with companies from around the world and assured the industry that the doors of her ministry remain open.

Dr. Nikolas P. Tsakos, Founder & CEO – **TEN Ltd. (NYSE: TEN)**; Chairman – **INTERTANKO (2014-2018)**, noted that the United Kingdom has traditionally been a maritime nation, with its ports, Lloyd's, and the IMO all based there, and therefore has every reason to maintain its position. However, in recent years, decisions have been taken that make it harder for shipowners and decision-makers to spend time in London. London still has the brokers, the banks and the IMO, but its position needs active support. He also reminded the audience that shipping is not a glamorous business but a working person's industry that provides the artery of the world economy, recalling that his father was a captain and that his son has also worked on ships.

Dr. Tsakos congratulated Cyprus for building a major maritime hub, and recalled that many Greek shipping families from Chios historically opened their first offices either on the island or directly in London, skipping Athens; the Tsakos Group opened its London office in 1974, 52 years ago. Referring to Greece, which he described jokingly as the "Silicon Valley of shipping," he pointed to the paradox that, of 5,500 Greek-owned vessels, fewer than 600 fly the Greek flag.

Speaking about seafarer education, Dr. Tsakos noted that Greek legislation still allows only the state to run universities, and that the support of Cyprus made the new academy in Chios possible, which today has 200 young men and women. He described Chios as one of the epicenters of seafaring, and explained how much the profession has changed since his father's time, as now modern vessels are state-of-the-art, with gyms and modern communications, rotations rarely exceed four to six months, and after eight to ten years at sea, seafarers receive excellent job offers from more than 700 shipping companies in Greece and around the world.

On geopolitics, Dr. Tsakos observed that the current U.S. administration has recognized the importance of shipping and is making efforts to support it, even though building competitive ships in the U.S., the UK or Greece remains very difficult. He described the current decade as the most turbulent period he has experienced, citing the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the events of October 7, the water shortage in the Panama Canal, and the closure of the Suez Canal. With attacks by the Houthis and Iran disrupting navigation, he warned that the last thing the industry needs is division at the IMO, which must remain the body that maintains order at sea.

According to Dr. Tsakos shipping is a marathon and not a sprint. TEN has been a public company for 33 years and has always been profitable and always paid a dividend in a highly cyclical market. While the market is very strong due to the current shortage of energy, he stressed that he would much rather have a peaceful world with open seas and a sustainable long-term business than a roller coaster that puts seafarers at risk, adding that navigating today is like crossing a minefield, with the company now relying on more admirals than captains for security advice.

Concluding, Dr. Tsakos stated that this is a very good moment for London to readdress its role as a maritime center, as other hubs such as Dubai face challenges due to their location and Hong Kong is seen as less international than it used to be. He noted that many international shipowners, including Norwegian and Far Eastern owners, have recently moved out of London, and stressed that shipowners who have long used London as their base should have the opportunity to stay.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE FORUM

COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT PARTICIPATED

ABS • ADNOC Logistics & Services (DH: ADNOCLS) • AET • Anglo American • A.P. Moller Maersk • Berenberg • Bureau Veritas • Citi • Columbia Group • d'Amico International Shipping S.A. (Borsa Italiana: DIS) (OTCQX: DMCOF) • Erasmus Shipinvest Group • Folk Maritime • Harren Group • Heidmar Maritime Holdings Corp. (NASDAQ: HMR) • Hill Dickinson LLP • IFCHOR GALBRAITHS (IG) • International Maritime Organization (IMO) • J.P. Morgan Asset Management • Kaptanoglu Shipping • Kuehne + Nagel • LD Armateurs • Liberian Registry • Lloyd's Register • Meerbaum Capital Solutions Inc. • MISC Group • MPC Container Ships ASA (OSLO: MPCC) • MPC Oceanic Group AG • Navigator Gas (NYSE: NVGS) • Navios Maritime Partners L.P. (NYSE: NMM) • Neptune Maritime Leasing Ltd. • Oak Hill Advisors • Oldendorff Overseas Investments • Precious Shipping • Reed Smith LLP • Star Bulk Carriers Corp. (NASDAQ: SBLK) • Stephenson Harwood • Stolt-Nielsen Limited (OSL: SNI) • TEN Ltd. (NYSE: TEN) • Tufton Investment • V.Group • Wah Kwong Maritime Transport • Watson Farley & Williams LLP • White & Case LLP • ZeroNorth

Distinguished senior executives from leading companies across the Greek, British, and international shipping communities participated in the Conference's panel discussions, highlighting the key developments, emerging trends, opportunities, and challenges shaping the maritime industry today and set to influence its future, as well as the broader ecosystem of maritime services.

THIS YEAR'S FORUM AGENDA INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

- Energy Security and Shipping
- Global Trade in a Fractured World: Sanctions, Risks, Routes, & Realignment
- MEPC Reality Check: Net Zero Meets Market Reality
- Smart Shipping: AI, Digitalization & Strategic Capital Allocation
- Keynote Roundtable – Government & Industry Perspectives: Trade, Regulation & Maritime Competitiveness
- Heading into a New Era: With Lots of Cash, a Big Orderbook, & Pressure to Change
- Dry Bulk Sector Panel
- Financing Global Shipping: Opportunities, Challenges, and Strategies
- Multi-Sector Investing & Corporate Strategy
- Shipping is Cash Rich – Where Will Capital Flow Next?

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