



I A M E
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ATHENS
GREECE



Invitation Message from the 27th Annual IAME Conference Chairman



It is with great pleasure that the **27th Annual Conference of the International Association of Maritime Economists (IAME)** will be hosted by the Athens University of Economics and Business in Athens, Greece, from 25th to 28th June, 2019.

As a country that is renowned for its strong maritime industry, Greece can be considered a “natural” choice for this prestigious conference. More specifically, Greece has continued to strengthen its position as the largest ship-owning nation in tonnage terms, and has developed into one of the major Maritime Centres in the World. Shipowners located in Attica (Athens, Piraeus and the surrounding areas) have the highest ship-ownership globally in tonnage capacity. More than 700 companies are located here serving the industry, including shipowning, ship-management, brokerage (chartering and ship sale and purchase), insurance, law, classification societies and other maritime sector-related companies.

The Greek shipping industry owes a large part of its competitive advantage to the possession of specialised entrepreneurial skills and know-how at the operations management level. Greek shipping companies are active in the highly competitive markets of the cargo-carrying sectors of shipping, constituting a paradigm of business success at international level. The entrepreneurial philosophy of Greek shipowners, their strategic planning and investment practices, their attitude to cost-effectiveness, outsourcing, crew management and social responsibility, have proved, among others, prudent strategies that have helped not only large, but also a significant number of small Greek shipping companies jointly maintain the country’s global leading position in tonnage ownership, even during periods of extended crises in freight markets.

The Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB) is at the very center of all these, distilling the country’s knowledge infrastructure in its MSc in International Shipping, Finance and Management; a post-graduate/post-experience international program aimed at transforming promising young professionals into tomorrow’s leaders in business, shipping industry and government. A number of academic staff of AUEB and other Universities both from Greece and abroad, as well as experienced professionals in top management positions of the Greek shipping industry, are collaborating in offering specialized knowledge in all major areas of shipping, finance and management.

AUEB is recognized as **a leading academic institution** in Greece in the areas of Economics and Business and one of the leading institutions internationally in its fields. Through publications in top international academic journals, participation in various editorial positions, and leadership of international conferences, as well as through their roles as advisors to large corporations and public organizations, or as leading public servants, AUEB’s faculty create knowledge on critical research issues, promote good management practices, generate innovation in business, and influence leadership through its alumni.

Within this framework, **the IAME 2019 Conference aims to** provide an international forum to academics, researchers and industry practitioners for discussion, exchange of ideas, networking and collaboration on critical issues and developments related to maritime transportation worldwide. It also aims to attract key players of the maritime sector at a global level and international maritime companies to participate in conference activities. The conference is seen as an exceptional opportunity for delegates to participate in special sessions with shipowners who are global leaders, and with experienced, highly skilled practitioners who have successfully designed and delivered crucial shipping finance projects. Besides owning the highest tonnage capacity globally, Greek shipping companies have strong presence in global financial markets and use advanced financial tools in their needs for capital to finance shipping projects. This is evidenced in these companies' strong presence in the American and London Stock Exchanges, reporting sustainable fundamentals and healthy financial statements, and enjoying the full appreciation and respect of international funds/investors. Top professionals and academics of the Greek shipping paradigm are expected to join the IAME 2019 Conference to interact with delegates.

Moreover, the **IAME 2019 Conference** will provide a forum for the discussion of issues with particular theoretical and practical significance. The importance of coherent and connected development across all maritime sectors will feature strongly in the Conference, as it will focus on ways of connecting ships, ports and people, in a globalized economy. The importance of 'joined-up' maritime development across all sectors, both from a policy and a practical perspective will be highlighted. The benefits of a free and efficient flow of goods and trade extend far beyond the ships and ports themselves. The concept of globalization of the world economy has been challenged lately and it would be interesting to consider research in this area and how its possible reversal will affect the world economy and the maritime industry as a consequence. Concerns regarding the protection of the environment has initiated legislation that has consequences for world shipping and its economics, and this is expected to be part of the conference themes.

The marine and maritime industry, based on the respective research fields and areas of interest as well as its impact, needs to be global. The maritime field relies on developing knowledge-based innovations. Research and innovation programs should therefore respond to the socioeconomic needs of the entire world. Today, all countries are facing complex challenges that will shape our common future. The major challenges include free international trade, a sustainable supply of food and energy, securing jobs and economic prosperity, human health, the environment and aging populations. The global economic downturn has made these issues even more pressing. Political challenges point to the possibility of reversing the free trade paradigm, which may have severe consequences for world shipping. By stimulating competitiveness of our maritime activities, marine research and innovation programs can and should make an important contribution towards meeting these impending challenges and in providing significant economic opportunities.

As hosts of the IAME 2019 Conference in Greece, we consider essential that our delegates experience not only a high-quality conference but also our country itself – its history, people, landscape, gastronomy, entertainment and hospitality. A cultural activity program will enrich the IAME 2019 Conference and let delegates time travel from modern to ancient Greece to **discover, contemplate, be inspired and create wonderful memories.**

On behalf of the 27th Annual IAME Conference Organising Committee, we encourage your participation in the Conference and are looking forward to welcoming you to Athens!

The IAME 2019 Conference Chairman,

Prof. Manolis G. Kavussanos

