

THE NEW

HORIZON

The Federation of National Associations of Ship Brokers and Agents

PRESIDENT'S INTRODUCTION

by President FULVIO CARLINI

Dear Members and Friends,

As we enter the final part of another busy year for FONASBA, I am pleased to welcome you to this September issue of *The New Horizon*.

Over the past months, the Executive Committee and the Secretariat have continued to work hard to ensure that FONASBA remains close to its members and responsive to the challenges they face. From Northern Europe to Kenya and Brazil, we have been present, listening, engaging and, where possible, standing side by side with our members when support was needed.

This is at the heart of what FONASBA is about. *Our members and their issues remain at the centre of everything we do.* A federation is strongest when it is able to bring together the experience, knowledge and voices of its members and to support them when challenges arise. I am proud of the commitment shown by our Executive Committee and Secretariat in putting this principle into practice.

And, of course, there is another very special reason to look forward to this September issue: our AGM in Tokyo.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to our hosts, JAFSA. The team may be small, but they are certainly doing wonders in preparing to welcome FONASBA delegates from around the world. Their dedication, enthusiasm and attention to detail have been remarkable, and I am confident that their efforts will result in a memorable event for us all.

We have an excellent programme lined up and as always, a FONASBA event is about more than presentations and meetings. It is also about the people: catching up with colleagues and friends, making new connections and sharing experiences across our international community.

This year's AGM will be particularly special because, as our Federation continues to expand, at the Tokyo event, we will exceptionally have a number of newly elected members joining us for the first time.

I would therefore ask all of you to join me in giving them the warmest possible welcome.

There is a great deal happening across our Federation and across our industry, and this issue of *The New Horizon* provides another snapshot of the work being carried out by FONASBA and our members around the world.

Above all, I want to thank you for your continued support, engagement and commitment to our Federation.

I truly look forward to seeing you all in Tokyo.



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FONASBA Annual General Meeting Tokyo, Japan 2026 OCTOBER 11TH 2026

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UPCOMING EVENTS

FONASBA Members: Access Preferential Rates for Breakbulk Americas & Asia 2026

Registration is now open for **Breakbulk Americas 2026** (Sept. 22–23, George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston) and **Breakbulk Asia 2026** (Nov. 18–19, Sands Expo and Convention Centre, Marina Bay Sands, Singapore). These events offer a valuable opportunity for FONASBA members to connect with decision-makers shaping the next two decades of maritime innovation and development. **As a FONASBA member, you're eligible for a preferential rate.**

Contact membership@fonasba.org for more information.



FONASBA Backs IAPH World Ports Conference 2026



FONASBA is officially supporting the **IAPH World Ports Conference 2026**! This year's edition will take place in **London on 3-6 November**, gathering senior port professionals under the theme “**Port leadership for a brave new world**”. Over four days, the conference will tackle the issues shaping the industry's future, from **geopolitical realignment** and **trade disruption** to **energy transition**, **port-city relations**, **security**, and the **integration of AI** and automation.

Registration is mandatory, but FONASBA members can ask for a **preferential rate** by emailing:

membership@fonasba.org.

REGISTER HERE →



NEWS / EUROPE

ECASBA Gothenburg 2026: A Landmark Seminar and a Heartfelt Farewell

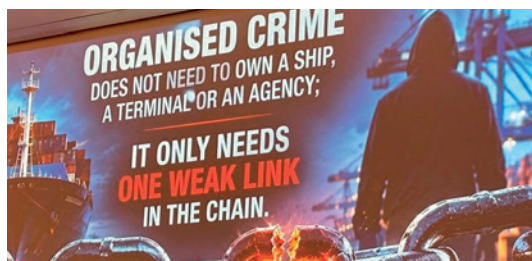
The **ECASBA Seminar** held in **Gothenburg** last June will be remembered for two outstanding reasons: it was **one of the most successful European gatherings** in recent years and, equally importantly, it provided the international maritime community with the **opportunity to honour one of its most respected and cherished colleagues, Berit Blomqvist**, as she concluded an extraordinary 24-year tenure as Chief Executive of the **Swedish Shipbrokers' Association**.

Hosted by the Swedish Shipbrokers' Association together with the Agents and Brokers Associations of **Denmark, Norway and Finland**, the seminar attracted a record attendance of more than **70 delegates from across Europe**, far exceeding expectations and confirming once again the **growing relevance of ECASBA** as the **voice of European ship agents and brokers**.

Delegates were welcomed in true Nordic style with an unforgettable **Swedish Midsummer celebration**, setting the tone for two days of friendship, networking and thought-provoking discussions. From the strategic im-

portance of **European shipping** and the challenges facing **Ukraine's ports**, to evolving **security threats, competitiveness, digitalisation** and the **future of shipping**, the programme reflected the breadth of issues shaping our industry today. The seminar also highlighted the strength of **Nordic cooperation**. Experts from Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland shared practical experiences and innovative initiatives, reinforcing the value of collaboration and **knowledge exchange** across our European maritime community. The event concluded with a memorable seafood cruise through the beautiful Gothenburg archipelago, providing delegates with the perfect setting to continue conversations and strengthen professional friendships.

FONASBA and **ECASBA** extend their sincere appreciation to the **Swedish Shipbrokers' Association**, the **Nordic organising committee**, all **speakers, sponsors and volunteers** whose dedication made this outstanding event possible. Special thanks are also due to **Lars Hallengren** and **Brax Shipping, Sirius Agency** and **ACL** for their invaluable support.



Yet, as successful as the seminar itself was, it was the day that followed which will remain forever in the hearts of those privileged to attend. The Swedish maritime community gathered to **celebrate Berit Blomqvist**—a leader whose influence extends far beyond Sweden’s borders and whose contribution has left an enduring mark on FONASBA, ECASBA and the international maritime community. For decades, Berit has been much more than an association executive. She has been a **trusted colleague**, an **inspiring ambassador** for shipping, a **champion of cooperation**, and a **passionate advocate for education** and the next generation of maritime professionals. Her leadership has brought people together, strengthened institutions, promoted the interests of our profession and, above all, **built lasting friendships throughout our international network**. The moving farewell celebration, **attended by 144 guests**, reflected the enormous affection and respect that Berit has earned throughout her remarkable career. The prestigious **Honorary Award** presented by the **Swedish Seamen’s House Foundation** was a fitting recognition of a lifetime devoted to Swedish shipping and the wider maritime industry. Equally moving were the many tributes from friends, colleagues and public figures, all acknowledging the extraordinary legacy she leaves behind. For FONASBA and ECASBA, however, **Berit’s contribution cannot be measured simply by titles, awards or years of service**. She has been part of our family for many decades. Generations of delegates have come to know Berit not only for her professionalism and

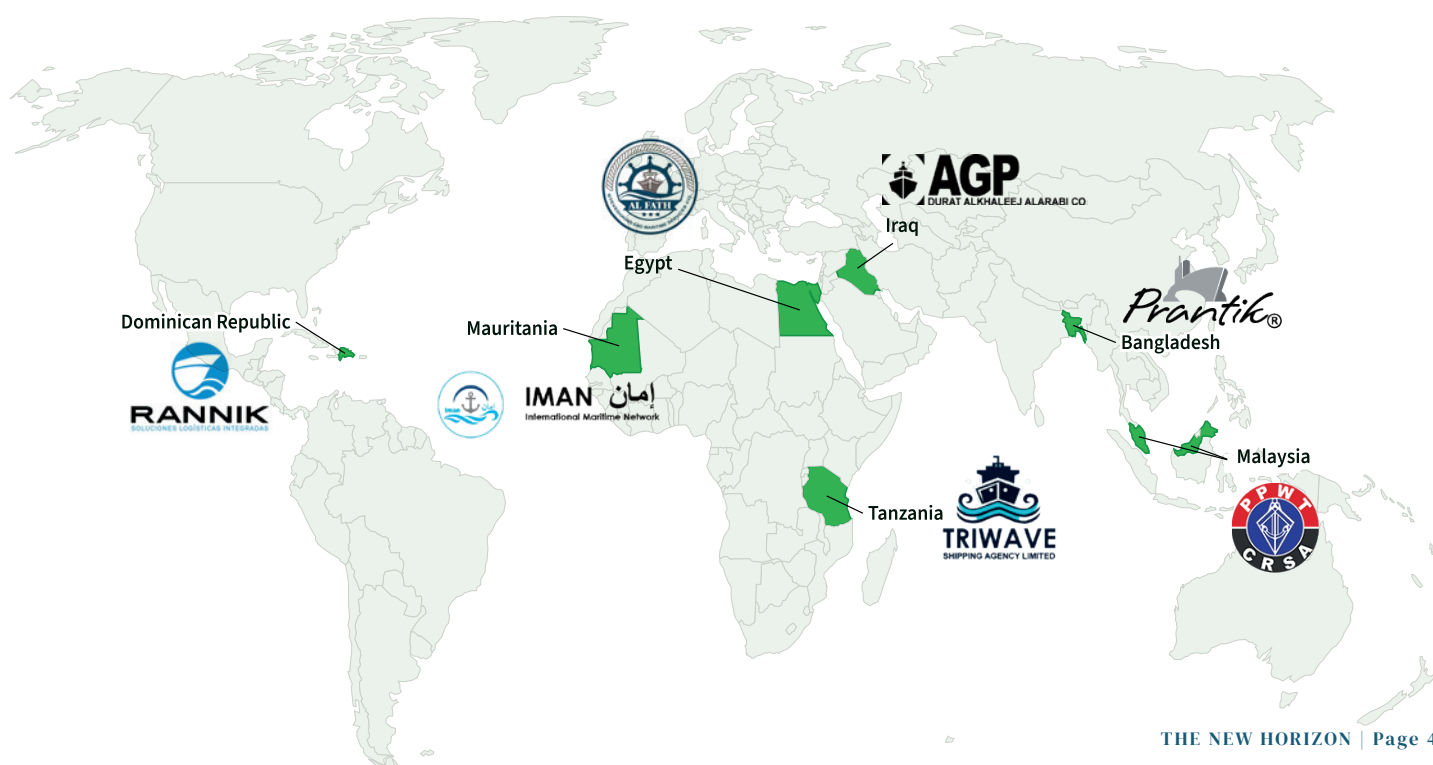
organisational excellence, but also for her **kindness, generosity, warmth** and **unwavering willingness to support others**. She has welcomed newcomers, mentored young professionals, encouraged collaboration between associations and helped **shape the spirit of friendship that defines our Federation**. **Some people attend meetings. Others help build an organisation. Berit helped build a community**. While she may be stepping away from her executive responsibilities, we know that her friendship, experience and passion for shipping will continue to enrich our Federation for many years to come. As with every truly valued member of the FONASBA and ECASBA family, this is not really goodbye—it is simply the beginning of a new chapter. On behalf of the FONASBA Executive Committee, the ECASBA Board and our members across the world, **we extend our deepest gratitude to Berit for her exceptional service**, steadfast friendship and unwavering commitment over so many years.

“Dear Berit, Thank you for everything you have done for Sweden, for Europe and for FONASBA. Thank you for your wisdom, your generosity, your enthusiasm and your friendship. Most of all, thank you for reminding us that our Federation is far more than an organisation—it is a family. We wish you every happiness in the years ahead, although we have a feeling that, much like the famous line from Hotel California, you may check out whenever you like... but you can never really leave. And truthfully, we wouldn’t want you to.

With our affection, admiration and profound gratitude.”

NEW MEMBERS

FONASBA Welcomes New Members



ECASBA: New Brussels Partnership Bears First Fruits

FONASBA/ECASBA has entered into a new partnership with **Magellan Circle Brussels**, strengthening our engagement with the **European regulatory and policy environment**. The partnership is already producing its first results, with the **relaunch of the ECASBA EU Policy & Maritime Bulletin**, now in a new format designed to keep members informed of **relevant developments in Brussels** and their potential impact on our sector. Working closely with the FONASBA Secretariat, Magellan Circle will help **identify important developments** at an early stage and support our efforts to



ensure that the voice of ship agents is effectively represented. Please see the latest [EU Policy & Maritime Bulletin](#).

We want this to be a two-way process. We encourage our **ECASBA members to share their priorities, concerns and**

suggestions with us. Your input will help us make future editions—and our wider European engagement—more relevant, focused and useful to you.

Message from ECASBA Chair, Raymond Troch:

"If there are issues you believe ECASBA should be addressing in Brussels, please come forward and let us know."

NEWS / EUROPE

Port Resilience in Focus: FONASBA at the European Ports Alliance Ministerial Meeting

FONASBA was pleased to participate in the **Third Ministerial Meeting of the European Ports Alliance Public-Private Partnership**, held on 16 July 2026 at Dublin Castle, Ireland.

The meeting was attended, among others, by **Magnus Brunner, European Commissioner**, and **Lorraine Nolan, Executive Director of the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA)**, underlining the political weight and priority given to this topic at European level. Representing FONASBA, **Raymond Troch**, Chair of **ECASBA** and **FONASBA Region-**

al Vice President Europe, joined public and private sector stakeholders from across Europe to tackle one of the most pressing challenges facing our maritime and logistics ecosystem: strengthening port resilience against organised crime and illicit trafficking. FONASBA remains committed to bringing the industry perspective to these **vital policy discussions**. Ports are strategic assets that require continuous cooperation and investment to stay secure and resilient, and a strong, coordinated European approach needs every stakeholder working together.

FONASBA and GAFTA represent two ends of the same journey: the traders who sell the cargo and the Shipbrokers and Ship Agents who make sure it actually moves. Bringing the two closer together was the purpose of our partnership, and it is producing concrete results.

The most recent one: an article by Bahadır Tonguç, Chairman of the FONASBA Shipbroking Committee, in the September issue of the GAFTA Journal, on the vital connection between international trade and shipping. **READ MORE →**



FONASBA Connects with the Turkish Shipbroking Community at the 7th Bosphorus Shipbrokers Dinner 2026

FONASBA was pleased to participate in the **7th Bosphorus Shipbrokers Dinner 2026** in Istanbul, an outstanding gathering that once again brought together members of the international shipbroking and maritime community. Representing FONASBA, **Raymond Troch**, Regional Vice President Europe and Chair of **ECASBA**, had the pleasure of reconnecting with valued colleagues and members in Türkiye, including representatives from the **Turkish Chamber of Shipping**, the **Türkiye Maritime Association of Shipowners and Agents**, and, naturally, the hosts of the evening, **Gemi Brokerleri Derneği**, the **Turkish Shipbrokers Association**. It was also an honour to meet **Suat Hayri Aka**, former Ambassador and a prom-

inent figure within the Turkish shipping community. The evening provided an excellent opportunity to exchange views and strengthen relationships with colleagues from

across the sector, including **Bahadır Tonguç**, Chair of the FONASBA Shipbroking Committee; Dr **Alexander Geisler** and **Sylvia Scheper** of Zentralverband Deutscher Schiffsmakler; and **Marc Buchholz**, Vice Chairman of the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers. FONASBA also extended its sincere thanks to **İsmail Şahin** of Yağcı Shipping

& Trading for the warm welcome and generous hospitality, and to GBD for bringing the sector together in such a dynamic and memorable setting.



FONASBA Joins FEDERAGENTI's 77th General Assembly in Civitavecchia



FONASBA was pleased to take part in the **77th FEDERAGENTI General Assembly** in **Civitavecchia**, represented by **President Fulvio Carlini**. The event provided an important opportunity for the Italian maritime and shipping community to come together, exchange views and strengthen dialogue at a time when the sector is undergoing rapid transformation and facing increasingly complex international challenges. During the Assembly, President Carlini had the pleasure of meeting **Paolo Pessina**, President of FEDERAGENTI; **Barbara Carabetti**, President of Asamar Lazio; and **Filippo Bongiovanni**, President of Gruppo Giovanni. Events such as this reaffirm the importance of cooperation among national associations and the value of maintaining open dialogue throughout the maritime community.

Port Call Optimisation: Standardisation, Data Sharing and the Race Against Time



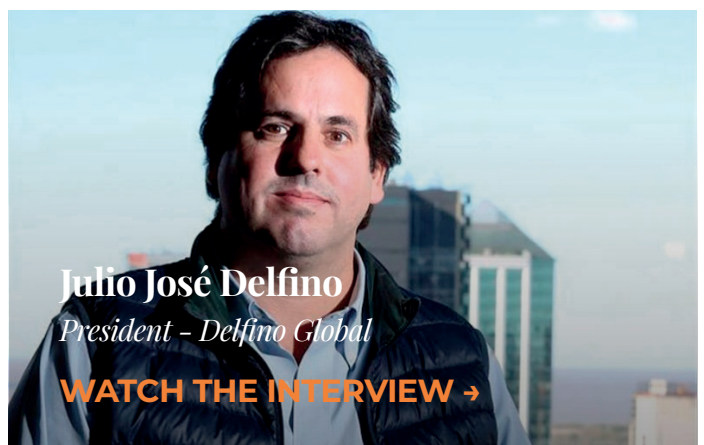
The third annual plenary meeting of the **'Port Call Optimisation' (PCO)** network took place from 7 to 9 September 2026. This time, it was hosted in **Bremerhaven** by the **Port Authority Bremen**. Around 70 representatives from all sectors of the maritime community finalised work on the so-called **Port Call Optimisation Guide** and discussed proposals on how these guidelines could be implemented as consistently as possible. The discussion highlighted once again that, even on such important issues as port calls, the maritime industry lacks standardised definitions. Added to this is a widespread reluctance when it comes to sharing data. This is all the more true given that providers of **digital solutions**

regularly attempt to obtain data free of charge, which can then be processed and resold. Despite these reservations, there is no doubt that digital processes can help to optimise port calls and make port stays more efficient. The interests of shipping agents were also represented, and **Dr Alexander Geisler** pointed out that, for such systems and procedures to be accepted, care must be taken to ensure open structures that are **accessible to all local service providers**. Decisions must be made transparently and **not behind a paywall**, where only those market participants who pay a separate fee can take part. This view was supported by the working group in the ensuing debate. The debate surrounding

KPIs for assessing the progress and success of PCO procedures is proving very lively, and it is likely that this debate is only just beginning. However, from the perspective of **agents and shipping lines, the benchmark is clear: time**. Only those PCOs that help to reduce port calls to the absolute minimum are worthwhile. This must be complemented by a culture of openness regarding errors, so that agents and shipping companies have the opportunity to discuss any mistakes openly and constructively with the other stakeholders.

Further details on the work of the PCO can be found on the following webpage: www.pconetwork.org

SPOKESPERSONS



FONASBA in Kenya: Standing with Members, Strengthening Dialogue

A June 2026 mission demonstrated the value of FONASBA's international reach in supporting members and fostering constructive dialogue with policymakers. When members face challenges extending beyond their immediate business environment, the strength of a federation lies in its ability to stand beside them. In June 2026, FONASBA demonstrated this commitment through a mission to Kenya, supporting members during a period of regulatory uncertainty affecting ship agents and the wider maritime sector. FONASBA General Manager **Eleonora Modde** visited the **Kenyan Ship Agents Association (KSAA)** and participated in a high-level meeting with **Prime Cabinet Secretary Mr. Musalia Mudavadi**, alongside **KSAA CEO Elijah Mbaru** and **World Shipping Council representative Damian Viccars**.

A mission focused on dialogue

FONASBA's objective was to ensure that the perspective of ship agents and maritime professionals was heard as Kenya considered changes to its regulatory framework. Its message was clear: **reform and progress are important, but they should be introduced thoughtfully, progressively and in**

consultation with the industry, recognising the expertise and contribution of established professionals and businesses. Following the high-level meeting, the General Manager held further discussions with representatives of the **Kenya Maritime Authority and Mombasa port authorities**, and visited the **Mission to Seafarers**. These engagements broadened the dialogue and encouraged further discussion between policymakers and industry stakeholders.

Bringing an international perspective

FONASBA's involvement demonstrated how an international federation can add value to a national discussion. Kenya's maritime sector is part of a wider international trading environment, where regulatory stability, consistency and construc-

tive government-industry relations are important to business confidence. The mission highlighted the importance of considering the wider practical implications of regulatory decisions while maintaining an open dialogue with those directly affected.

Finding common ground

FONASBA's approach was not to oppose change, but to encourage balanced and workable change. By bringing together the perspectives of government, industry and maritime professionals, the mission helped reopen a broader conversation within Kenya and encouraged a cooperative approach to addressing the challenges facing the sector.

The **President of KSAA, Roger Dainty**, and **CEO Elijah Mbaru** expressed their gratitude for FONASBA's involvement and support, recognising

the value of having the Federation stand alongside its members during a challenging period.

For FONASBA, the mission was a practical demonstration of the value of federation membership: when local challenges arise, members can draw on international representation, experience and a broader industry perspective.



AN INVITATION TO MEMBERS

If your industry is facing a significant challenge, come **forward and talk to us**. Not every situation will require an international mission, but where developments could significantly affect the ship agency profession or the wider maritime sector, **FONASBA is ready to listen, engage and explore how it can support its members**. The Kenya experience showed the value of combining local knowledge with international representation. That is the strength of a federation — and it is there for every FONASBA member.

YABA 2026

Making waves: FONASBA's YABA 2026 winners are all women

FONASBA is delighted to announce the results of the Young Agents and Brokers Award 2026 (#YABA2026) – and this year's edition **carries a particularly special significance**.

The Review Committee, led by **Aziz Mantrach**, reviewed 18 high-quality research papers submitted by **young maritime professionals** from 16 countries, a strong showing that reflects the growing international recognition and prestige of this competition. Among the many talented entries, the Committee's decision this year tells a story worth celebrating in its own right: **all three prize winners are young women**.

Ship agency and **shipbroking**, like much of the wider maritime industry, has long been a **male-dominated field**. Women have historically been underrepresented in technical, commercial and leadership roles across shipping, and the path into the profession **has not always been an easy one to navigate**. That is precisely why this year's result matters so much. It shows that **talent, insight** and **ambition** are **opening doors that have not always been open**, and it signals a shift that **FONASBA is proud to support and encourage**. These three winners bring not only excellent research, but also **fresh energy** and **new perspectives** to a profession, and an industry, that stands to benefit enormously from greater diversity at every level. Big congratulations to:

- First Prize: **Gizem Kandemir** from the United Kingdom
- Second Prize: Capt. **Ayşe Aslı Başak** from Türkiye
- Third Prize: **Lorena Medeiros** from Brazil
- Jury's Special Mention: **Jithesh Prakash** from the United Arab Emirates

Supporting the next generation of women in shipping **is not a one-off gesture for FONASBA**, but part of a **sustained commitment**. Through initiatives such as Women in Shipping, alongside the Young Agents and Brokers Award itself, FONASBA continues to invest in **creating real opportunities for young women** to enter, grow and lead within ship agency and shipbroking. Results like this year's YABA are proof that these efforts are making a **tangible difference, helping to build a more inclusive and representative future for the maritime industry as a whole**.

FONASBA warmly congratulates all participants for their remarkable contributions and extends its sincere appreciation to every member of the **Review Committee** for their professionalism, dedication and commitment in evaluating the papers. A special mention also goes to the sponsors of YABA 2026, without whom this competition would not be possible: **JAFSA – Japan; Asociación de Agentes Consignatarios de Buques de Barcelona; BIMCO; ITIC; Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers; ASBA**.



BIMCO

Exclusive BIMCO Academy Opportunity for FONASBA Members: Agency and Port Operations

FONASBA members can benefit from an **exclusive preferential rate** for the upcoming **BIMCO Academy programme: Agency and Port Operations**. Taking place in **Panama** from 30 November to 4 December 2026, this intensive five-day programme is designed for **shipping agents** and **port professionals** seeking to strengthen their expertise in charterparties, bills of lading, claims handling, documentary risks, and

the evolving role of the modern port agent. The course combines **classroom learning** with **practical maritime visits**, offering participants a valuable opportunity to expand their knowledge, exchange experiences, and further develop their professional skills. FONASBA has secured a preferential registration rate for its members, please contact membership@fonasba.org



ACB COURSES

Enrolment is open for the FONASBA – ACB Online Course: Project Cargo and Ro-Ro Cargo Shipping!

Running from 10 October to 13 November 2026, this course offers an in-depth look at ro-ro cargo shipping, **Project Cargo** and **Short Sea Shipping**, covering everything from vessel types and operating costs to **port logistics**, loading and lashing procedures, and **EU cabotage** regulations. Taught by industry experts from **Wallenius Wilhelmsen**, **Höegh Autoliners**, **Berge Maritima**, and **Vapores Suardiaz**, the course is

ideal for shipping agents, freight forwarders, customs agents, port terminals and logistics professionals. No prior knowledge is required.

The course is organised by the **Asociación de Agentes Consignatarios de Buques de Barcelona**, in collaboration with **FONASBA** and the **Universitat Oberta de Catalunya**.

More information: membership@fonasba.org



FONASBA Supports FENAMAR in Brazil

Standing alongside members when support is needed is at the heart of FONASBA's role as a Federation. A recent case involving FENAMAR in Brazil is another example of that commitment in practice. FONASBA's strength as a Federation lies not only in bringing together ship agents and brokers from across the world, but also in being there for its members when they encounter challenges and need support.

Recently, **FENAMAR, the Federation of Ship Agents in Brazil**, approached FONASBA for assistance with a matter that required engagement with the relevant parties. FONASBA responded by stepping forward to support its member and by engaging directly with the service provider. The objective was clear: to open a constructive dialogue, better understand the situation and work together towards a solution.

Rather than allowing the matter to develop into a confrontation, FONASBA sought to facilitate communication and identify a practical way forward. Through its engagement with the supplier, the Federation was able to contribute its perspective and help create the conditions for the issue to be addressed constructively.

Finding a way forward

The engagement ultimately produced a positive result. The matter was **clarified and resolved amicably**, with the parties reaching a satisfactory way forward. Importantly, the process demonstrated the value of dialogue and of having a Federation willing to step in and support its members when assis-

tance is required. In the end, **all parties expressed their gratitude**, reflecting the constructive nature of the engagement and the positive outcome achieved.

Quote from FENAMAR Director, André Zanin:

"For FENAMAR, the experience was a tangible demonstration of the value of being part of a global Federation that is prepared to listen and provide support when its members need it."

Quote from Marcelo Neri, FONASBA Americas VP:

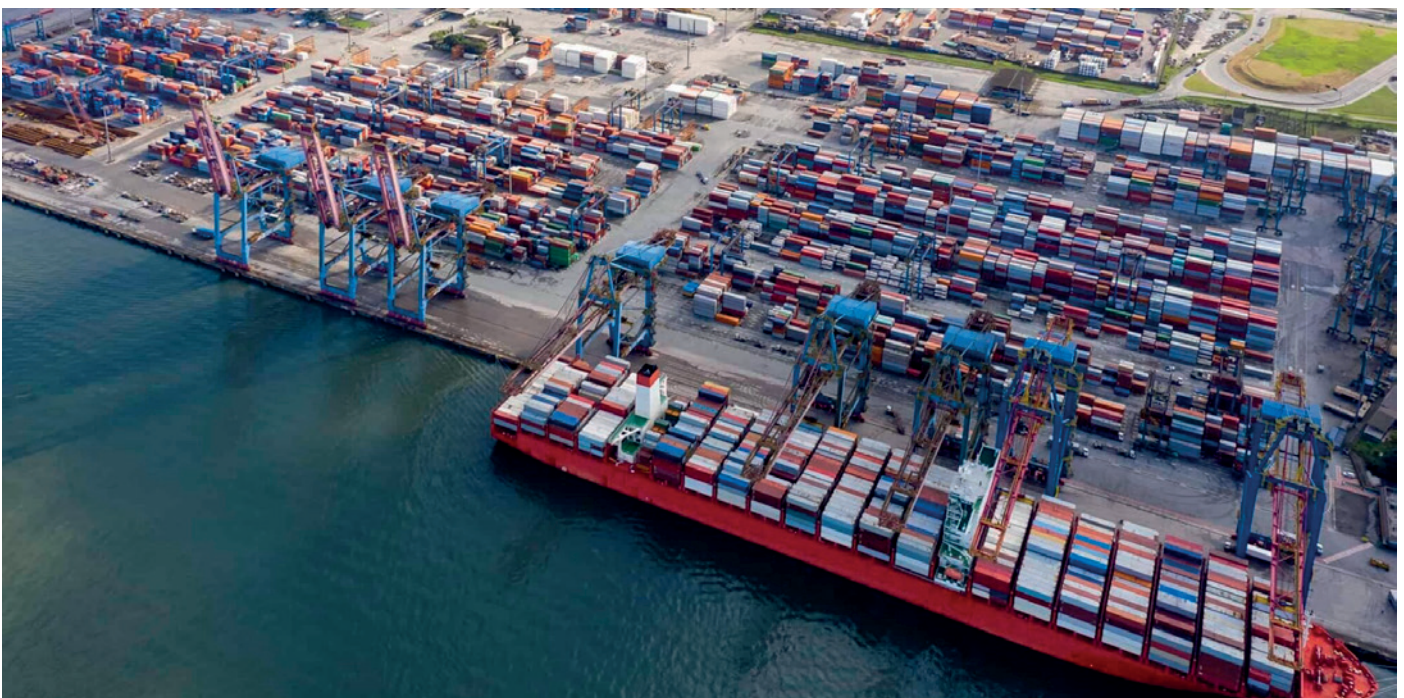
"For FONASBA, it is another example of the Federation putting its role into practice: supporting its members, engaging with stakeholders and helping to find solutions that allow all parties to move forward."

The value of being part of FONASBA

Cases such as this underline an important aspect of FONASBA membership. While national associations remain at the forefront of representing their members in their respective markets, there are occasions when the involvement of an international Federation can provide an additional and valuable perspective. FONASBA can offer a channel for engagement, a broader industry perspective and, where appropriate, direct support in addressing issues that

affect its members. The experience with FENAMAR is therefore a reminder that **FONASBA is there when its members need it**. The Federation remains committed to listening to its members, understanding the challenges they face and doing what it can to help find constructive solutions.

FOR FONASBA,
SUPPORTING ITS
MEMBERS IS NOT SIMPLY
PART OF ITS MISSION.
IT IS THAT MISSION IN
ACTION.



FONASBA Member Akanksha Batura Pai Named Among Singapore's Maritime Changemakers

FONASBA is delighted to celebrate the achievements of **Akanksha Batura Pai**, Executive Director of **Sinoda Shipping Agency Pte Ltd**, who was recently recognised by the **Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA)** as one of 30 Changemakers who have helped shape Singapore's



maritime sector! This latest honour follows another significant international recognition: in 2025, Akanksha was ranked **No. 1 in AllAboutShipping's global list of the Top 100 #WomenInShipping** (11th in 2024).

Akanksha's story, aptly titled "**Making Waves, One Conversation at a Time**", reflects a career combining the operational realities of **Ship Agency** and **maritime services** with advocacy, talent development, digitalisation, sustainability and inclusive leadership. Beyond her executive responsibilities, Akanksha serves the wider maritime community through numerous industry appointments and **ambassadorial roles**. Her work has consistently focused on opening the maritime sector to the next generation, supporting women and **emerging professionals**, strengthening the visibility of **seafarers**, and demonstrating the breadth of opportunities available across **shipping, logistics, technology, sustainability and international trade**.

Her achievements embody the contribution that **women leaders from FONASBA member companies** are making across the global **maritime industry**. Our warmest congratulations, Akanksha, on these richly deserved recognitions. We are proud to feature you as a prominent female leader within **our international membership**, and we look forward to seeing you **continue to make waves!**

[READ MORE →](#)

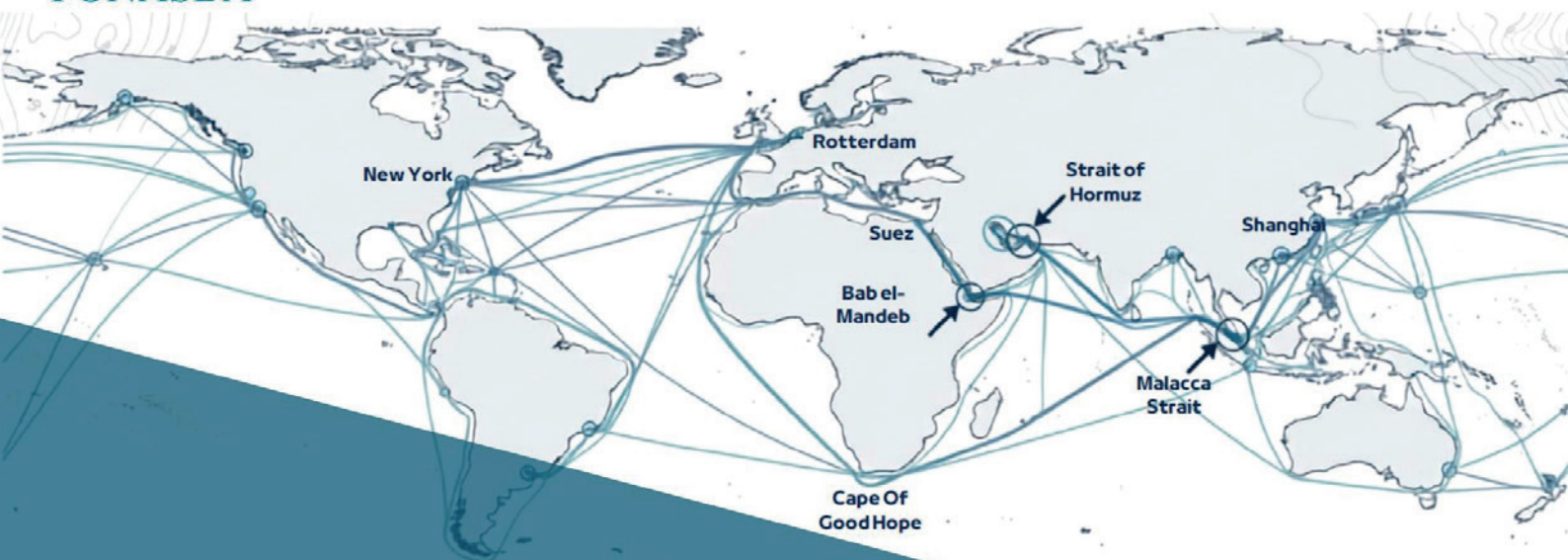


FONASBA

FONASBA Membership Webinar

Global Maritime Corridors: From Disruption to Practical Solutions

SEPTEMBER 23RD - 13.00 BST



Saudi Arabia Expands Rail Logistics to Strengthen Regional Supply Chains

By Ibrahim Mahir, Hasco

Saudi Arabia is accelerating the development of **alternative logistics routes** to enhance the resilience of supply chains and regional trade, amid disruptions to shipping through the **Strait of Hormuz**, through which approximately one-fifth of the world's seaborne oil trade passes, along with a significant portion of goods destined for Gulf economies. The **Saudi Railway Company** launched an international logistics corridor via freight trains connecting ports in the Eastern Province to the **Al-Haditha** border crossing. This will enhance connectivity with **Jordan** and the northern countries of the Kingdom and support trade activity, according to a statement issued by SAR. This is the second logistics corridor launched by the Kingdom in less than a week, following the inauguration of a route

linking the Emirate of Sharjah in the UAE to the city of **Dammam**, integrating maritime and land transport. It is worth noting that with the escalation of the conflict, attacks on energy facilities and ships, and rising marine insurance costs, **shipping companies have begun to avoid sailing through the Strait**. This has prompted the Kingdom to expand its land and rail transport capabilities to ensure the continuity of trade flows. The Saudi Public Transport Authority (SAR) has granted a license to the Saudi Railway Company (SAR) to operate additional container trains, increasing its freight transport capacity, which currently exceeds 2,500 containers per day. SAR explained that the new route allows for two-way freight transport between ports and the land border crossing, enhancing the **flexibil-**

ity of shipping operations and the integration of supply chains. The company noted that the journey time, covering a distance of over 1,700 kilometres, will be halved compared to traditional land transport methods. Each train has a capacity of more than 400 standard containers. This comes as the Minister of Transport and Logistics, Saleh Al-Jasser, announced on March 12 the launch of the **"Logistics Routes" initiative**. This initiative connects the Kingdom's western coast ports to a network of land and customs corridors extending towards the Gulf countries and regional markets, a move aimed at ensuring the continuity of supply chains amidst the increasing risks facing shipping in the Gulf.



Non-paper on an effective EU Ports Alliance and EU Ports Strategy to tackle organised crime by the Coalition of European Countries against Organised Crime

The coalition of seven European Countries against organised crime (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden) welcomes recent EU efforts, such as the launch of the European Ports Alliance in January 2024, to make ports more resilient against organised crime. These efforts are in line with the Coalition's ambition to stimulate public private cooperation to benefit the fight against organised crime. We are therefore pleased that the topic in general and the European Ports Alliance in particular will remain high on the agenda of the new Commission, with an upcoming Internal Security Strategy, an action plan against drug trafficking, the continuation of the European Ports Alliance and the EU Ports Strategy. In this non-paper, we describe what we believe should be included in these upcoming strategies to assure ports are more resilient against organised crime. We invite the Commission to take these elements into account when developing these new initiatives.

Level Playing Field

Promote a level playing field within the EU by making sure that all EU ports are adequately secured against organised crime. For instance in terms of physical barriers, access control (e.g. with biometric data) and misuse of IT-systems (and databases). Public private partnerships are crucial to establish this, for instance to promote changes in private companies' IT-systems to restrict access to data. The best practices for police and migration authorities identified by the thematic Schengen evaluation on drug trafficking and the upcoming Customs assessment should be promoted among all ports. Other best practices and lessons learned of the MS should be monitored and actively promoted by the Commission, for instance with European funds within the current allocation of the budget.

Monitoring and Reporting

Establish more regular and thorough monitoring and reporting of seizures of illegal goods, modus operandi and trends at ports in the EU (both big and small hubs). This is in line with the ambition of the Steering

Committee of Antwerp, Hamburg and Rotterdam to be a leading coalition and work together with Europol to establish a strategic analysis regarding drug trafficking via ports. An improved intelligence picture by Europol, the European Drugs Agency or another entity would support a better understanding of possible waterbed effects and consequently more tailored strategies could be formulated. This would also support a more risk- and evidence-based approach: what are the risks of organised crime, what are the impacts of these risks and which measures are the most effective to implement.



Personnel Screening

Implement uniform screening procedures for port personnel in the EU and enable effective sharing of necessary information to execute these background checks (particularly between neighbouring countries). Due to the international nature of the work in the field of transport and the many nationalities that are working in this field, it is crucial that the relevant data that is being shared amongst member states is allowed to be used for administrative purposes.

Uniform Security Standards

The ultimate aim should be that member states of the EU and IMO are required to have the same level of security against modus operandi of criminals in their ports, port facilities and on their ships, thereby preventing displacement effects from occurring and allowing specific security measures

to be taken at a local level; Sharing best practices and the availability of funding are important steps towards a level playing field and the Commission can play an important role in this. However, if the implementation of these types of measures do not lead to sufficient progress, we urge the Commission to assess, as a first step, which legislation can and should be updated to make it mandatory for ports to implement a sufficient level of measures to be more resilient against organised crime. For instance by reviewing the European implementation Regulation 725/2004 on enhancing ship and port facility security or European Directive 2005/65/EC. The brochure of ISPS standards to fight drug trafficking that was developed by the Steering Committee of Antwerp, Hamburg and Rotterdam can help in that matter.

Third Country Cooperation

Strengthen the collaboration with third countries (starting with Norway, the Western Balkans and the United Kingdom), for instance by including them in (some meetings of) the European Ports Alliance. These countries face similar challenges and, due to their proximity, can have a direct impact on the situation in our ports. We encourage the Commission to investigate if the set-up of the Steering Committee of Antwerp, Hamburg and Rotterdam can be used as inspiration for other ports who face similar challenges to share information and strengthen their collaboration.

Information Sharing

Strengthen the current legal framework with the aim to enhance and facilitate the effective and efficient exchange of information between 1) enforcement organisations, including police and customs, 2) the private sector and enforcement agencies, and 3) private parties (for instance regarding lay-offs). At this moment, this is still too much of a grey area, which means it is not structural and opportunities are missed.

Our Coalition stands ready to assist the Commission on this important matter.