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The International Maritime Organization

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In 1960, within the United Nations framework, the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization, later renamed the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and permanently headquartered in London, was constituted. In the wake of the Torrey Canyon disaster, an oil spill in 1966 off the Brittany coast that is widely regarded as a watershed in modern maritime law for the attention it brought to marine pollution, the IMO established its Legal Committee.

Cooperation between the IMO and the CMI

With the establishment of the Legal Committee, the IMO began to gradually assume, and eventually fully replace, the Belgian government in the role of convening and organizing diplomatic conferences to discuss maritime law conventions. Since 1968, the majority of international conventions in the field of maritime law have been promoted by the IMO, with a few also spearheaded by UNCTAD and UNCITRAL.

The Role of the CMI in the Formation and Modernization of Maritime Law

Since then, the role of the CMI has been, initially, one of preparatory or foundational work for conventions, aiming to influence the IMO in their formation. Indeed, with the rise of the IMO as the governing body driving international conventions, the CMI developed the method of Working Groups, which are formed on topics that it deems require resolution or standardization [1]

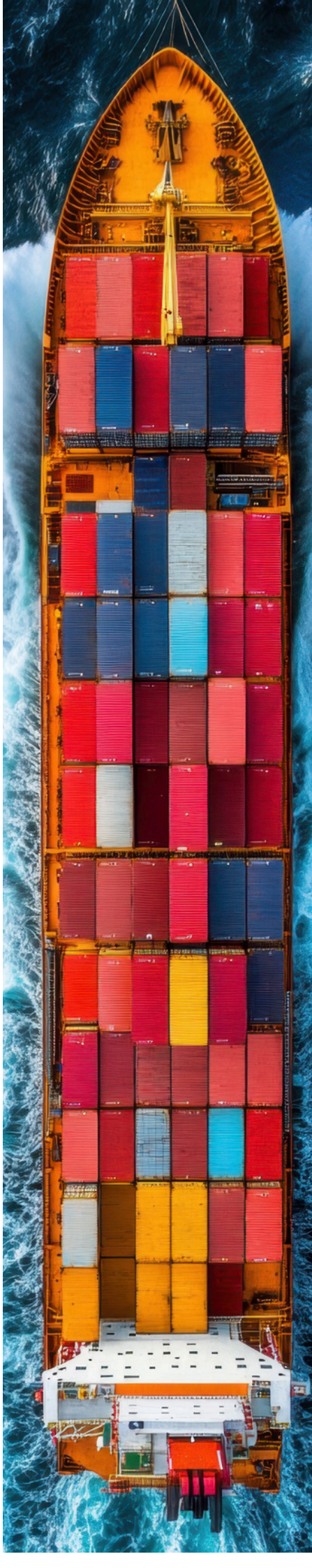
[1] Currently, there are Working Groups and, in general, ongoing processes on the following subjects: responsibility for illegal arrests, ship financing, arbitration, reformulation of maritime law, unmanned vessels, nomenclature, civil liability of classification societies, cybercrimes in the maritime industry, general average, offshore activities, implementation of international conventions, acts of piracy and maritime violence, polar navigation, international bankruptcies, fair treatment of crew members, data on international judicial decisions, marine insurance, international recognition of judicial sale of ships, and cargo transport (including the Rotterdam Rules).



At the same time, since 1960, the CMI has served as an advisory body to Intergovernmental Organizations, influencing them to address the processes of verification and modernization of maritime law in areas deemed necessary, as well as emerging issues with advances in navigation. For instance, today, this includes areas such as unmanned vessels, cybercrimes, and intelligent navigation devices, among others.

CMI's Participation in International Conventions and Rules

EIn this regard, the CMI played a key role in UNCITRAL in the process of discussing and ultimately signing the so-called Rotterdam Rules, which, if approved, will likely serve as the regulatory framework governing the transportation of goods for the next two centuries.
Moreover, since 1960, the CMI has maintained, and continues to maintain, a critical function in the development of general Maritime Codes, model laws, and recommendations in various levels of international maritime regulation, as well as in regional frameworks.





The CMI maintains its position as the custodian of the York-Antwerp Rules, as well as its role as an advisor to various regional entities, such as the European Community, on matters related to maritime law.

Achievements and Outlook of the Comité Marítimo Internacional

With 120 years of existence, the fundamental achievement and merit of the CMI has been the promotion and realization of a unified body of International Maritime Law, achieving to a large extent, though there is always much more to be done, the goal of uniformity in this area of law.

The role of the Comité Marítimo Internacional will remain essential in the study, dissemination, and unification of Maritime Law at the international level, in continuous collaboration with the Legal Committee of the International Maritime Organization, regional entities, and in addressing the challenges that new developments, such as unmanned vessels, will bring to this fascinating area of legal science known as Maritime Law.

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