



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE



**ADDRESS OF H.E. THE PRESIDENT OF THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES
MRS ANNITA DEMETRIOU AT THE 36TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE CYPRUS SHIPPING CHAMBER**

Tuesday, 27 May 2025, 12:00 at Four Seasons Hotel, Limassol

Your excellencies,

Honourable Members of the Board of Directors and Members of the Cyprus Shipping Chamber,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I sincerely thank you for your invitation to address, for yet another year, the Annual General Meeting of the Cyprus Shipping Chamber.

We all acknowledge the Chamber's invaluable contribution, for more than three decades, to establishing Cyprus as the maritime hub of excellence it is today. We also recognise the actions and forward-looking initiatives the Chamber has consistently spearheaded. This annual meeting affords an excellent opportunity to listen directly to the industry—complementing our existing communication channels—and to exchange views and ideas that will steer Cypriot shipping safely into the future.

Allow me, therefore, first to extend my warmest congratulations to the Members of the Board of the Cyprus Shipping Chamber for the noteworthy work completed so far and—just as importantly—for the achievements that lie ahead.

The maritime sector is undoubtedly a strategic economic pillar of our country and a source of national pride alike. Cyprus continues its determined efforts to serve as a credible and stable partner, despite global adversities, not least the ongoing war in Ukraine and the continued military tensions in our neighbouring Middle East. In these turbulent times, we aim to contribute positively at the European and international levels and to preserve Cyprus as an attractive and innovative hub for shipping services.

Our island now hosts the third largest merchant fleet in the European Union and the eleventh largest worldwide, employing more than 9,000 highly skilled professionals on shore and over 55,000 seafarers at sea, making the sector a significant contributor to our national gross value added.

Yet the global maritime environment is evolving at unprecedented speed. Geoeconomic and geopolitical tensions often cause disruptions that are difficult to foresee. Cyprus remains fully committed to applying and complying with sanctions and restrictions and despite the complexities involved, we must confront these realities with responsibility and clarity.

To this end, maintaining and further strengthening our competitive advantages and regulatory stability should be our top priority.

Another dimension posing challenges to the sector is the climate and environmental agenda, which requires the decarbonisation of shipping in line with the revised EU Emissions Trading System and the International Maritime Organization's 2023 Strategy. Cyprus is committed to enabling this green transition by offering targeted incentives for the early adoption of low- and zero-carbon technologies.

The legislative framework should be equally agile to accommodate emerging trends and innovations, while remaining aligned with our European and international obligations. The House of Representatives has risen to this challenge, enacting in 2024 no fewer than twenty-two pieces of maritime-related legislation. Currently, the Parliament is examining revisions to the legal framework concerning recreational navigation and marine leisure activities, along with the relevant secondary regulations. These measures aim to modernise safety standards, further stimulate an already vibrant maritime tourism sector, and create new opportunities for Cypriot ports and coastal communities.

The imminent staffing and start of operations of the Admiralty Court is also expected to significantly enhance Cyprus' maritime legal infrastructure, offering specialised and efficient resolution of maritime disputes.

Distinguished Guests,

Dear Friends,

When it comes to the maritime sector, we are fortunate to enjoy broad political consensus as we all collectively share the same vision and common goals for the future of Cyprus shipping.

However, shipping remains, above all, a people-centred industry. We attach particular importance to maritime education and seafarer welfare. In this respect, the Cyprus Shipping Chamber has been impressively active in bridging the industry with all relevant stakeholders, effectively representing Cyprus in international fora, and engaging in educational outreach—especially towards the younger generation.

None of these advances would be possible without the Chamber's constructive engagement and leadership and as we policymakers, rely on your expertise, I reaffirm our political readiness to listen and to act in support of the industry's continued success.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished Guests,

The Eastern Mediterranean has historically been a crossroads of commerce, culture, and innovation. In an era marked by fragmentation and uncertainty, Cyprus stands ready to transform challenges into opportunities. Looking ahead, we aim to align three vectors of progress: sustainability, digitalisation, and resilience as the cornerstones of our maritime future.

Last—but always relevant and crucial—we must all continue our collective efforts towards achieving a viable and comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem. Only then will we once again see Cyprus-flagged ships sailing freely from our ports of Famagusta and Kerynia, restoring what has long been denied to our maritime heritage. To this end, we must - and do - support the current active efforts and the re- appointment of Ms María Angela Holguín Cuéllar as the UN Secretary General's Personal Envoy on Cyprus) in view to resuming the negotiations process on the Cyprus issue in accordance with the relevant United Nations framework.

With that in mind, I congratulate you once again on your achievements. I thank you for your unwavering partnership, and I wish the 36th Annual General Meeting of the Cyprus Shipping Chamber every success.

Thank you.