

**Call for Papers**  
**Special Issue of the *WMU Journal of Maritime Affairs***

**BEYOND COVID-19: THE FUTURE OF MARITIME TRANSPORT**

**Background and Objectives**

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Covid-19 disease a pandemic and since then, the health crisis has unravelled a social, political, and economic one across the globe. As indicated by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and in order to overcome these devastating effects that seriously threaten the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), we need to ensure uninterrupted shipping (UNCTAD, 2020).

Shipping is the backbone of international trade. With a contribution of more than 80% of cargo by volume and 70% by value, it is the most efficient mode of transportation. Global ports handle over 80% of global merchandise trade in volume and more than two thirds of its value (UNCTAD, 2019). In this context, port performance is a key indicator of trade efficiency that determines connectivity and trade costs (Micco et al., 2003; UNCTAD, 2017a). Measuring the impact of Covid-19, the WSPSP-IAPH COVID19 Port Economic Impact Barometer (2020) reports a pendulum swing from over-capacity to under-utilization at some port storage areas, highlighting that Latin American ports are more impacted by hinterland delays, dock worker shortages, and truck driver availability than other global regions. Covid-19 is thus having a huge global economic impact that will negatively increase the mismatch between supply and demand, among other issues.

First, the pandemic threatens to change the approach to safety in a disruptive manner reminiscent of the effects the 9/11 attacks had on the maritime security regime. Travel restrictions to combat Covid-19 have put a halt on basic human and labour rights that have led to different reactions for the time being -- from a Declaration by Port Authorities Roundtable (PAR) members in view of the global Covid-19 situation (IMO, 2020a), to guidance on protection of health, repatriation and travel arrangements for seafarers, passengers and other persons on board ships (IMO, 2020b; IMO-ICAO-ILO, 2020; EC, 2020). They signal the need for additional measures to the existing international legal framework that has been suspended without taking into consideration less invasive measures and in particular the essential role that seafarers and other maritime professionals play.

Second, and as a result of the health crisis, disruptions in the flow of goods, people, and services are putting under enormous pressure a maritime sector that is facing significant business loss and bankruptcies because of the legal implications of the crisis, among other reasons. Governments are already reacting ahead of the expected recession establishing economic emergency and social protection measures, fine-tuning legislation and encouraging the resort to negotiation and ADR-methods. Nevertheless, shipping, because of its global nature, is facing challenges in availing itself of these measures while in other cases, serious competition issues might arise as a result of market distortions created by State aid packages.

Third, and on a positive note, Covid-19 might provide a window of opportunity to advance a green agenda. More specifically, the EU and especially the IMO environmental policy agenda is at stake and appears more important than ever, as the nature of the crisis requires great ambition to advance

the UN SDGs. The role of the international framework to steer the recovery might, nevertheless, be compromised by a geo-political shift with a direct impact on global trade and thus shipping, even as States grow tempted to look inwards.

Research on the uptake of remote communications, control, and other technologies and strategies to address the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic is also welcome. The crisis might accelerate the use of automation, and the move from a physical to a virtual business environment brought on through cross-border ship-shore electronic exchange of information, electronic bills of lading, and the general expansion of the distributed ledger technology (World Economic Forum, 2020). Indeed, this current pandemic situation can hasten digitization in ports and for them to become more resilient, especially in terms of GHG reduction.

This special issue will focus on insights on maritime safety and security issues, the socio-economic and political impact of the crisis across the maritime sector, and in general the future of maritime transport beyond Covid-19. It will try to uncover measures and practices adopted as a reaction to the pandemic with a view to examining their success, extract lessons for future scenarios, identify gaps in Covid-19 response, and enhance the resilience of the maritime sector.

### **Scope of Topics:**

A variety of issues and topics can be examined in this special issue from the perspectives of how to restore, enhance and adjust the existing maritime legal framework to the situation created by the pandemic, how political approaches to global trade and business models are evolving in view of the challenges posed by Covid-19, and how UN SDGs can be advanced in this uncertain scenario. The issues addressed may include maritime safety and security, shipping and port business models and digitization, Covid-19 related legislation and litigation, maritime environmental policy agenda, etc. Some research questions/topics may include but are not limited to:

1. How can the existing international framework for shipping be enhanced to face a major disruption in the global supply chain such as a pandemic? How can collaboration between relevant stakeholders be improved to ensure uninterrupted shipping and a safe work environment on board and ashore?
2. What are the geo-political implications of Covid-19 and what impact will they have on shipping?
3. What policies and strategic measures can organizations, States, ports and shipping companies implement in order to alleviate the impacts of a health crisis such as Covid-19?
4. What lessons can be learned from policies and measures adopted by States and companies to address the economic impact of the Covid-19 crisis? What innovative practices and business models have been developed as a result of the crisis?
5. How has the Covid-19 crisis impacted the maritime environmental policy agenda? Have policies and measures adopted to fight the crisis taken the UN SDGs sufficiently into account?
6. How did the adoption of digital technologies and big data analytics support and improve efficiency in port operations during? How will it continue to do so post Covid-19?
7. What implications can the push for digital technologies have on maritime security concerns, such as cybercrime?
8. The fall in shipping demand due to the coronavirus has resulted in reduced port capacity utilisation and negatively impacted the global logistic supply chain. What major economic

and financial impacts on global shipping markets could be anticipated in a post-Covid-19 scenario?

9. What significant changes in maritime transport operations could be expected in a post-Covid-19 world?

### **Deadlines:**

Full paper submission: 31 October 2020

First round of review and decisions: 31 January 2021

Second round revision submission: 31 March 2021

Final round of reviews and decisions: 30 April 2021

We welcome manuscripts on an earlier schedule where possible. Manuscripts should conform to the instructions given in the Guide for Authors for the *WMU Journal of Maritime Affairs* (<https://www.springer.com/journal/13437/submission-guidelines>).

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### **Special Issue Guest Editors:**

**Laura Carballo Piñeiro** is Professor at the World Maritime University where she holds the Nippon Foundation Chair of Maritime Labour Law and Policy. Her main areas of expertise are private international law with an emphasis on international maritime labour law, international litigation and cross-border insolvencies. Professor Carballo is a Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and has published in a number of international journals in English, German, Italian and Spanish. She has been visiting fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative and Private International Law, Columbia Law School, the Institute of European and Comparative Law at Oxford University and UNCITRAL, and she has taught in a number of institutions in Europe and Latin America. including the Hague Academy of International Law.

**Max Mejia** joined the World Maritime University (WMU) in 1998. He holds a BSc (US Naval Academy), MALD (Fletcher), MSc (WMU), and PhD (Lund). He went on leave from WMU to serve as Administrator of the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), 2013-2016. MARINA is the Philippines' maritime administration, responsible for integrating the development and regulation of the industry. During his term, Dr. Mejia implemented a comprehensive reform of the country's maritime training and certification system and other wide-ranging safety and industry promotion programs. Prof. Mejia returned to WMU in 2016, and currently serves as Director of the PhD Program, Associate Academic Dean, and Head of Maritime Law and Policy.

**Fabio Ballini** has an Economic and Maritime Transportation background. He obtained his MSc in Maritime Economics and Transport at the Faculty of Economics in Genova (Italy) and holds a Ph.D. Electrical Engineering, awarded a European Ph.D. label, from the University of Genova (Italy), Dept. of Naval, Electrical, Electronic and Telecommunication Engineering (DITEN). At WMU, Dr Fabio Ballini is currently an Assistant Professor in the Maritime Energy Management specialization dealing with research topics related to Port Energy Management Planning, Gaseous Emissions from Ships in Harbors, Externality Cost in Transportation, Externality Modeling and Energy Audit Systems in Port. His recent research areas of interest at the WMU in Malmö have

focused on Circular Economy in relation to ports and renewable energy and alternative fuels as a marine fuel.

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