

> Insight:

Conventions cut costs

Establishing conventions for globally harmonised rules can take time and for this reason often attract cynicism, but cost and efficiency are their driving forces

This year, the Comité Maritime International (CMI) will continue to promote the harmonisation of maritime law and make things easier for shipowners – and everyone else involved.

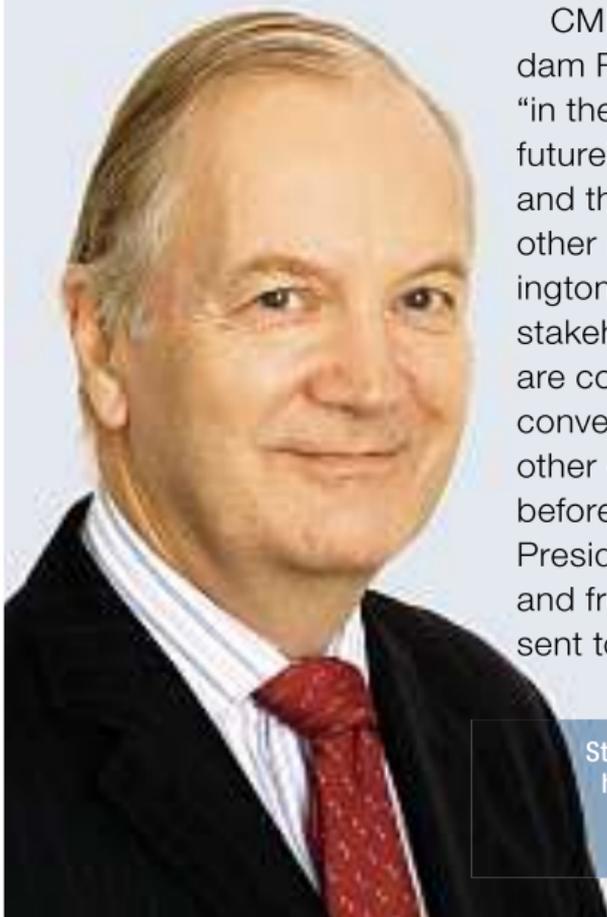
Speaking to *Fairplay*, CMI president Stuart Hetherington explained: “It is costly for shipowners to have to operate in a multitude of jurisdictions if the laws ... are different in each,” not least because legal advice is more likely to be required and will take lawyers longer to supply as they have “much greater uncertainty in advising clients”.

Liability regimes are a particular concern. Ship-

owners, cargo owners, P&I clubs, and insurers all stand to benefit if liabilities are likely to be the same, or at least similar, wherever their ship trades. “They can organise themselves and train their crews accordingly,” he said.

One example is the carriage of goods. The CMI-developed Rotterdam Rules convention, which aims to clarify the liability situation, is awaiting ratification. Currently, jurisdictions often adopt a mixture (“hybrid”) of current laws, but this “can sometimes lead to difficult questions of conflicts of laws and costly litigation”, said Hetherington.

CMI hopes the Rotterdam Rules will be ratified “in the relatively near future” by the United States and that this will encourage other ratifications. Hetherington said that once stakeholder discussions are completed, the convention will be sent to other government agencies before sending it to President Barack Obama, and from there it will be sent to the Senate. **F**



Stuart Hetherington: regulatory harmonisation makes it easier and cheaper for lawyers to help their clients