

## Do we have the courage to inspire?

### An interview with Stinne Taiger Ivø, Deputy Secretary General, BIMCO for International Women's Day and Women's History Month 2024

8 March is International Women's Day and March is Women's History Month. Together these provide an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women. It is also a time to raise awareness about discrimination and to take action to drive women's equality. This year, Fiona Cain, Counsel, a dispute resolution lawyer specialising in shipping and energy and part of Haynes Boone's London Women in Energy and Shipping Group, spoke to Stinne Taiger Ivø of The Baltic and International Maritime Council. BIMCO, an NGO with over 2,000 members in 130 countries, provides leadership to the global shipping industry and represents around 64 percent of the world's tonnage. Stinne was appointed Deputy Secretary General this year and is involved in leading BIMCO's documentary work and the development of standard contracts and clauses for use in the shipping industry and, more recently, the offshore renewables industry.

**Fiona Cain: Congratulations on your recent appointment as Deputy Secretary General for BIMCO. Can you tell me a bit about your background and your new role?**

**Stinne Taiger Ivø:** *My career did not start in shipping, but in international company law and research. I discovered maritime law during my research at the University of Copenhagen. It interested me, so I joined the shipping department of the Danish law firm Gorrissen Federspiel to gain practical experience, and did not return to research. I still, however, find legal research important, as it provides us with a better understanding of legal developments and sets them into perspective. I have also worked for Danish Shipping, the Danish association for shipowners, and the P&I insurer Skuld, where I headed the claims department in Copenhagen. Before I joined BIMCO, I was aware of the documentary work and the importance of the contracts and clauses produced by BIMCO for the industry. It is exciting to be involved in developing these because if standard and industry-acceptable clauses did not exist, the individual owner and charterer would have to develop their own, and this takes time and resources and potentially makes it harder to negotiate.*

**Fiona: 2023 was a productive year for BIMCO, which saw you introduce several standard contracts and clauses. Which of these has been the most significant?**

**Stinne:** *2023 was indeed a productive year, and we published several significant contracts and clauses. These included a CII (carbon intensity indicator) Clause for Voyage Charter Parties, and we developed clauses for ETS (emissions trading scheme), both for voyage charter parties and for ship management agreements. The EU ETS directive entered into force on 1 January 2024, and it was important to have the clauses ready by then.*

**Fiona: Women represent less than 1.5 percent of the global seafarer workforce (according to a 2021 report from BIMCO and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)). How has this changed over the course of your career?**

**Stinne:** *On a positive note, the 2021 BIMCO ICS seafarer workforce report shows that the total number of female seafarers represents a 45.8 percent increase compared to the 2015 report. However, because the starting point was so low, this high percentage in a way hides the slow progress. WISTA (Women's International Shipping and Trading Association) conducted a survey in 2021 within the general maritime industry, showing that women currently account for 29 percent of the overall workforce, but there are differences between the*

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*roles women hold and the functions they perform. For example, women constitute only 10 percent of staff in national maritime authorities, whereas female diplomats working in the maritime sector represent 33 percent of the workforce. Whilst numbers have been low throughout my career, what has changed is the number of initiatives addressing the gender imbalance. We might consider ourselves to be at a turning point for the industry with broader drives such as digitalisation, and a move to greener, more sustainable shipping affording the industry with an opportunity to reinvent itself as an employer.*

**Fiona: Are you aware of initiatives to increase the number of women working in the shipping industry?**

***Stinne:** I am sure that many companies are already thinking carefully about this, not only in shipping, but also in other male-dominated industries. I am hopeful that at an individual company level, we will see more initiatives and more concrete plans to increase the number of women working in individual shipping companies. Such steps are important at this level, as leaders can more easily establish effective initiatives, for example, by setting targets for increasing the number of women. And narrowing the lenses even further, looking at BIMCO, we recently had two female presidents, Sabrina Chao and Sadan Kaptanoglu, which has been a significant step forward in our 120-plus-year history. BIMCO's diversity KPIs demonstrates a good gender diversity across the organisation, and BIMCO has established an ESG (Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance) network for our members. With ESG placing the environment and people at the heart of a company and its responsibility, we are positioning ourselves to learn more about our members' activities related to diversity and inclusion and also to support them.*

**Fiona: Can you tell us about your own experiences in the industry, including what attracted you to the industry?**

***Stinne:** For me, it is the global element, working in an international environment, having colleagues around the globe. Also, the industry is ever-changing. It adapts and develops, freight rates go up and down, market conditions change. With this comes many different career opportunities, job types and you can continue developing your own skills and add to your experience day by day. Having worked together with several nationalities and met many fantastic people, what attracted me to the industry from the outset, still attracts me today.*

**Fiona: What are your hopes for the future in terms of diversity in the shipping industry?**

***Stinne:** I hope that we will get more women in the industry; seafarers, leaders and a more diverse industry at all levels. It will strengthen the industry and it will bring another way of thinking to the table, innovative ideas and overall, all companies and industries benefit from having a good diversity balance. But hopes are not enough in this context. Initiatives need to be taken and pursued. Getting more women into the shipping industry does not happen by itself. What makes me hopeful for a more diverse industry is the green transition in shipping. There is evidence that green jobs are more attractive to women than men. As shipping moves to new fuels and new ways of working, we need to make sure that we look at new ways of training and upskilling people. Addressing upskilling and the green transition also benefits the entire workforce, not only women.*

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**Fiona: The theme of International Women's Day this year is #InspireInclusion. Who inspires you? What do you do to inspire others?**

*Stinne: To me, inspiration is more about personal skills than what has been achieved. Leadership is not an easy discipline. Women who can keep their authority and at the same time show up with empathy to create an inclusive and respectful working environment inspire me. I have met women mastering this skill set, which to me, is more inspiring than an impressive CV.*

*For this year's theme, I think we as an industry can make progress by setting more time aside not to agree on fundamental values such as a respectful and inclusive culture, but to address situations where such values get undermined. I also find women who have risked their lives for others very inspiring. My partner's grandmother was part of the Danish resistance movement. Women like her confront us with the personal question: Would I have the courage to do the same? And it puts our work-related challenges into perspective.*

*To me, inspiring others is not so much about doing or saying anything particular with the purpose to be inspirational. That can easily fail.*

*Inspiring others, I see more as the result of being a person, colleague or leader who has clear values that others can relate to.*

*A key driver and value for me is to demonstrate what we can achieve together, as a team, working together, sharing the successes.*

*Fairness is another value that I live by. To me, inspirational leadership also values the importance of setting aside time, not only to work and perform, but taking care of your family, relationships and other activities to thrive at a personal level.*

**Fiona: What words of advice did you receive early in your career that have stayed with you?**

*Stinne: The piece of advice was given to me in Danish but can be translated to mean "keep your eyes on the road." This advice was given to me when I was preparing for my trial case to be admitted to the High Courts. I was a young and inexperienced lawyer, and the opponent was a very well-known attorney representing the Danish Government. He was doing his best to make me nervous and potentially not pass my exam. The partner I worked with preparing for the case was very supportive and said those words of advice, and that meant a lot. It helped me stay on my course, keep my line of arguments etc. Occasionally, this advice still helps me not to lose sight of my direction and keep focus.*

**Fiona: What is the most important message you would give to young women considering a career in the shipping industry today?**

*Stinne: Be yourself, choose your boss carefully and prioritise a supportive network.*

*Shipping is a rewarding industry; it is truly global and ever-changing, and these aspects create great opportunities for an international career. You can pursue jobs abroad and positions where you work together with different nationalities, which, for me, has been one of the most valuable elements of working in shipping.*

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*Also, the industry is ever-changing. The world changes, and shipping changes with it. Shipping is never trivial. Of course, you can find more repetitive jobs in shipping as well, but my experience is that this industry never sleeps, and you learn and grow your experience and develop your skills year by year.*

*To young women considering a career in shipping, it is important that women bring to work an authentic version of themselves. This is much more sustainable and long-lasting. It may be tempting to try to fit in, especially in workplaces where the majority are men, but this is not what the industry needs. Diversity and an environment where ideas and views can be shared in a respectable manner is the way forward. Find a boss who backs you up and supports you. If you find yourselves in a workplace where your boss only promotes your male colleagues, go somewhere else. There are many workplaces today where women are promoted and have a career path on more equal terms. Those workplaces are more attractive in the long run than less diverse workplaces. And grow a network. Whether mixed or female, you need a network where you can share problems, experiences and get support and feedback to help you work out solutions.*

**Fiona: BIMCO has ambitious plans to produce further standard contracts and clauses. Which of these projects are you most excited about?**

*Stinne: I am excited about the entire documentary work programme for 2024. In addition to the supply terms for alternative fuels such as methanol and ammonia (we produced supply terms of LNG in 2023), we will develop a data-sharing and energy-efficiency performance clause and a retrofit cost/benefit clause. Sharing quality data has become fundamentally important in this new era, where emission control and carbon reductions are new business parameters and have become elements of commercial negotiations. Another equally important project is the development of a contractual framework for complying with the FuelEU Maritime Regulation. We have established the subcommittee and commenced the work, which will be multi-faceted. It will be clauses for time charter parties, terms around certification and documentation, as well as terms for the pooling mechanism. The FuelEU Maritime Regulation will be the next challenge, adding a layer to the existing regulatory framework within the overall scope of decarbonisation and alternative fuels. Our new contract for transportation and installation of wind farms, WINDSEACON, is another very exciting project.*

**Fiona: On behalf of the Haynes Boone's London Women in Energy and Shipping Group, thank you Stinne for your interesting and thought-provoking answers.**