EDITORIAL

The global economy relies heavily on maritime transport. In Europe only, 90% of the trade with third countries and 30% of intra-European trade takes place by sea. This requires efficient shipping and port sectors as well as attractive intermodal transport solutions promoting trade and contributing to sustainable mobility of goods and passengers. The significant body of research carried out internationally on all aspects of the wider maritime sector – with the most notable example the research undertaken on behalf of the European Union – and the need for a quality platform to disseminate this research, constitute the prime reason for the inauguration of the International Journal of Maritime Economics.

The launching of IJME comes also to fulfil a long awaited, lengthily discussed and strongly felt wish by maritime economists for a high-ranking scientific journal that would help establish maritime economics as a distinct and well defined branch of applied economics. This is the mission of IJME and the ambition of its Editorial Board; an international group of top academics and professionals in the field who have enthusiastically embraced the determination and confidence of the Rotterdam School of Economics to go ahead with this important assignment.

The Journal aims to achieve an A or B Publication ranking (as determined by the Royal Academy of Sciences in the Netherlands or similar classifications abroad). Something like this, apart from being of course desirable in its own right, serves two other important objectives: a) it makes the task of Research Review Committees more straightforward and b) provides members of the academia and the wider maritime research and consulting community with an accredited platform for the dissemination of their research; something most important for research staff evolution.

Papers submitted for publication are rigorously refereed and preference is given to those that are based on solid research, exhaustive review of the literature and with conclusions that: (a) are of direct applicability and usefulness to practitioners and policy makers alike and (b) help other authors to build upon and thus advance the research, in a way that creates a body of knowledge that fulfils the mission of the Journal.

In addition, the Journal introduces a novel feature, that of a "Policy Perspectives" section that will host papers – often invited ones – carrying significant policy implications. Papers in this section are refereed in a different way, placing less emphasis on scientific rigour but rather on the strategic policy implications of the paper.

The papers in this inaugural issue offer readers the distilled wisdom of five authors, all members of the Editorial Board – whose writings have to a great extent defined what many of us would understand as maritime economics. Each and everyone deserves careful study and their joint appearance in this volume is, I believe, the most appropriate way to commemorate the launching of IJME.

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