

# 2023 - Seasonal Greetings

“BACK ON OUR OWN FEET AGAIN”

Dear Members,

Now with the end of 2023 rapidly approaching, we all are taking some time to reflect over the past year. Definitely, in the domain where all of us are active, it has probably been again a year where everything went so fast that we think the year only just begun...

After last year's horrible setback, the grief and sadness that fell to us all, we can say now that IPCSA is '*back on track*' and that we are walking on our own feet now again. Thanks to the tremendous efforts of IPCSA's management and the wonderful support from our chairman, Javier Gallardo, our vice-chairman, Steve Lamb, our General Manager, Inga Morton, and the Association's personal Ambassador, Hans Rook, I clearly felt the unwavering help as from my first day as being your new Secretary-General.

Personally 2023 was quite a challenging year, diving into the 'adventure' of this new position and giving all of my utmost efforts to put IPCSA on the level where it deserves to be, namely as the knowledgeable institute and Competence Centre when it comes to Port Community Systems, Cargo Community Systems and Maritime and Trade Single Windows.

A lot of people who I have met in the past year from all different sorts of associations and organisations acknowledge our expertise without any doubt.

With bringing IPCSA back on the different global forums and agendas, being there back as 'the talk of the town' it is heart warming to see how they all talk about our Association and admire our experience and knowledge in a, for the most, complex landscape of digital ecosystems. It is clear and obvious that people find their way to IPCSA again.

In my first eight months as Secretary-General, one of the goals was to see and speak – either in-person or online – with as much members as possible to hear their topics of interest and what the Association can do or can do more for them. Without exactly counting I guess it will be around 60% of our members who I have spoken to. I felt huge support and confidence from all of them towards me as their new Secretary-General, and this certainly will give me the strength to reinforce for 2024 the efforts to be there for our Members.



Topics raised by or questioned to IPCSA on all forums are the returning items of the global IMO-regulation on the mandatory Maritime Single Window – as from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 – and the importance of Change Management in the context of digital ecosystems of any kind. And probably these topics will continue to be high on the agenda for quite some time, which is beneficial for IPCSA as having several experts amongst us in this domain.

One of the remarkable observations throughout the year, but at the same time not new to us, is that people want to dive into the technical details of a PCS or a SW as fast as possible. As IPCSA we continue to preach not to go too fast and that you need to take everything one step at the time. The “12 Key Actions” in a PCS-implementation are there already since 2011 but again, in 2023, they have been proven once more to be very actual and to-the-point.

Of course, and unfortunately, we can’t again go around the disturbing elements that cause a fragile and unpredictable macro-economical situation, of which PCSs and SWs of all kinds continuously need to prove their resilience and need to be a firm and trustworthy hold when it comes to securing global supply chain and logistics.

But I’m a firm believer of the positive things that came out of the past pandemic, namely the fact that people and especially PCS- and SW-organisations have proven to be adaptive and resilient in times where digitalisation is the key success factor in bringing change in order to stay the same! Our IPCSA-members have proven to be and I’m certain they will keep on being an accelerator and a lever towards the answers of climate change, sustainability transition and other macro-economic disruptors.

This time of the year is also a time of reflection and a time of looking forward to new challenges. We as IPCSA look forward to your continued support and welcome your thoughts and ideas as to how we as IPCSA can improve ourselves in supporting you as a member even more. IPCSA will continue to change and adapt to the needs and to act in the common interest of all our members. Together with the entire management team at IPCSA we are looking forward to strengthen our community even further with all of you in 2024.

On behalf of the IPCSA Management Team we hope you and your families will be in good health and will stay safe. We wish you greetings of the season, a relaxing and excellent festive season break and a positive and prosperous 2024.

Nico De Cauwer,  
IPCSA Secretary-General

