ICS continues to play a leading part in the Maritime Anti-Corruption Network (MACN), which now has an important role in demonstrating how corruption can present a serious safety risk for seafarers, as well as being an obstacle to efficient maritime trade and wider economic development.

A Cross Industry Working Group, jointly established by MACN and ICS, is actively working towards the vision of a maritime industry free of corruption, enabling fair trade to the benefit of society. The Group incorporates a wide range of industry organisations which collaborate, share ideas and address key issues that the shipping industry is currently facing with respect to bribery and corruption.

The shipping industry operates in a wide variety of ports under many different jurisdictions. Masters and seafarers therefore have frequent and multiple interactions with many government officials around the world, sometimes being exposed to corruption and demands for bribes. Rejecting and challenging corrupt demands, including so called ‘facilitation payments’, can lead to severe delays, place the safety of the crews and ships at risk, and have seriously damaging commercial consequences for shipping companies.

By acquiescing to demands to make potentially corrupt payments, companies and seafarers also expose themselves to the risk of criminal prosecution in their home state. ICS therefore believes that tackling instances of bribery and corruption must remain a key priority, which the industry’s regulators, both internationally and nationally, must work very seriously to address, so that the integrity of shipping companies – and the safety of the seafarers they employ in the service of world trade – is adequately protected.

In order to promote wider awareness among maritime administrations about the impact of corruption, the ICS led-group made an important submission to the IMO Facilitation Committee (FAL) meeting in June 2018. This highlighted how corruption impedes social and economic development while undermining security, in ports and on board ships, as well as impacting negatively on the wellbeing and safety of seafarers. The submission also made suggestions on how anti-corruption measures might best be integrated into the current IMO work programme for governmental improvement, and addressed the risks frequently encountered by ships during Port State Control inspections. A presentation was also delivered to IMO FAL Committee delegates about the activities of MACN and the wider challenges in the maritime industry regarding anti-corruption.