



19 & 20 June 2025

MASS Rotterdam Conference: The Legal Future of Autonomous Vessels

Autonomous vessels are on the rise, but legal challenges remain. How will the European AI Act impact their development? What role does the IMO MASS Code play? How will autonomy affect charterparties, contracts, pilotage, and maritime casualty investigations?

Join leading experts as they explore these crucial legal and technical questions. Gain insights into AI, collision avoidance, regulatory challenges, and industry perspectives at this 1.5-day conference in the heart of the maritime world.

MASS ROTTERDAM

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Content

Autonomous ships continue to attract the attention of researchers and developers, and several (smaller scale) autonomous vessels such as survey craft and ferries are already operational. On the legal side, however, many questions are still open.

The MASS Rotterdam Conference will delve into these legal questions. What is the impact of the recent European AI Act on the development of autonomous vessels? What is the purpose and scope of the MASS Code that IMO is developing? What consequences may autonomous vessels have for the charterparties and contracts of carriage in use today? How will the pilotage of autonomous vessels work, and what implications might there be for the investigation of maritime casualties involving MASS? A proper legal analysis of these and other questions requires an understanding of the technical realities. The MASS Rotterdam Conference will therefore also provide an introduction to the technology used in autonomous ships. AI will obviously play a role, but which type of AI, with which characteristics? What is the state of affairs in the field of automated collision avoidance and COLREGS compliance?

Finally, the MASS Rotterdam Conference will be looking at the perspective of other interested parties. How do the shipyards that will be designing and building autonomous ships approach possible risks and liabilities? What does it take to convince regulators that the technology is mature enough to allow it to be used in day-to-day practice?

A panel of expert speakers will answer these questions during a 1.5 day conference in the world port city of Rotterdam.

CONTACTGEGEVENS

Coördinator
Drs. Lisette Smit-Bennemeer
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Burgermeester Oudlaan 50
3062 PA, Rotterdam

Schedule Thursday 19 June

- 13:00-14:00** **Registration Sandwich lunch**
- 14:00-14:20** **Introduction**
Prof. Dr. Fabian Ambtenbrink, Vice-Dean of Research ESL
- 14:20-15:00** **An introduction to AI**
Dr. Giovanni Sileno, Assistant Professor, University of Amsterdam
- 15:00-15:40** **The EU AI Act and its implications for shipping**
Prof. Dr. Mihael Miso Mudric, University of Zagreb
- 15:40-16:20** **Digital pilotage**
Dr. Asli Arda, Assistant Professor, University of Copenhagen
- 16:20-17:00** **The IMO MASS Code**
Dr. Maruis Amouzou, Post-doctoral researcher
- 19:00- ...** **Conference diner**
Koninklijke Roei- en Zeilvereniging De Maas, Veerdam 1, 3016 DD Rotterdam

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Schedule Friday 20 June

- 09:00-09:40** **Testing and certification of complex systems**
Are Jørgensen, Senior Principal Engineer, DNV
- 09:40-10:20** **Shipyards building MASS**
David Stibbe, Damen Shipyards
- 10:20-11:00** **Coffee break**
- 11:00-11:40** **Collision avoidance and COLREGS compliance algorithms**
Prof. Dr. Rudy Negenborn, TU Delft
- 11:40-12:20** **(Collision) liabilities of MASS**
Dr. Frank Stevens, Associate Professor ESL
- 12:20-13:00** **The BIMCO forms and the MASS future**
Grant Hunter, Chief Digital Officer, Director of Products, BIMCO
- 13:00-14:15** **Lunch**
- 14:15-14:55** **The regulator's perspective**
Goon Scheres, Sr. Inspecteur/Adviseur Smart Shipping, ILenT
- 14:55-15:35** **MASS and maritime decarbonisation**
Dr. Jolien Kruit, Partner, Van Traa Advocaten
- 15:35-16:05** **Casualty investigation and MASS**
Capt. Jeroen Weyn, Nautical Commission Antwerp

CONTACT

Practical Information

Sessions:

All sessions on Thursday and Friday will take place in the **'Forum' lecture theatre** in the 3rd Floor of the **Van Der Goot Building**, on the Woudestein Campus of the Erasmus University Rotterdam, Burgemeester Oudlaan 50, 3062 PA Rotterdam.



The registration, lunches and coffee break will take place in a room immediately adjacent to the **'Forum' lecture theatre**.

CONTACT

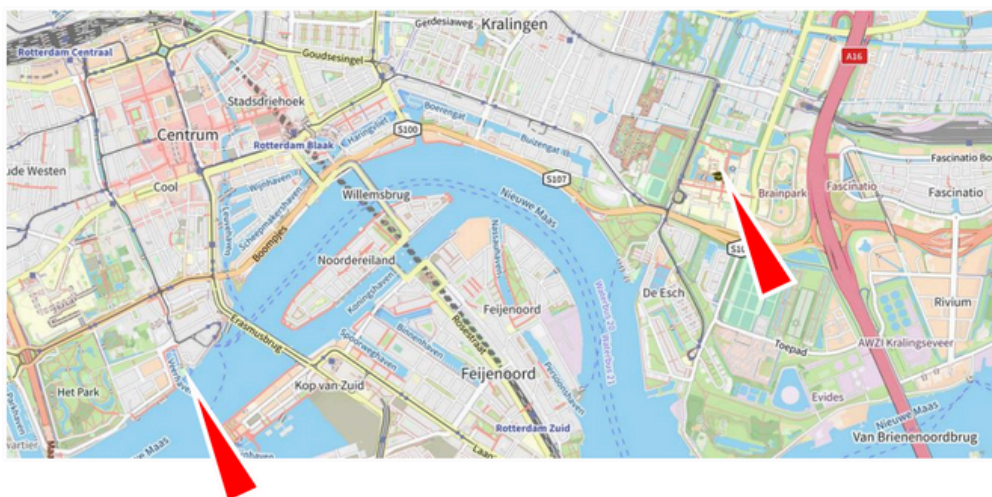
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Practical Information

Conference dinner:

The Conference dinner on Thursday evening will take place at the **Koninklijke Roei- en Zeilvereniging De Maas**, Veerdam 1, 3016 DD Rotterdam.



Registration:

Registration for the MASS Rotterdam Conference is online, via the ESL website:

<https://www.eur.nl/en/esl/events/mass-rotterdam-conference-2025-06-19>

The registration fee is 345,00 EUR and includes the lunches, coffee break and the conference dinner.

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