

Former IMO man Mikelis joins GMS in advisory role

Key architect of the Hong Kong Convention says he will be helping the Anil Sharma company develop its initiatives for the responsible recycling of ships

Jonathan Boonzaier **Dubai**

Nikos Mikelis, a key figure in developing an international agreement on ship recycling during a long career with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), is joining cash buyer Anil Sharma's company, GMS, in an advisory role.

Mikelis describes his new job as being a consultant on strategy and public relations, as well as to help GMS develop its initiatives for the responsible recycling of ships.

He tells TradeWinds that he worked with Sharma for several years during his time at the IMO and credits him with opening doors in both India and Bangladesh for the organisation.

"This is giving me the opportunity to apply my expertise in areas I have worked before. When I worked at the IMO, I had the lux-

ury of being able to be driven by idealism. It rewards my past work by proving that I am still relevant to the commercial side of the industry," he said.

In his GMS role, Mikelis expects that most of his time will be spent as a bridge between owners and shipbreaking yards. He has long been a proponent of improving standards at these yards through encouraging commercial success for those who invest in environmental upgrading.

"There are yards in India and Bangladesh that have moved well ahead of the others. These yards need to be recognised by shipowners awarding them business. The other yards will see this and it will encourage them to do the same," he explained.

Mikelis assures TradeWinds that his new GMS role will not conflict with his joint venture



► **NIKOS MIKELIS:** 'It rewards my past work by proving that I am still relevant to the commercial side of the industry.'

Photo: JONATHAN BOONZAIER

with broker Harry Malandreniotis for buying ships for Dalian Shipbuilding Industry Ship Recycling Co, a Chinese yard that plans to exclusively dismantle vessels in full compliance with Mikelis's Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships (Hong Kong Convention).

Mikelis teamed up with Malandreniotis on this project shortly after retiring from the IMO.

"I am not buying ships for GMS. When I represent Dalian, I will praise it for all the facilities it has. It doesn't mean that I have to say that the other yards are no good," he said.

Mikelis says the Dalian facil-

ity is half completed, with the repair side of the yard ready. Two ships are in the process of being dismantled as test projects and it is expected that authorities will issue permits to acquire foreign tonnage in the summer. The facility will be completed in all respects by the end of the year.

Mikelis reveals that a third post-IMO retirement project he is working on is an initiative of the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation — Norad — to build hazardous-waste disposal facilities for the shipbreaking yards in Bangladesh. He admits, however, that the project is moving slowly because of bureaucratic red tape.