



MARINE TRANSPORT WORKERS' TRADE UNION OF UKRAINE E-BULLETIN

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2025

DEAR FRIENDS!

Happy New Year 2026!

Today, the freedom-loving Ukrainian nation is experiencing a new chapter in its history. Since the start of the full-scale invasion, the Marine Transport Workers' Trade Union of Ukraine hasn't changed its mission — protecting its members. The Union continued to seek new opportunities for seafarers, never left the brave port workers, and walked side by side with the young generation of maritime specialists whose ideas, dreams and aspirations will move Ukraine forward.

The MTWTU is grateful to our international colleagues and organisations for not leaving us at a time when the world has broken and divided into 'before' and 'after'. Numerous words of support, the implementation of projects for Ukrainian maritime community welfare, tonnes of humanitarian aid — generators, food, hygiene products and other essentials for our Union members — all became possible thanks to the solidarity and dedication of the global trade union movement.

The year 2025 is coming to an end. But our struggle continues, we continue to believe in a happy future and continue to help our Union members overcome all challenges. We are confident that only together we can do anything, together we are unbreakable, together we are stronger!

Your sincerely,
Oleg Grygoriuk
Chairman MTWTU
IMO Goodwill Ambassador in Ukraine
Vice President of IFSMA



STANDING WITH SEAFARERS BEYOND BORDERS



MTWTU MEETS WITH UKRAINIAN SEAFARERS IN CHISINAU

Ukrainian seafarers are scattered around the world today because of the war, but Union support is stronger than distance and all obstacles.

In Chisinau, the MTWTU, with the support of the ITF Seafarers' Trust, held a networking meeting where seafarers learned about the Union's activities during the war, international achievements, and challenges at home from Oleg Grygoriuk. Seafarers also had the opportunity to ask questions about legal protection within the framework of the MTWTU LAW HUB, discuss the work of the ITF Inspector in Ukraine and social projects for seafarers and their families, and receive psychological support.



CONSTANT SUPPORT FOR UKRAINIAN SEAFARERS DURING WARTIME

Katie Higginbottom Head of the ITF Seafarers' Trust, also joined the event. She provided detailed information about the Fund's work, its structure and key areas of activity.

Katie Higginbottom also focused part of her speech on supporting Ukraine during the war. Since the first days of the full-scale invasion, the ITF Seafarers' Trust has been involved in helping the Ukrainian maritime community. Her statement was a powerful reminder that those who truly understand the value of the Ukrainian seafarers' work and resilience stand by their side.





INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY IN WARTIME:

HEAD OF THE ITF SEAFARERS' TRUST VISITS UKRAINE

Despite constant threats and shelling, Katie Higginbottom, Head of the ITF Seafarers' Trust, visited Ukraine on a working mission — an important sign of international support and solidarity with Ukrainian seafarers. Her visit was not only a demonstration of respect, but also a clear message that the global maritime community continues to stand with the MTWTU and the entire industry, even in the most difficult times.

PREPARING FUTURE LEADERS IN ODESA

MTWTU
YOUTH

At the Maritime Union Center, Katie Higginbottom met with MTWTU youth and answered a number of important and exciting questions. In an open discussion, she shared her experience, talked about motivation in charitable work, and explained approaches to supporting creative initiatives.



FOCUS ON THE MTWTU'S SOCIAL PROJECTS

Katie Higginbottom, visited the Union Dent Clinic, a partner medical facility of the MTWTU, where dental projects for seafarers and cadets are implemented with the support of the ITF Seafarers' Trust.

Clinic representatives noted that cooperation with the MTWTU and its international partners makes it possible to support hundreds of seafarers every year, providing access to quality dental care at no additional cost.



MEETING WITH CADETS OF DINUOMA IN IZMAIL

MTWTU
YOUTH

The MTWTU Chairman Oleg Grygoriuk and Head of the ITF Seafarers' Trust Katie Higginbottom met with cadets of the Danube Institute of the National University "Odesa Maritime Academy".

Guests were shown the educational facility, specialised laboratories for practical preparation and modern shelters — an important step that ensures the continuity of the educational process amid regular shelling in the Danube region.

Katie Higginbottom noted students' enthusiasm and interest, emphasizing that it is the younger generation that will shape a sustainable and successful maritime industry.



REAL SUPPORT IN DIFFICULT TIMES

The MTWTU Chairman Oleg Grygoriuk and Head of the ITF Seafarers' Trust Katie Higginbottom visited the Izmail International Seamen's Club. Katie Higginbottom personally viewed the building after the completion of repair work, familiarised with the renovated premises and talked to the Club's workers.

The Club has been working since 1957, and its current building was constructed in 2002 thanks to a grant from the ITF Seafarers' Trust. In 2020-2021, another renovation took place, also with the Fund's support.

The Izmail International Seamen's Club was one of the objects that suffered during a massive drone attack in 2023, when Russian drones deliberately targeted port infrastructure in the Danube region. The ITF Seafarers' Trust funded the reconstruction of the damaged building and ensured that the space was quickly returned to service.



MTWTU MEETING WITH THE IZMAIL SEA COMMERCIAL PORT MANAGEMENT

A meeting was held in Izmail between Oleg Grygoriuk, Chairman of the Marine Transport Workers' Trade Union of Ukraine, and Vitalii Nikula, Director of the State Enterprise "Izmail Sea Commercial Port". Oleg Paskalov, Head of the Port's local trade union organisation, and Katie Higginbottom, Head of the ITF Seafarers' Trust, also participated in the discussion.

Vitalii Nikula reported on the enterprise's current activities, ongoing problems and ways to solve them, and shared strategic plans aimed at increasing cargo turnover and developing the port.

He emphasised his readiness for constructive cooperation with the Union and noted that good relations had already been established with the Local Trade Union Organisation.



WF “MORTRANS” STRENGTHENS PARTNERSHIP WITH ITF SEAFARERS’ TRUST

The Welfare Fund of Marine Transport “MORTRANS” held an extremely important meeting with Head of the ITF Seafarers’ Trust Katie Higginbottom.

During the meeting, they discussed current issues related to supporting Ukrainian seafarers, possible ways to strengthen assistance, and further cooperation in developing social projects during wartime.

Antonina Shkamerda, Director Welfare Fund “MORTRANS”, emphasised the importance of such meetings and joint projects, which allow for the consolidation of efforts to support seafarers and their families.



WORKING ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

WORKING MEETING OF REGIONAL PARTNERS OF THE DANISH TRADE UNION 3F



The MTWTU shared its experience with other partner trade unions from Denmark, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia on issues related to protecting the labor rights of union members, conducting social dialogue, and involving youth in the trade union movement.



Oleg Grygoriuk, MTWTU Chairman, emphasised the importance of conducting informational and educational work among youth before they enter the workforce, as well as among the employed population. The Union carries out such work, including within the framework of joint projects with the Danish trade union 3F.

The participants also focused on the prospects of European integration processes, a fair green transition, the role of trade unions in such processes, and the importance of solidarity support.

PARTNERSHIP DIALOG WITH THE ILO



The MTWTU Chairman, Vice Chairman of the Federation of Transport Workers' Trade Unions of Ukraine Oleg Grygoriuk and Federation Secretary Oleksandr Shubin met with Aida Lindmeier, Director of the ILO Country Office in Ukraine.

They discussed both the current challenges of wartime and the long-term priorities for the development of the transport sector.



STRENGTHENING YOUTH MOVEMENT



KSMA CADETS CONTINUE THEIR STUDIES IN LITHUANIA

Second-year cadets from the Kherson State Maritime Academy (KSMA), who are studying under a joint program at the Vilnius Tech LMA with the support of the MTWTU and Wilson, have successfully started the new academic year.



They have already received their class schedule and are studying according to the updated plan coordinated by the two academies.

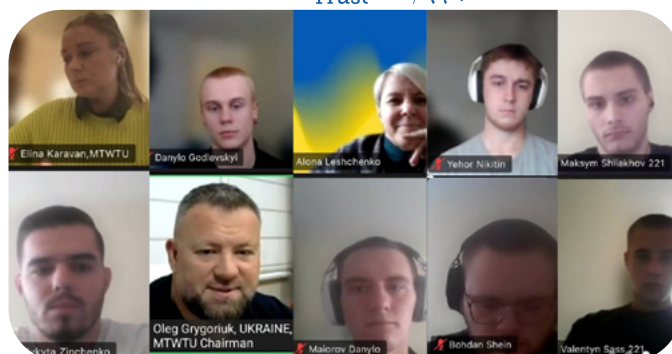
Thanks to the MTWTU and its partners — ITF Seafarers' Trust, Wilson, and the German trade union ver.di — a total of 80 Ukrainian cadets have joined the project.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS FROM THE SEA AND MTWTU SUPPORT



The MTWTU Chairman Oleg Grygoriuk held an online meeting with third-year cadets from the KSMA who, with the MTWTU and ITF Seafarers' Trust support, are also studying at the Vilnius Tech LMA.

The young seafarers have just returned from their first voyage and shared their impressions of working on board.



“This was your first experience of a long stay at sea, which is why it's important to discuss what you've been through directly, so that your further professional development can proceed confidently and without unnecessary obstacles. You can rely on the Union in any situation. We believe in your potential and stand by you at every step of your development,” said Oleg Grygoriuk, MTWTU Chairman.

MTWTU TOGETHER WITH YOUTH



Every meeting with youth is an opportunity to hear what the new seafarers' generation is interested in and to support its development. This is how MTWTU builds a community in which specialists and leaders grow.

This month, the Union:

- visited the Maritime Professional College named after O. Marinesko of NUOMA, talked about the MTWTU's opportunities, and held a Union Quiz organised by the Youth Council;



- met with NUOMA first-year students at the Maritime Union Center, where we showed how we support future specialists;
- hosted cadets from the Danube Institute of NUOMA to talk about the development and benefits of MTWTU membership.
- Together, we are building a community where everyone can develop and feel supported.



SEAFARERS' WELFARE



UNION DENT: NEW LEVEL OF MEDICAL SERVICES ACCESSIBILITY



The MTWTU, in cooperation with the fraternal German trade union ver.di, the Welfare Fund of Marine Transport "MORTRANS" and the medical partner UNION DENT Clinic, implemented a large-scale initiative — a campaign awareness-raising campaign on dental hygiene for MTWTU cadets.

Today, 200 cadets have already received a full range of dental services and continue their treatment from UNION DENT. Each young project participant receives a professional dental consultation, preventive dental treatment, individual recommendations for dental care, and a hygiene set free-of-charge.

The MTWTU together with the German trade union ver.di continue to work to ensure that our members have access to the necessary assistance and feel confident.



UNION SUPPORTS SEAFARERS' FAMILIES ON ST. NICHOLAS DAY

To bring the spirit of the New Year holidays to its members, the Union held its traditional campaign to support the families of seafarers who are MTWTU members. About 300 holiday gift sets were received at the Union's office and sent to families in various regions of Ukraine.



"The Union is about action, it is about care, it is about people and our desire to overcome their daily struggles. We do everything we can to ensure that our MTWTU family is confident that there are those who will support, help, and provide a reliable shoulder to lean on regardless of circumstances, despite distance and despite all difficulties," emphasised Oleg Grygoriuk, MTWTU Chairman.

For seafarers who are Union members, the Welfare Fund "MORTRANS", with the support of the MTWTU and The Seafarers' Charity, organised another initiative — 100 holiday gift sets for those in Odesa.

"WARMTH CAMPAIGN" FOR MTWTU MEMBERS

The Union continues to do everything possible to make everyday life easier for its members during these difficult times. Despite the cold, constant shelling and blackouts, it's important for us to stay close.

Therefore, the Union has launched a "Warmth Campaign" for seafarers who are MTWTU members and their families from the most affected regions. Over 200 gifts were delivered to those who are currently most in need of care and simple things that make life a little warmer.



FOR MORE DETAILS

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