



MARINE TRANSPORT WORKERS' TRADE UNION OF UKRAINE E-BULLETIN

OCTOBER 2024

DEAR ALL!

Since the war began, our country and Trade Union members have endured countless hardships. Yet, through it all, we have stood firm, united by the belief that together, we are stronger.

Ukrainian seafarers have faced significant challenges, from job losses due to martial law restrictions to the ongoing threat of missile strikes and infrastructure failures. Ports and the civilian vessels calling at them have also been targeted. However, the MTWTU has remained steadfast in its mission to support its members. We organize social events, and provide financial assistance, humanitarian aid, and legal support, ensuring that no one faces their struggles alone.

We strive to stay close to our members abroad, offering them comprehensive support. Each of them should know that, despite the distance, they are remembered, and we are always ready to assist.

In addition, we continuously address the urgent issues of Ukrainian seafarers by engaging with the Ukrainian government, competent authorities, and the maritime industry internationally. This includes border crossings, obtaining foreign passports, and document renewals.

We firmly believe that no matter the obstacles, we can overcome them if we stay united and support one another. This sense of solidarity is our greatest strength.

And of course, we are incredibly grateful to all our partners for their unwavering support. Your help and commitment continue to be invaluable as we navigate these challenging times together.

*Your sincerely, Oleg Grygoriuk
Chairman MTWTU
Vice President IFSMA,
Goodwill Maritime Ambassador*



ITF CONGRESS 2024

This October, the 46th Congress of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) convened in Marrakech, Morocco, bringing together thousands of delegates from around the world to advocate for the sector's rights and resilience.

Held every five years on different continents, this Congress emphasized the unique challenges and opportunities in the African region.

Representing Ukraine at this vital event was the delegation from the Marine Transport Workers' Trade Union of Ukraine (MTWTU), the country's sole maritime Trade Union in the ITF.



SOLIDARITY EVENT IN SUPPORT OF UKRAINE

During the Congress, the MTWTU organized a powerful Solidarity Event, which united together over 100 representatives from the global transport industry. This impactful event underscored the ongoing hardships faced by Ukrainian citizens, workers, and essential infrastructure amid the continued conflict.

Oleg Grygoriuk, MTWTU Chairman, emphasized the importance of solidarity for Ukrainian transport workers, who, despite the devastating consequences of the war, are steadfastly fulfilling their vital roles:

“We are immensely grateful that our voice has been heard. Thanks to you, we have found the strength to confront this extraordinary challenge. We continue to spread information and the truth about what is happening in Ukraine; about what we are fighting for; and for whom we tirelessly set new goals. This is a difficult struggle, filled with sacrifices and losses. When we faced continuous stress and threats, you continued to protect all representatives of the Ukrainian transport sector: seafarers, port workers, railway workers, road workers, and others. Your support has given us the strength to endure and continue our resistance on the path to a peaceful life”.

Antonina Shkamerda, Director of Welfare Fund “MORTRANS”, added that their commitment to aid is comprehensive, providing critical support that goes beyond material assistance.



DOCKERS' CONFERENCE

At the Dockers' Conference, Oleg Grygoriuk emphasized the urgency of international backing for Ukrainian dockworkers, who are under constant threat. He described the daily risks faced by dockers, highlighting missile threats and the need for global protective measures through international cooperation.

“Our dockers have faced constant danger daily. Each time a Ukrainian docker goes to work, he cannot be sure he will return home. I assure you that we are doing everything possible, appealing to the IMO and other international organizations to secure the necessary tools to protect our people.

We are grateful to Europe and the USA for their assistance in providing air defense equipment that helps protect us physically. However, we also seek legal protection and the opportunity to gain valuable experience, such as through today's solidarity event in support of Ukraine.

We are grateful for your support. We stand in front of you, protecting you, while you provide us with the assistance we need. Together, we will stand strong! Together, we will win!”.

SEAFARERS' CONFERENCE

At the Seafarers' Conference, MTWTU presented resolutions that champion support for Ukraine's transport workers amidst ongoing adversity.

A pivotal proposal by MTWTU called for facilitating border crossings for transport workers vital to Ukraine's supply chain and humanitarian needs.

“Today, we ask the ITF to appeal to the Ukrainian government to ease border crossing procedures for male transport workers entering and exiting the country”, emphasized Oleg Grygoriuk, MTWTU Chairman.

The proposal received public endorsement from Swedish, Croatian, and international trade unions, reflecting broad support for Ukraine’s workforce.



YOUTH CONFERENCE

Young people continue to fight for a world where job security and safety are not just aspirations but guaranteed rights. The ITF Youth Conference highlighted crucial issues that will guide the ITF Youth work plan for 2025-2029, with a focus on mental health, worker safety, and youth inclusion in trade union activities.

During the conference, Iryna Yerinenko, Chair of the MTWTU Youth Council, was appointed as one of the regional representatives for Europe on the ITF Youth Committee.

Over the past six years, the number of young trade union members has grown by 50%, a success that reflects the effectiveness of the Youth Council’s policies and their dedication to increasing youth participation in trade union activities.

The transport sector’s future hinges on empowering young professionals to lead the fight for safe and fair working conditions. The ITF transport movement remains committed to fostering a new generation of leaders who will continue advancing these essential rights with fresh ideas and energy, ensuring a strong and sustainable foundation for years to come.



WOMEN'S CONFERENCE



The ITF Women Transport Workers' Conference primarily marked the 25th anniversary of women's representation within the ITF. Participants discussed the considerable progress made in defending women's rights in the transport sector, while acknowledging that the struggle for these rights continues to grow.

Elina Karavan, representing the Marine Transport Workers' Trade Union of Ukraine, spoke on behalf of Ukrainian women in maritime transport. She highlighted that, due to the war, Ukraine faces a labor shortage, prompting women to step into traditionally male professions to support the country.

Meaningful progress in protecting women's rights and ensuring their participation in decision-making can only be achieved through solidarity. By uniting, women can become a powerful force for change and secure fair representation in all areas of public life.

PEACE AND SECURITY FOR TRANSPORT WORKERS

A special session at the ITF Congress reaffirmed workers' rights to peace and security, which can only be achieved through unity and cooperation. Oleg Grygoriuk stressed the urgency of these principles, advocating for peace and justice in Ukraine and worldwide.

“We stand for peace, justice, and freedom for Ukraine and the entire world. The war must end, and it is essential to join forces to achieve peace”.



ITF GOLD AWARD

At the ITF Congress, Michael Kirieiev, First Vice Chairman of the MTWTU, received the prestigious “Gold Award for Exceptional Service” — a first for Ukraine. This honor recognizes his steadfast commitment to transport workers worldwide.

Michael Kirieiev, who chaired the Marine Transport Workers’ Trade Union of Ukraine until 2021, has earned international respect for his dedication to workers’ rights and trade union freedoms. The award was presented by Stephen Cotton, ITF Secretary General.

In his speech, Michael Kirieiev expressed gratitude, calling the award a shared achievement:

“This journey is not just mine, but the collective effort of everyone who has supported me. I thank the ITF leadership and all my brothers and sisters here for your support”.



IMO SECRETARY-GENERAL PARTICIPATES IN ITF CONGRESS

Also, on October 18, IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez addressed the 46th ITF Congress, marking the first-ever participation of an IMO Secretary-General in this event. In his speech, he expressed strong support for the ITF's six demands and emphasized his commitment to collaborative efforts aimed at improving seafarers' living and working conditions.

Arsenio Dominguez also met with Oleg Grygoriuk, IMO's Goodwill Maritime Ambassador in Ukraine, during the event. Oleg Grygoriuk shared the outcomes of his work and outlined initiatives aimed at enhancing working conditions for future seafarers, both amid the challenges of wartime and on a global scale.



He expressed gratitude to the Secretary-General for his support and continued attention to the issues faced by seafarers, especially during this difficult time for Ukraine.

ITF EXECUTIVE BOARD

In a final achievement, Oleg Grygoriuk, MTWTU Chairman, was appointed to the ITF Executive Board, solidifying MTWTU's role in representing maritime interests at the highest levels.

This appointment reinforces international backing for Ukrainian transport workers and recognizes the Trade Union's role in advocating for critical infrastructure during these challenging times.



YOUTH-ORIENTED ACTIVITIES

GROWING UNION FAMILY

At the Maritime Union Center, first-year cadets of the Educational and Scientific Institute of Maritime Law and Management of the National University "Odesa Maritime Academy", were officially inducted. They received student and union membership cards, marking the beginning of their journey filled with learning and career development opportunities.

MTWTU will support them at every step. Congratulations to the cadets, their families, and the institute staff on this significant day!



YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE

The MTWTU Youth Council participated in the First Black Sea Youth Forum, themed “Youth Participation in Community Development”. This event united local government representatives and the Chornomorsk Territorial Community to discuss ways to enhance youth involvement in decision-making.

The Youth Council shared its projects, developed in collaboration with Oleg Grygoriuk, IMO Goodwill Ambassador, aiming to inspire young leaders to shape a better future.



BUILDING CAREERS FOR FUTURE MARITIME PROFESSIONALS

The MTWTU is committed to fostering successful careers for young seafarers, aiding their integration into the global maritime community from their student years.

MTWTU representatives met with cadets from the Odesa Maritime College of Technical Fleet, introducing them to the Trade Union’s role in safeguarding seafarers’ rights and supporting professional growth.

Representatives from Acomarin (Odesa) discussed employment opportunities, reinforcing the importance of career prospects.

The Trade Union also collaborates with crewing companies and international shipowners to help cadets achieve their career goals.



HOW TO SPEAK WITH HEROES

In collaboration with Oleg Grygoriuk, IMO Goodwill Ambassador, and Veterans HUB Odesa, the MTWTU Youth Council hosted psychologist Olena Shytko, who guided communication with military veterans. She shared best practices for respectful interaction, emphasizing sensitivity to avoid triggering past traumas. This initiative fosters a supportive community for those who safeguard our freedom.



INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL COOPERATION

UKRAINIAN MARITIME EVENT

With support from the Embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of Singapore and ASP Ships Group, MTWTU organized a Ukrainian Maritime Event in Singapore.

Aimed at increasing job opportunities and addressing current challenges for Ukrainian seafarers, the event brought together around 70 representatives from shipping companies, maritime organizations, and other international partners.

This event not only promoted Ukrainian seafarers' valuable contributions to the

maritime industry but also addressed employers' questions, reinforcing the positive reputation of Ukrainian crews globally.



WAGES SET TO INCREASE

Annually, the MTWTU negotiates alongside the Norwegian Seafarers' Union (NSU), the Norwegian Union of Marine Engineers (NUME), the Norwegian Maritime Officers' Association (NMOA), and representatives of the Norwegian Shipowners' Association (NSA) to ensure fair conditions for Ukrainian seafarers.

During October, MTWTU reached a new collective bargaining agreement for Ukrainian seafarers working under the Norwegian International Ship Register and other flags.

This agreement includes a 4% wage increase effective from 2025, followed by an additional 2% in 2026. Compensation for seafarers in the event of death or disability was also raised, ensuring enhanced protections for Ukrainian maritime workers worldwide.

These provisions extend to both Norwegian and "convenience flag" vessels, expanding safeguards for Ukrainian crews.



SEAFARERS' EDUCATION

MTWTU'S MARITIME ENGLISH INITIATIVE



Since 2018, the MTWTU's initiative to advance maritime English proficiency has helped hundreds of seafarers and cadets improve their language skills.

Now, cadets from the Danube Institute of the National University "Odesa Maritime Academy", who are members of the MTWTU, have the opportunity to join the project. The first session has already taken place at the Izmail International Seamen's Club.

This project has been developed in collaboration with the All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU), reflecting a shared commitment to enhancing the professional competencies of maritime professionals worldwide.



WILSON AND MTWTU SUPPORT YOUNG UKRAINIAN SEAFARERS

Wilson, in collaboration with MTWTU, continues to invest in the future of young Ukrainian seafarers.

Ten first-year cadets from Kherson State Maritime Academy have been selected to study at the Lithuanian Maritime Academy in Klaipeda. These cadets were chosen based on criteria including academic performance, English proficiency, and additional skills, with priority given to children from socially vulnerable backgrounds and families affected by the conflict.



The project guarantees practical training on Wilson's vessels, covers tuition for contract cadets, and includes accommodation in the Lithuanian student residence.

This collaboration, now in its third iteration, reflects MTWTU's dedication to providing the best educational and professional conditions for the new generation of maritime professionals, building a strong foundation for the future of Ukraine's maritime industry.



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