

MARINE TRANSPORT WORKERS' TRADE UNION OF UKRAINE E-BULLETIN

MARCH-APRIL 2026

DEAR ALL!

The Marine Transport Workers' Trade Union of Ukraine is constantly moving forward. It strives for new achievements, consistent steps toward change, and readiness to respond to the challenges that time brings us. Our mission remains unchanged — to support and protect our Union members, wherever they are.

Even thousands of kilometers away from home, amid war, instability, and global transformations, the MTWTU stands by its members: staying in touch, providing necessary support, and taking decisive action. Every day, we are reminded that true international solidarity knows no borders, and we continue to strengthen our cooperation with partners and organizations around the world. We work to ensure that Ukrainian seafarers have decent working conditions, social guarantees, and reliable protection, and most importantly, can look to the future with confidence.

The Union continues to provide legal and social support. We have continuously accompanied and will continue to maintain our course alongside the freedom-loving younger generation, whose knowledge, ideas, and dreams will become new lines in Ukraine's maritime future, which we are writing together.

The MTWTU remains a dedicated, reliable and unbreakable support for the Ukrainian maritime community. Only through joint actions can we confidently move forward towards a sustainable future. Together we are stronger!

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



FIGHT FOR THE RIGHTS

UKRAINIAN SEAFARERS' SAFETY IN THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ: MTWTU'S OFFICIAL STATEMENT

On 2 March 2026, the MTWTU sent an official letter to international organisations, shipowners and their associations, whose vessels are covered by the MTWTU collective bargaining agreements, regarding the sharp escalation of the military situation in the Strait of Hormuz and the surrounding waters and ports of the Middle East.

Particular attention was paid to the situation of seafarers who are already in the ports or territorial waters of the aforementioned states.

The MTWTU called for enhanced safety measures to be put in place for them, constant monitoring of official warnings, the establishment of clear emergency response plans, and, where necessary, prompt evacuation or repatriation.

The Union has also called on its international partners — the ITF, IMEC, ICS and IMO — to urgently assess the current situation and consider updating risk classifications and additional protective measures within the framework of the IBF.



Full text
of the
statement

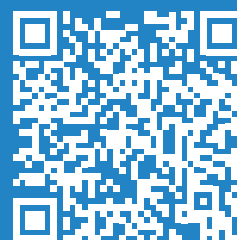
MTWTU CALLS FOR RATIFICATION OF THE MLC, 2006

The MTWTU addressed an official letter to the Office of the President of Ukraine requesting assistance in expediting the ratification of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006).

This concerns the fulfilment of Ukraine's international obligations, in particular under the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and national strategic documents, which provide for the ratification of the Convention.

The statement specifically raises the issue of security — given the escalation of the situation in the Strait of Hormuz, where Ukrainian seafarers are in a high-risk zone. In such circumstances, the existence of effective international legal protection mechanisms takes on particular significance.

The MTWTU emphasises that ratification of the Convention is necessary to ensure the proper protection of the rights of Ukrainian seafarers, particularly in the context of growing security risks in global shipping.



Full text
of the
statement

EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE FOR UKRAINIAN PORTS: MTWTU IS WORKING ON NEW APPROACHES



In Brussels, the MTWTU delegation had a meeting with representatives of the European Transport Workers' Federation, focusing on the application of European best practice in the field of collective bargaining work.

The focus was on solutions for systematically engaging private stevedoring companies with the Union and strengthening worker protection.



The development of the private sector in ports is creating a need for new approaches to social dialogue at company level.

Given Ukraine's status as an EU candidate country, alignment with European standards remains one of the key areas of work.

A further action plan was agreed following the meeting. European practices are expected to enhance the effectiveness of protection for Union members.

STRENGTHENING YOUTH MOVEMENT

MTWTU
YOUTH

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MTWTU YOUTH COUNCIL

Cadets from maritime educational institutions and MTWTU members gathered in Odesa to discuss their vision and directions for the Union's Youth Council.

The speaker at the meeting was Ivanna Khrapko, Deputy Chair of the State Employees Union of Ukraine and Chair of the Youth Council of the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine.

The participants worked in an interactive format and jointly developed ideas for the development of the Youth Council. In the near future, the young people plan to meet again to present and discuss the ideas they have developed and to determine the next steps for the development of the MTWTU Youth Council.



HOW THE UNION AND THE SEAFARERS' PROTECTION SYSTEM WORK: YOUTH FORUM IN IZMAIL



Students from the Danube Institute of the National University "Odesa Maritime Academy" took part in a Youth Union Forum organised by the MTWTU with the support of the Danish trade union 3F.

The participants discussed the union movement, its history, the people who were there at the very beginning, and examples of how unions have influenced working conditions and workers' rights. Next, they considered the work of the ITF.

The cadets worked in teams and took part in debates on general maritime and professional topics arguing their points of view and seeking solutions together.



VR TECHNOLOGIES FOR TRAINING SEAFARERS: MTWTU PROVIDES DINUOMA WITH SOFTWARE



The MTWTU, with sponsorship from the ITF Seafarers' Trust, provided the Danube Institute of the National University "Odesa Maritime Academy" with the right to use and a licence for 16 software modules for training cadets on Virtual Reality equipment.

A relevant Memorandum of Cooperation was signed by the MTWTU, the Danube Institute of the NUOMA and OMS VR, the software developer. The new VR modules will enable the simulation of professional situations and the use of modern digital tools in the training of future seafarers.



"Maritime education is changing rapidly, and future seafarers must learn using the technologies they will work with in their profession. That is why we support the introduction of VR training — it is an opportunity for cadets to practise professional situations and gain practical experience while still in training," said Oleg Grygoriuk, MTWTU Chairman.

MTWTU STANDS WITH YOUTH FROM THEIR FIRST STEPS



An Open Day was held at the National University “Odesa Maritime Academy” — an event that brought together prospective cadets who are just beginning to plan their careers in the maritime sector.

The Union representatives took part in the event, introducing youth to the opportunities for development alongside the MTWTU and explaining the support available at every stage of their professional development.

The Union continues to look after those who aspire to master a maritime profession and reach new heights alongside the MTWTU family.



USQE 2026 ABROAD: COORDINATING EFFORTS FOR AN IMPORTANT DECISION FOR THE INDUSTRY

Oksen Lisovyi, Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, has signed an order regarding the assessment of students through the Unified State Qualification Exam (USQE) for speciality 271 ‘Maritime and Inland Water Transport’ outside Ukraine.

This year, with the assistance of the MTWTU, students will be able to pass the exam at temporary examination centres in Chişinău and Varna.



“It is essential for us that Ukrainian cadets have the opportunity to pass the USQE, regardless of where they are. This is not just a question of education — it is a question of access to the profession, retaining the sector’s human resources, and ensuring the competitiveness of Ukrainian seafarers in the global labour market,” emphasised Oleg Grygoriuk, MTWTU Chairman.

As a reminder, last year, thanks to the MTWTU, the USQE was organised at five locations across four European countries. This enabled 1,650 Ukrainian seafarers to obtain their diplomas and continue working in their profession.

STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN THE GLOBAL UNION MOVEMENT



The MTWTU took part in a meeting of the Youth Committee of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF). For many years, the Union has been actively involved in the development of youth policy and has consistently worked to engage young workers in the union movement, helping to expand their opportunities and strengthen their voice at national and international levels.

Participation in the event provided an opportunity to represent the interests of young Ukrainian transport workers, as well as to adopt best international practices and implement modern approaches to working with youth.



Photo: Representatives of the ITF Young Transport Workers' Committee, 2024

MTWTU MEETS THE NEXT GENERATION OF SEAFARERS

The MTWTU met with future seafarers — cadets from the Kherson State Maritime Academy.

Discussions covered their studies, their first steps in the profession, the challenges they face, and where to find support. Specific issues that arise right from the start were also discussed.



STANDING WITH SEAFARERS BEYOND BORDERS

MTWTU SUPPORT FOR SEAFARERS BOTH IN UKRAINE AND ABROAD



The MTWTU, with the support of ITF Seafarers' Trust, held a networking meeting with Ukrainian seafarers in Chişinău. The following key topics were discussed: the MTWTU's activities during the war; social projects for seafarers; practical legal support from the MTWTU LAW HUB, and the process of receiving and handling claims, in cooperation with the Assistant to the ITF Inspector in Ukraine.

“We work to ensure that every seafarer feels real support — no matter where they are. For us, it is important not only to protect, assist and support, but also to build a strong union future together with seafarers. That is why we are developing projects that respond to their needs and help them move forward with confidence,” emphasised Oleg Grygoriuk.

Tobias Bavnsgaard, Regional Programme Coordinator for 3F International, joined the event. He emphasised the importance of cooperation with the MTWTU, noting that this partnership is based on mutual support and common values.



SEAFARERS' WELFARE

UNION DENT: 5 YEAR OF CARING FOR SEAFARERS' HEALTH

Five years ago, the MTWTU's idea came to life to make dental care more accessible to seafarers, who often don't have the opportunity to visit a doctor on time due to long voyages. It turned into a major dental project called UNION DENT — a free support programme for seafarers who are Union members and work on ships covered by ver.di agreements.



Despite the pandemic and the full-scale war, the project continued to develop. With the support of the ITF Seafarers' Trust, it expanded to include seafarers' families and now also supports cadets at maritime institutions.

Over the years, hundreds of seafarers and their relatives have received the necessary assistance, and a new generation of seafarers has received treatment and knowledge that will help them stay healthy in their future profession.

The UNION DENT Project, implemented by the MTWTU with the support of the WF "MORTRANS", is about care, partnership, solidarity and confidence that the Union stands by its members and cares about their health.

HEALTHY SMILE FOR MARITIME YOUTH

The MTWTU, in cooperation with the WF "MORTRANS" and the German trade union ver.di, is implementing its third 'Healthy Smiles' campaign for students at maritime educational institutions.

Last year, 200 cadets from Odesa, Izmail, Chornomorsk and Kherson received free professional dental care: consultations, examinations, professional teeth cleaning, as well as kits of daily hygiene products. In addition, campaign participants took part in a raffle for modern irrigators — devices for effective dental care.



This year, the initiative has been continued. For youth who are just beginning their journey in the maritime sector, such programmes have practical value.

They help them look after their health during their studies and feel the support of the professional community and international partners.



WOMEN IN THE MARITIME COMMUNITY: STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE

A maritime career is not just about voyages and ships. Behind it all are women who shoulder responsibility, make decisions and provide support every day. Among them are female seafarers working in a complex and demanding profession, and seafarers' wives, for whom long months of waiting and caring for their families have become part of life.

To mark International Women's Day, the MTWTU and the WF "MORTRANS" organised a campaign to support female seafarers and seafarers' wives who are Union members. In various cities across Ukraine, they received gift sets as a token of respect for their strength, resilience and role in the maritime community.



EASTER SUPPORT FOR UNION MEMBERS

On the eve of Easter, the MTWTU, together with the WF "MORTRANS" and with the support of our international partners, The Seafarers' Charity, greeted Union members and their families.

Around 130 families took part in the initiative. Seafarers and their relatives received Easter gift baskets containing Easter bread so that their homes might feel the warmth of the holiday during these days.



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