

MARINE TRANSPORT WORKERS' TRADE UNION OF UKRAINE E-BULLETIN

MAY 2026

DEAR FRIENDS!

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 of our time. 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 organisations 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 we can confidently move forward towards a sustainable future. Together we are stronger!

Your sincerely,
Oleg Grygoriuk
Chairman MTWTU
IMO Goodwill Ambassador in Ukraine (2020-2025)
Vice President of IFSMA



FIGHT FOR THE RIGHTS

SITUATION IN THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ: KEY TOPIC AT ITF SEAFARERS' SECTION MEETING



During a meeting of the ITF Seafarers' Section, significant attention was paid to the security situation in the Strait of Hormuz, which remains one of the most tense regions for global shipping.

The discussion will focus on developing approaches to safe navigation and strengthening measures aimed at seafarers' needs.



During the discussion, Oleg Grygoriuk, MTWTU Chairman, emphasised the need for more coordinated and proactive action in crisis situations, “This isn't the first time we've faced large-scale uncertainty that goes beyond the usual response mechanisms. For this reason, the sector needs a clear, proactive action plan and effective coordination between all parties. In the early hours of a crisis, understanding joint steps and the rapid exchange of information are essential. We recognise that similar situations may arise in other regions, so we have to develop a common vision of how to respond effectively in the future.”

ITF FAIR PRACTICES COMMITTEE MEETS IN ROTTERDAM



On 13–14 May 2026, a meeting of ITF Fair Practices Committee was held in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, bringing together representatives of seafarers' and dockers' unions from around the world to discuss key challenges and priorities in the maritime sector.

Oleg Grygoriuk, MTWTU Chairman, participated in the Committee's work as a member of the Executive Board.

Over the two days, participants considered a wide range of issues relating to the protection of seafarers' rights, the activities of the ITF Inspectorate, the campaign against "convenience flags" and the development of global supply chains, as well as the updating of international sectoral policies and collective agreements.



USQE ABROAD: HISTORIC STEP FOR FUTURE UKRAINIAN SEAFARERS



Having completed an unprecedented mission in 2025 – securing the right to take the Unified State Qualification Exam (USQE) outside Ukraine – the MTWTU continued its systematic efforts to preserve this opportunity for maritime cadets in 2026 as well.

For many future seafarers who have found themselves abroad due to the full-scale war, the opportunity to pass the USQE remains a critically important condition for completing their studies, obtaining professional qualifications and securing future employment in international shipping.



1,700 CADETS PRESERVE ACCESS TO MARITIME CAREERS

The MTWTU has achieved its goal, and students majoring in 271 'Maritime and Inland Water Transport' took the USQE in Chisinau and Varna.

Thanks to the support of the ITF Seafarers' Trust, which provided financial assistance, the examination centres were fully equipped with all the necessary technical facilities. For which we express our sincere gratitude.



The MTWTU's consistent stance, supported by state institutions and the international trade union community, has enabled 1700 cadets to continue their professional careers, obtain the necessary qualifications and retain access to employment in the global maritime industry.

"The global fleet has not lost these specialists, and Ukraine has retained its human resources potential in the sector. This is not the basic function of the Union, but we consciously took on this responsibility for the profession, for the sector, and for the future of Ukrainian seafarers," noted Oleg Grygoriuk.

WORKING AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

MTWTU STRENGTHENS COOPERATION WITH NETHERLANDS SHIPOWNERS



ROYAL
ASSOCIATION OF
NETHERLANDS
SHIPOWNERS

MTWTU Chairman Oleg Grygoriuk held a meeting with representatives of the Royal Association of Netherlands Shipowners (KVNR).

The Netherlands' ship register includes about 800 ships, and the country's national fleet is one of the most modern and innovative in the world, which is why this market is very prospective for Ukrainian seafarers.



“Ukrainian seafarers remain an important part of global shipping, and our task is to strengthen their presence in the fleets of leading maritime states. We are working to ensure that Ukrainian seafarers are known around the world for their professionalism, reliability and high standards of work,” noted Oleg Grygoriuk.

During the meeting, the parties discussed opportunities for cooperation, the employment of Ukrainian seafarers, working conditions on vessels owned by Netherlands shipowners, and the prospects for increasing the presence of Ukrainian specialists in international crews.

FUTURE OF MARITIME INDUSTRY – FOCUS OF IMEC CONFERENCE



MTWTU Chairman Oleg Grygoriuk represented the Union at the IMEC Conference “Charting the Course for the Future of Shipping”, which brought together representatives of the shipping industry, seafarers, cadets, employers and international partners.

The discussion focused on the future of global shipping, the impact of digitalisation and new technologies on seafarers’ work, training personnel to work with alternative fuels, and the need to strengthen cooperation between all stakeholders in the maritime sector.

“Constructive dialogue with employers during the Conference provides an opportunity to listen to problems and answer questions, and to build new relationships and partnerships.

This kind of open dialogue helps us to better understand the challenges currently facing the global maritime industry and to seek solutions together,” said Oleg Grygoriuk.

For many years, the MTWTU has been cooperating with IMEC. Thanks to this partnership, the Union implements joint initiatives, supports Ukrainian seafarers and continues to interact at the negotiation level to protect their rights and promote the development of the maritime industry.



STRENGTHENING YOUTH MOVEMENT

MTWTU
YOUTH

EXPECTATIONS TO REALITY: CADET'S FIRST VOYAGE

As part of the Sail Smart: Valuable Insights project, the MTWTU Youth Council, with the support of MTWTU Chairman Oleg Grygoriuk, held a meeting for young people on the topic "Experience of the First Voyage: Engine Cadet and Electrical Cadet". Union members and cadets from the Maritime Transport Professional College of the NUOMA – Maksym Shaitan, an Electrical Cadet on a container ship with Marlow Navigation, and Mykyta Postolatii, an Engine Cadet on a bulk carrier with Anglo-Eastern – shared their stories and experiences of their first contracts.

During the meeting, they discussed preparations for the first voyage, settling in on board, a cadet's duties, as well as the difficulties young professionals most often face at the start of their careers. At the end, the youth received practical advice on maintaining motivation whilst working at sea and building communication within an international crew.



NEW GENERATION OF FUTURE SEAFARERS BEGINS THEIR JOURNEY

**VILNIUS
TECH**
Lietuvos jūreivystės
akademija



A ceremony to induct first-year students from the Kherson State Maritime Academy (KSMA) as cadets was held at Vilnius Tech LMA. The students have started their studies as part of an educational project supported by the MTWTU and the German trade union ver.di.

For the youth, this is a special day, symbolising the beginning of a new stage in life, filled with learning, professional development and the first steps towards a future maritime career. Despite all the challenges brought about by the full-scale war, Ukrainian cadets continue to pursue their education and move confidently towards their goal.

As a reminder, the project was launched in 2022 thanks to the collaboration between the MTWTU, the ITF Seafarers' Trust, the KSMA and Vilnius Tech LMA. Thanks to the support of international partners, the initiative has not only continued but has also been further developed. In total, over 80 cadets have taken part in the programme since its launch.



SEAFARERS' WELFARE

MTWTU'S INTERNATIONAL LABOUR DAY INITIATIVE

International Labour Day symbolises the unwavering struggle for the rights of those whose daily dedication and hard work drive the world forward. On this day, together with transport workers from around the world, we join our voices for a common goal: a fair, safe and dignified future for all.



On the occasion of the holiday, the Marine Transport Workers' Trade Union of Ukraine organised a charity campaign to support seafarers who are MTWTU members. In Odesa, seafarers and their families received food sets personally, whilst for those in other regions of Ukraine, targeted deliveries were organised. As part of the initiative, Union members from all corners of the country received over 300 food sets.

THIRD WAVE OF UNION DENT INITIATIVE FOR CADETS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED



The MTWTU, together with the German trade union ver.di, the Welfare Fund "MORTRANS" and the UNION DENT Clinic, continues to support Ukrainian seafarers and future professionals by implementing social initiatives even during the country's most challenging times.

The third phase of the joint campaign to raise awareness among cadets who are Union members about dental and gum hygiene has now been completed. As part of the initiative, cadets from Odesa, Izmail, Chornomorsk and Kherson received professional consultations and teeth cleaning, preventive check-ups, personalised advice from doctors and hygiene kits. In cases where treatment was necessary, assistance was provided immediately.

In total, 300 cadets took part in the initiative. The Union stands by and walks alongside young people right from the stage of their education.



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