

EU shipowners highlight importance of seafarers in Ukraine crisis

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ECSA urges regulators to guarantee seafarers' mobility and their rights as essential workers.

European shipowners are following very closely the impacts of the events in Ukraine on the crews and the safe continuation of shipping operations.

The EU fleet relies heavily on Ukrainian and Russian seafarers, which make up a significant percentage of the current shipping workforce. Ukrainian and Russian seafarers make up 14.5% of [global shipping workforce](#).

“Seafarers are key workers and are at the heart of Europe’s economy. They have worked tirelessly to deliver our goods, and have made extraordinary sacrifices to keep our economy going in the past two years of pandemic. Ukrainian seafarers are already bearing the impact of this rapidly evolving situation, with seafarers coming to the end of their contracts not being allowed to return home. The provision of accommodation and visas for stranded seafarers is of crucial importance for shipowners as they seek to support their crews” said Philippos Philis, President of ECSA.

European shipowners call on the EU policy makers to consider the significant impact of this crisis on crew changes, already severely strained by COVID-19. Due to the current crisis, severe crew shortages and in particular shortages of officers may occur on EU vessels. Payment of salaries for seafarers already under contract is also expected to be significantly affected.

Shipowners also warn on the effect of having no access to Ukrainian ports, which can further affect supply chains and is impacting EU companies.

“European shipowners call on the EU policy makers to do their utmost to guarantee mobility and safety of seafarers, as well as their right to being paid. In these extraordinary times, ECSA will continue to liaise with the Commission to ensure the best outcome for the crews” said Sotiris Raptis, Acting Secretary General of ECSA.