



International  
Chamber of Shipping

Shaping the Future of Shipping

## **Russian and Ukrainian seafarers make up 14.5% of global shipping workforce, according to the International Chamber of Shipping**

**24 February 2022, London** – The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), representing 80% of the world's merchant fleet, has warned of supply chain disruption should the free movement of Ukrainian and Russian seafarers be impeded.

The [Seafarer Workforce Report](#), published in 2021 by BIMCO and ICS, reports that 1.89 million seafarers are currently operating over 74,000 vessels in the global merchant fleet.

Of this total workforce, 198,123 (10.5%) of seafarers are Russian of which 71,652 are officers and 126,471 are ratings<sup>1</sup>. Ukraine accounts for 76,442 (4%) of seafarers of which 47,058 are officers and 29,383 are ratings. Combined they represent 14.5% of the global workforce.

Shipping is currently responsible for the movement of near 90% of global trade. Seafarers have been at the forefront of the response to the pandemic, ensuring essential supplies of food, fuel and medicine continue to reach their destinations.

To maintain this unfettered trade, seafarers must be able to join and disembark ships (crew change) freely across the world. With flights cancelled in the region, this will become increasingly difficult. The ability to pay seafarers also needs to be maintained via international banking systems.

ICS has [previously warned](#) of a shortage of merchant sailors to crew commercial ships if action is not taken to boost numbers, raising risks for global supply chains. This has been compounded by draconian travel restrictions, brought on by the pandemic, that saw seafarers unable to crew change and resulted in 100'000's overstaying contracted periods at sea.

Research [carried out by ICS](#) reported that the average ship has a mix of at least three nationalities on board, and sometimes as many as thirty. Three languages were the minimum spoken on the average ship.

### **Guy Platten, Secretary General of the International Chamber of Shipping said:**

“The safety of our seafarers is our absolute priority. We call on all parties to ensure that seafarers do not become the collateral damage in any actions that governments or others may take.

“Seafarers have been at the forefront of keeping trade flowing though the pandemic and we hope that all parties will continue to facilitate free passage of goods and these key workers at this time.”

**- Ends -**

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<sup>1</sup> Ratings is a general term for skilled seafarers who carry out support work for officers in all departments.

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**Notes to Editors:**

**About ICS**

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) is the principal international trade association for merchant shipowners and operators, representing all sectors and trades and over 80% of the world merchant fleet.

**Seafarer Workforce Report**

These numbers in the Seafarer Workforce Report were reduced by 25% of the reported figure to account for significant domestic demand for seafarers, and as such only represent those which are classed as available to the international merchant fleet.