

Day of the Seafarer 2026

The Day of the Seafarer is marked every year on 25th June. It was established by the International Maritime Organisation in 2010 and recognizes the unique, vital contributions of mariners to international trade and the world economy. We caught up with Stepan Ievchenko, First Officer on the MV Hermine, to share some of his perspectives as a seafarer and life aboard a CLdN vessel.

What drew you to a career on the sea?

I wasn't one of those people who dreamed of becoming a seafarer as a child. I grew up by the sea and spent most of my time around the water, so it always felt familiar to me. When I chose this career, it was a practical decision rather than a romantic one – an honest profession and a way to earn a living. What surprised me is that, over the years, I found much more in this life than just a salary or adventure. Seafaring is an extraordinary profession because it constantly challenges you to develop skills far beyond navigation. At different times, you have to be a navigator, a manager, a psychologist, a problem-solver, a builder, and sometimes even a doctor. It teaches you responsibility, adaptability, and self-reliance in a way that few professions can. Looking back now, becoming a seafarer was definitely the right decision for me, though my colleagues might have a different opinion about me!

Describe a day that feels like: "This is why I do this".

For me, the most valuable part of this profession is that there is no finish line. It offers a limitless field for learning and self-improvement. Every voyage, every challenge, and every day at sea teaches you something new. You are constantly developing – not only your knowledge and experience, but also your calmness, confidence, judgement, and character. At the end of the day, if I can honestly say that I am slightly better than I was yesterday, then I feel a real sense of fulfilment. That's when I think, "This is why I do this."

What does it mean to you that your work keeps trade moving?

It gives me both a sense of responsibility and a sense of purpose. Most people never really think about how goods move around the world, yet our work affects their daily lives in countless ways. I like to think that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves. Every voyage helps keep businesses running, shelves stocked, and communities connected. Even if our contribution often goes unnoticed, it matters – and knowing that gives real meaning to what we do.

What is something about life at sea that surprised you – and that you'd love to share with colleagues who follow your work from shore?

What surprised me most is how important a positive atmosphere is on board. Early in my career, I thought that smiling, having a sense of humour, and bringing positive energy might be seen as signs of weakness. Over time, I realised the opposite is true. Life at sea can be demanding, and people perform at their best when they feel respected, appreciated, and supported. There is a time to be serious and professional, but there is also a time to laugh and enjoy each other's company. That balance makes a huge difference.

What do you want people to remember about the work of a seafarer, after reading this article?

I would like people to remember that, just like a seafarer, none of us is truly alone. We are all part of something bigger – our families, our companies, our countries, and the world as a whole. A seafarer's job is a good reminder that our actions have an impact far beyond ourselves. The way we work, the way we live, and the way we treat others all make a difference. If we strive to be professionals, take pride in what we do, and show kindness and respect to those around us, we can make the world a better place.

