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## International Day for Women in Maritime: VDR sees need for action

**For the first time, the global shipping industry will pay special tribute to the role of female seafarers on 18 May / VDR President Bornheim: “We need more women on board”**

For the first time, the maritime industry worldwide will be celebrating International Day for Women in Maritime tomorrow. This stems from a decision taken last year by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a specialised agency of the United Nations. Henceforth, special recognition will be given to women in the industry each year on 18 May. The day aims to help promote the recruitment and employment of women in the maritime sector as well as to reinforce efforts to reduce the gender imbalance in shipping.

To mark this occasion, Gaby Bornheim, who became the first female president of the German Shipowners’ Association (VDR) in its 115-year history last December, said: “We very much welcome the IMO’s decision. We want to do everything we can to encourage more women to want to serve on board, but also on shore.” Bornheim added: “It is very clear to us that there is an urgent need for more female seafarers – in no small part because shipping, like all other sectors, also has a recruitment problem.”

Out of the 6,927 employees on board the German merchant fleet who are subject to social security contributions in Germany, only 400 are currently female – or just under 6 per cent of all seafarers. In global terms, according to last year’s BIMCO/ICS Seafarer Workforce Report, women only make up 1.2 per cent of the world’s 1.9 million seafarers. The trend is therefore positive, as it represents a 45 per cent increase compared to the figures in the 2015 report.

VDR President Bornheim, who will also speak at a special ceremony to mark the occasion at the Bremen Chamber of Commerce tomorrow, 18 May, thanked the women who are already serving on board, saying: “You are the trailblazers. I have great respect for you.” Bornheim emphasised: “I am absolutely convinced that women can do everything that men can do – and that naturally includes technical professions.”

### About the German Shipowners’ Association

The German Shipowners’ Association (*Verband Deutscher Reeder, VDR*) is responsible for representing the common business and social policy interests of German shipping companies at federal and state government level as well as in relation to European and international bodies. Founded in 1907, the VDR merged with the Association of German Coastal Shipowners in 1994. With a membership of around 200, the VDR represents the majority of Germany’s merchant fleet. For more details, visit [www.reederverband.de](http://www.reederverband.de).

Press photographs of Dr Gaby Bornheim: <https://www.reederverband.de/en/press/press-images.html>

More information and links from the IMO on 18 May:  
<https://www.imo.org/en/About/Events/Pages/International-Day-for-Women-in-Maritime-2022.aspx>

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