

“Slowly but steadily”: Proportion of women is increasing

The proportion of women in the German shipping industry has risen to 7.1%. The German Shipowners' Association (VDR) notes a positive development.

[International Women in Shipping Day](#) is celebrated worldwide on 18 May for the third time. The day is intended to promote the employment of women in the maritime sector and strengthen efforts to reduce gender imbalance. The World Maritime Organization [IMO](#), a sub-organisation of the United Nations, established the notable day. It has been held annually since 2022.

The VDR said that it is gratifying that the proportion of employees subject to social insurance contributions on board the German merchant fleet has since risen from 5.8% to 7.1%.

“Fortunately, the proportion of women in the German shipping industry is increasing. Slowly, but steadily. This is a good development,” emphasised [Gaby Bornheim](#), President of the German Shipowners' Association. With a proportion of women of over 7%, Germany is “well above the average international proportion of women in the shipping industry of around 2%”.

“But we are still nowhere near where we want to be. There is an obvious imbalance when, in a population that is roughly half female, a single-digit percentage of seafarers are women. We need to increase this percentage,” Bornheim continues. She therefore wants to continue her efforts to promote “gender diversity” in the industry.

490 women on board

In 2022, 400 of the 6,927 employees subject to social insurance contributions on board the German merchant fleet were female. In 2023, there were already 485 women out of 6,964 employees (7%) and this year, according to VDR data, there are 490 women out of 6,952 employees (7.1%). The women work on board as captains, nautical or technical officers or ship mechanics, for example.

“It is pleasing to see that in recent years, increasingly talented and committed women have managed to overcome stereotypes and gain a foothold in the maritime industry. The maritime world is not reserved for men,” explained Bornheim.