

# Chernomorsk Trade Union Chairman: Sale of Chernomorsk Port to Hutchison Ports to result in mass layoffs

UKRAINE, UKRAINE, May 12, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Employees of Chernomorsk Port stand against the transfer of the company's facilities to Hong Kong-based Hutchison Ports as the sale would lead to mass layoffs and is illegal. The statement was made by Sergey Bryzgalov, Chairman of Chernomorsk Port Trade Union, [Censor.NET reports](#).

Sergey Bryzgalov said about 1,000 employees worked at Berths 1-6 currently considered by Hutchison Ports, which could employ not more than 150 people.

"Today nearly all container terminals are fully or partly automated. So Hutchison Ports needs 150 employees at most. Others would not have workload as Ukraine lacks container shipping market now... I told [Infrastructure] Deputy Minister Nadezhda Kaznacheyeva as far back as November 7, 2016: Hutchison Ports would not take these facilities from Berth 1 to Berth 6 on conditions we can offer them," said Sergey Bryzgalov.

The Trade Union Chairman warned that port employees were set to defend their legitimate rights in case of mass layoffs.

"Thousands of our people who have dedicated their life to the port would be thrown out on the street. What should we do: give the port away to Hutchison Ports and put people out of a job? We are against it," he underlined.

He also reminded that the government had made a commitment in summer 2015 to defend workforce interests. Therefore, the transfer of the berths to the Hong Kong company would be blocked in court.

"As far back as June 17, 2013, a workforce conference took place to approve a port development program. The document outlines conditions on which employees would agree to restructuring. The decision was approved by Order No.302 issued by the Infrastructure Ministry on August 4, 2015. The program clearly establishes that all jobs existing at the date of the transfer to an investor should be kept. The salary may not be cut," Mr Bryzgalov stressed.

The Trade Union Chairman argued Hutchison Ports would have no prospects in Ukraine. The entry to Ukrainian market would not be beneficial for the international player.

"If parties got round the table to discuss the issue in professional jargon, the discussion of Hutchison Ports in Chernomorsk Port would end in 15 minutes. It was a political statement, like a Silk Road train. Where is this Silk Road train now after a year and a half? Hutchison Ports lacks the capacities to load these facilities. A container terminal would be enough for the company now," Sergey Bryzgalov noted.

As reported earlier, the Hong Kong-based company signed a memorandum of understanding with Chernomorsk Port state-owned company in December 2016. Hutchison Ports showed interest in developing and operating container terminals on Berth 1 through Berth 6. Ukrainian President Petro

Poroshenko stated during his official visit to the United Kingdom in April 2017 that the company was set to enter the domestic marine container shipping market in the near future.

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