

UPF-2019: Competitiveness of Ukraine's MMC complexes depends on increasing depths and modernization of specialized terminals in ports.

Cargoes of the mining and metallurgical complex remain one of the main nomenclatures in the sea ports of Ukraine. Now they are confidently second only to agrarian ones. Last year more than 52 million tons of MMC products were handled. In the framework of the Ukrainian Ports Forum-2019, international experts have emphasized that Ukrainian cargo owners and ports should be prepared to increase the number of ship calls of large vessels of Newcastlemax type. This will increase the vessel's batch, reduce the cost of logistics and make Ukrainian exports less vulnerable to fluctuations in world prices.

Among the main problems in the field of handling of industrial cargoes in Ukraine, representatives of leading companies from the USA, Germany, Italy, UAE, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Croatia and other countries noted the need for deep-sea ports, the development of specialized terminals equipped with modern equipment for the processing of mining and metallurgical cargoes, as well as ensuring the stable operation of Ukrainian ports in the Azov Sea.

President of the global logistics company Clarksons Platou (Italy) Massimo Dentice at the Forum in Odessa noted the worldwide trend of increasing the fleet of Newcastlemax class vessels, which is over 41% of the total number of new vessels that are now ordered by ship-owners in the world. "The transition to modern large vessels will significantly improve the economic situation for both ship-owners and port operators. Therefore, it is now necessary to bring the depths of Ukrainian ports to the level appropriate for such vessels in order to remain competitive in world markets" – the expert noted.

In Ukraine, there is only one port, which is close to have the required depths. This port is Pivdennyi. Ukrainian Sea Ports Authority is completing the next stage of dredging. "The USPA has already practically ensured bringing the depths of the approach channel, maneuver zones and operational aquatoria of the individual berths of the Pivdennyi port up to 20 m. In this project more than half a billion UAH were invested, and the volume of dredging works was 2.7 million m³" the head of the USPA, Raivis Veckagans commented on the implementation of a large-scale project in the port.

Another issue, which was discussed at the Forum in Odessa, is the need to provide freedom of navigation in the Azov Sea. Due to problems encountered at the end of last year with the passage of vessels through the Kerch-Yenikalsky Canal, cargo owners were forced to reorient some of the cargoes to the Ukrainian ports in the Black Sea. But the technical equipment of the terminals did not always allow to process the corresponding volumes in the necessary time.

Now the situation in the Kerch Strait has somewhat stabilized, besides, the USPA managed to attract a contractor to restore passport depths in the ports of Mariupol and Berdyansk and on the approach channels to them. The volume of investments of USPA in these projects is almost 725 million UAH. In addition, it was recently announced that JSC Ukrzaliznytsya intends to provide a 20% discount on the delivery of goods to Ukrainian ports in the Azov Sea. All this allows us to hope for an increase of competitiveness of cargo handling through the ports of Mariupol and Berdyansk.

However, the state and businesses should intensify their interaction in order to develop specialized terminal facilities in Ukrainian ports. The optimal format for this is public-private partnership projects, in particular concessions, which, for example, allowed Bulgaria, over 4 years to attract more than 127 million euros for the development of the port of Burgas and increase the volume of in it by almost 5 times.

Currently, pilot concession projects of state stevedores in Olvia and Kherson ports are being implemented in Ukraine, prepared by the Ministry of Infrastructure, a team of international consultants and specialists from USPA. Tender contests are to be announced in June-July 2019. For more details, see the link below. As previously reported, the next possible concessions in the Ukrainian port sector are projects for the development of specialized terminals in the ports of Pivdennyi and Chornomorsk.