

## MEMBER ALERT

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### **CUSTOMS CONTINUE TO CHALLENGE FOREIGN VESSELS IN UKRAINIAN PORTS**

Members should note that Ukrainian customs have recently adopted an aggressive posture toward foreign-flagged vessels entering Ukrainian ports.

At the main Ukrainian Black Sea ports customs officials have adopted a procedure to carry out soundings of bunker tanks during vessels' inward clearance. The results of the customs bunker calculations regularly show that the actual quantity of fuel or diesel oil on board the vessel is different from that declared. In many cases this figure is greater than the quantity declared by the master. This results in customs imposing a fine on the vessel, typically not less than USD 2,500, for the so-called "smuggling of fuel". The highest fine reported to date was USD 10,000.

It has become apparent that chief engineers do not regularly perform soundings of the bunker tanks before entering port and just do theoretical, approximate calculations, by extrapolation on the basis of the original bunker survey figure. This method is inherently inaccurate. Customs make the vessel pay for resultant discrepancies.

It is therefore recommended that masters of vessels entering Ukrainian ports ensure that thorough soundings of bunker tanks are completed immediately prior to arrival, so that the correct quantity of bunkers on board is accurately declared. This practice should significantly reduce any discrepancies with customs figures and help to avoid any unnecessary fines.