

PRESS RELEASE

Lisbon lays the foundations for a Global Maritime Alliance of workers against automation

- The international maritime union movement agrees on a common roadmap to address technological challenges and protect port employment
- The Lisbon Summit consolidates cooperation and gives rise to a Global Maritime Alliance for a fair and sustainable future of work

Lisbon, Portugal – 6 November 2025

After two days of sessions, the international conference “People Over Profits: Anti-Automation”, jointly organised by the **International Dockworkers Council (IDC)** and the **International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA)**, concluded today at the **Pavilhão Carlos Lopes** in Lisbon (Portugal) with the presentation of the **Lisbon Summit Resolution Document**, a text reflecting the common position of the global maritime union movement on automation and establishing a historic framework for coordination and global action.

The meeting brought together hundreds of trade union representatives from more than 60 countries, along with leaders, academics, and experts from the maritime and port sectors, in an unprecedented exercise of international unity.

A global call against automation

During the opening, **Harold J. Daggett**, President of the ILA, warned that automation constitutes “a total attack on our very existence” and called for the creation of a **Global Maritime Alliance** capable of responding collectively to any corporate attempt to replace workers with technology. “If any company decides to implement job-destroying automation in any port whose workers are part of this new alliance, we will confront it with a global strike of three to four weeks,” he said.

Representing the IDC, **Dennis A. Daggett**, Executive Vice President of the ILA and General Coordinator of the IDC, opened his remarks with a tribute to the Portuguese union **SEAL**, whose four-year strike “represents the very essence of port resistance.” He recalled that the ILA “never forgot SEAL’s solidarity during the 2012 framework agreement negotiations” and emphasised that “dockworkers do not retreat and never surrender, not in Lisbon, not in New York, not in any port in the world.”

He further warned that automation does not aim to modernise ports but to eliminate professionals to increase profits, repeating the mistakes of the past under a new technological disguise. “We are not against innovation; we are against its use to erase



us from the map,” he stated, also denouncing the devastating effects that partial or full automation has already had on employment and port communities across continents.

From resistance to international coordination

For his part, **Jordi Aragunde**, IDC International Labour Coordinator, described the Lisbon meeting as a turning point for the global maritime union movement. Presenting the roadmap for the **Global Maritime Alliance**, he highlighted that the Summit symbolises the transition from resistance to coordination, from local struggles to a global strategy. “For too long companies have spoken with one voice. From today, we will too,” he declared.

Aragunde advocated for a permanent international trade union architecture that allows fast, united, and effective action in the face of technological challenges, stressing that the workers’ response must be comprehensive, combining political action, legal resistance, public communication, and global solidarity. “If their strategy is global, ours must be too. Wherever there is a port, there will be an organised union, and wherever a worker is threatened, there will be international solidarity,” he concluded.

Technical contributions and future vision

The second day of the Summit brought together internationally recognised speakers who provided technical and economic analyses of the impact of automation on employment, port efficiency, and the sustainability of the maritime system.

Dr. Sergi Saurí Marchán, Director of **CENIT-UPC**, analysed technological trends in ports and showed the socio-economic impact of new technologies.

Dr. Fernando González Laxe, Professor of Applied Economics at the University of A Coruña and former President of Spanish State Ports, discussed the risks of business concentration in maritime transport and defended the public role of ports as drivers of economic and territorial cohesion.

Dr. Greig Taylor, academic at the University of Wollongong (Australia), examined labour relations models in automated environments and stressed that trade union participation is essential to ensure technology does not erode collective rights.

The day was opened by a special address from **Gary Herrera**, President of **ILWU Local 13** in Los Angeles – Long Beach (USA), who reaffirmed the determination of North American dockworkers to maintain a common line of action with the international movement in defence of port employment.

During the first day, the Summit also featured a panel moderated by **Sergio Sousa**, of the Portuguese union SEAL, with union leaders from the United States, Australia, New



Zealand, Chile, Italy, Angola, and the United Kingdom, who shared experiences and strategies against automation. The session made it possible to compare local realities and strengthen the foundations for global coordination in the face of technological challenges.

The Lisbon Document: commitment and global framework for action

The highlight of the meeting was the presentation of the **Lisbon Summit Resolution Document**, entitled “Protecting Employment, Communities and Collective Bargaining against Job-Destructive Automation”.

This text, adopted as the common position of the international maritime union movement, declares the unions’ rejection of any automation process involving job losses or violations of rights, reaffirms collective bargaining as an essential tool to regulate technological change, and establishes the commitment of dockworkers and maritime workers around the world to act in a united and coordinated way against the imposition of automated terminals without union consent.

The document, signed in Lisbon on 6 November by the main representatives of the organising bodies, together with the trade union organisations present and represented, establishes the creation of a permanent international network for trade union coordination, the development of joint actions to defend employment, and the periodic convening of new editions of the **“People Over Profits: Anti-Automation Summit”** every four years to evaluate progress and update strategies.

The IDC and the ILA agree that the objective is not to halt technological progress, but to redefine it in human and sustainable terms. The ports of the future must be modern, green, and efficient, but centred on the professionals who work in them. As **Jordi Aragunde** stated at the close of his speech, “the future of ports cannot be built against workers, but with workers.”

The Lisbon Summit thus concludes by consolidating a new stage of unity and international action for maritime and port workers worldwide, with the commitment that technology, employment, and social justice advance together.

URL: <https://www.idcdockworkers.org/lisbonsummit/>

