The European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO) will gather the European port community in Gdańsk on 7–8 May for the 22nd edition of its Annual Conference.

Hosted by the Port of Gdańsk, Poland's leading seaport and the country's gateway, and set against the historic backdrop of the Hilton Gdańsk in the heart of the Old Town, this year's event arrives at a critical juncture for the industry and in a periodd of great uncertainy.

Under the central theme "Competitiveness as a Driver of Resilience", the conference aims to dissect the complex reality of the profound transformations shaping the global operating environment. In a global landscape becomes increasingly unpredictable, the maritime sector faces multiple challenges and European ports today find themselves at the crossroads of geopolitical volatility, shifting value chains, energy shocks, hybrid threats, trade tensions, and the strategic use of raw materials.

In this context, ports are called to navigate uncertainty while balancing their commercial role as multimodal hubs with their growing mission-driven responsibility in building a stronger, more sustainable, and more resilient Europe. Their strategic importance also requires a rapid strengthening of protection and preparedness measures, reinforcing their role as critical nodes in Europe's security and economic architecture.

Against this backdrop, the ESPO Conference 2026 will provide a high-level platform for dialogue among port leaders, experts, EU maritime stakeholders, and prominent European policymakers.

Discussions will delve into the rapid surge of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its role in port efficiency, as well as the ongoing demands of the energy and climate transitions. A key focus will be "preparedness." In light of their strategic role, ports are being called to quickly step up their protection levels against both physical and cyber threats. The ESPO Conference 2026 will provide the necessary space to discuss how EU policy can better support these strategies, turning systemic

uncertainties into tangible opportunities for growth.

Beyond the plenary sessions and panel discussions, the social program promises to be particularly symbolic. The Port of Gdańsk will host an unforgettable gala dinner within the legendary Gdańsk Shipyard. As the birthplace of the Solidarity movement, this venue serves as a powerful reminder of resilience and transformation—themes that resonate deeply with the challenges facing ports today. Gdańsk itself, with over a thousand years of history shaped by maritime trade, offers a unique atmosphere for attendees, encouraging them to explore the city's rich cultural heritage, which seamlessly blends its historic soul with a vibrant, modern seaside character.

For further details on the programme and registration:

www.espo-conference.com