In March 2026, Lisbon will host a three-day international conference that places energy transition at the heart of port–city futures. Organized within the framework of the COST Action *PACT – Port City Territories in Action*, the event will transform the Lisbon Metropolitan Area and the Tagus estuary into a living laboratory for exploring how waterfronts can become more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient.

From 25 to 27 March, the conference Energy Transition & Waterfront Futures will convene academics, practitioners, port and city authorities, NGOs, transdisciplinary teams, cultural actors, and community groups with the aim to understand how energy transition can reshape port–city territories and contribute to a shared European vision for the waterfronts of tomorrow. Participants will engage with research insights, practice based experiences, methodological innovations, policy reflections, scenario explorations, and artistic or design driven perspectives that help reimagine the waterfronts of tomorrow.

Lisbon’s Tagus estuary offers a interesting case study. Here, port operations, urban life, fragile ecosystems, heritage landscapes, and tourism coexist in a complex and evolving territory. Over recent decades, the city has undergone major waterfront transformations—from Expo 1998 to the regeneration of industrial zones and the expansion of public spaces—while confronting the urgent challenges of climate change, social inequalities, and decarbonization.

By situating the conference within this dynamic territory, PACT invites participants to explore how energy transition can be integrated into waterfront development, port–city synergies, climate adaptation, and inclusive urban regeneration. Lisbon’s ongoing transformations provide a fertile ground for discussing themes such as decarbonization strategies, the integration of renewable energy systems, blue green and nature based solutions, mobility and infrastructural connections between port and city, community led energy initiatives, governance frameworks for equitable transition, and the cultural and narrative dimensions of energy futures.

The event will contribute to a comparative analysis of experiences and best practices among European port cities, enriching a growing body of shared knowledge and methodologies.

The conference – organized in collaboration with ISCTE IUL; Lisbon School of Architecture, University of Lisbon; Port Authority of Lisbon, The Worldwide Network of Port Cities – AIVP); Instituto Superior Técnico – IST / Projecto CidadePortoTejo – includes a program divided into three days of exploration and co-creation:

Day 1 — **Framing the Waterfront: Theory, Governance & Policy**

The opening day will set the conceptual and policy foundations for the discussion. Keynotes and panels will address governance models in port–city territories, decarbonization strategies, climate adaptation and sea-level resilience, blue-green infrastructure, and the role of equity and participation in shaping just transitions.

Day 2 — **Methods, Practices & Transition Pathways**

The second day will focus on tools, methods, and experiential practices. Sessions will include counter-mapping exercises, comparative case studies from European and global port cities, sensorial walks exploring transition pathways, and presentations of artistic, cultural, and community-driven initiatives that contribute to reimagining waterfront futures.

Day 3 — **On-Site Exploration: Waterfront Immersion**

The final day will take participants into the field. A guided visit, organized in collaboration with the Port of Lisbon, will explore key waterfront areas such as Alcântara, Belém–Pedrouços, and Marvila–Beato—territories where regeneration, blue-green interventions, creative industries, and community projects intersect with port activities and environmental challenges.

The Lisbon conference marks a significant milestone in the second year of PACT – Port City Territories in Action addressing the spatial, social, and cultural implications of energy transition in port city territories—spaces historically shaped by energy flows and now central to Europe’s shift toward renewable systems.

Structured around six core objectives—mapping, reframing, co-creating, including,

envisioning, and transmitting—PACT develops innovative methodologies for participatory planning and knowledge co-production. Pilot studies in Le Havre, Livorno, Rotterdam, Lisbon, Limassol, and Dubrovnik test new forms of cooperation between ports and cities, offering insights that can inspire other European port territories.

More Information

https://www.pact-costaction.eu/events