Organized by AIVP (International Association of Cities and Ports) with the strategic support of Dunkirk-Port and the Urban Community of Dunkirk, the 21st World Conference Cities & Ports, under the official theme *“Cities and Ports in Motion: Time for Action!”*, will take place from November 3 to 6, 2026, in the city of Dunkirk. The event, dedicated to the design, planning, and governance of urban-port interfaces, will bring together over 400 delegates from more than 50 nations.

The conference takes over the baton from the 20th edition held in New York, positioning Dunkirk as a European reference model for economic reconversion, ecological transition, industrial decarbonization, and large-scale planning based on strong public-private cooperation. Faced with land scarcity, climate and geopolitical pressures, and new citizen expectations, the future of maritime cities depends on the ability to share territories, risks, investments, and decision-making processes in a negotiated and flexible manner, reconciling economic performance with ecological protection and social well-being. The conference serves as a cutting-edge platform to examine the morphological and environmental coexistence between commercial ports and residential fabrics.

The scientific programme and speakers’ contributions will be structured around three main tracks:

Climate Resilience and Adaptation of Port Waterfronts

This track will analyze hydraulic defense models and strategies for coastal territories and water cities threatened by rising sea levels and extreme weather events. Pilot projects of adaptive infrastructure and Nature-based Solutions will be presented for environmental protection and ecological regeneration of vulnerable coastlines, reducing the impact of risk factors on community planning.

Energy Transition and Decarbonisation of the Port-City Interface

The focus will be on the spatial reconversion of former industrial areas and the planning of clean energy hubs within major European maritime and inland ports. In

particular, sessions will explore the technological development and integration of green hydrogen networks, wind energy in industrial waterfronts, the state-of-the-art in shoreside electricity (cold ironing), and the urban design criteria required to ensure harmonious coexistence between new heavy logistics networks and adjacent city districts.

Social Innovation, Employment, and Local Blue Economy

Dedicated working groups will delve into educational methodologies to reconnect local communities with the maritime and industrial culture of their territory. A central role will be given to Port Center projects and action frameworks to promote an equitable and inclusive blue growth, capable of anticipating labor market transformations and training the new professional figures required by the digitalization and automation of the port logistics chain.

In addition to days of theoretical debate and in-depth case study reviews, the conference agenda will include guided technical site visits. This practical track will offer delegates and researchers a direct immersion experience into the urban waterfront regeneration sites and the operational terminals of the Port of Dunkirk, analyzing the solutions adopted to mitigate anthropogenic impacts along the land-water interface.

More Information

https://aivpworldconference.org/