

12th International Maritime Congress, 13-14 May 2026

13 May 2026

Venue	Teatr Polski, ul. Swarozyzca 5, Szczecin, Poland
08:30 – 09:30	Registration
9:30 :00 – 11:30	<p>Official Opening Opening address Plenary Session I</p> <p>Striking the right balance in European shipping: IMO and EU regulations, seafarers’ social protection, and the strategic importance of the national flag</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>MLC as the cornerstone of social security in shipping: Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) has become a pivotal global instrument governing seafarers’ working conditions and social protection. In 2026, its interpretation and practical implementation shape not only crew welfare, but also shipowner; competitiveness and the attractiveness of flag states. The discussion will consider how to strike the right balance between robust social standards and cost predictability for business.</i> • <i>The national flag as an instrument of strategic state autonomy: bringing ships back under the national flag is no longer merely a matter of prestige; it is increasingly viewed as a pillar of economic security and supply chain resilience. Against the backdrop of geopolitical and regulatory disruption, EU Member States are redefining the role of their ship registries. Poland now has the necessary experience and a well-established regulatory framework, allowing it to compete credibly to attract ships to its register.</i> • <i>European ship registers as a driver of EU competitiveness: Cyprus, Malta and Madera have developed registry models that combine full compliance with EU and IMO requirements with strong appeal to shipowners. Their experience shows that competitiveness need not mean lowering standards, but rather providing efficient, predictable and user-friendly administrative and regulatory environment. This offers a valuable benchmark for the further development of ship registries across the European Union, including Poland.</i> • <i>European shipowners’ competitiveness: a challenge beyond environmental compliance: European shipowners now operate under increasing regulatory, cost, and geopolitical pressures. In 2026, their market position is shaped not only by environmental requirements, but also labour cost (including access to crews), financing, and the alignment of EU rules with global regulations. Maintaining a competitive fleet in Europe is essential to safeguarding jobs and maritime safety.</i> • <i>IMO and the European Union: between global standards and regional ambition. The relationship between IMO regulations and EU policies becoming one of defining challenges for global shipping. The EU seeks to raise standards, yet risks eroding competitiveness against shipowners operating outside the Union. This debate will examine how to shape ambitious but coherent regulatory approach – one that strengthens, rather than undermines, the European fleet.</i>
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee break
12:00 – 13:30	<p>Plenary Session II</p> <p>Safe and secure Baltic Sea: critical infrastructure, defence, and the resilience of the maritime economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Baltic Sea as strategic theatre: new threats, new responsibilities, and a new dimension of maritime security</i> • <i>Seaports: the state’s strategic and defence perspective</i> • <i>The Green transition as a growth opportunity: industrial upgrading, research and innovation in the new maritime economy</i> • <i>Ports and shipping amid ongoing volatility: how to maintain operation and competitiveness in the Baltic Sea Region?</i>
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00	<p>Plenary Session III:</p> <p>Supply chains in a turbulent world: opportunities, risks, and challenges ahead to 2030+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How global geopolitical, economic and strategic pressures are shaping international transport corridors</i> • <i>Supply chain stability: do today’s conditions still allow for effective planning and delivery?</i> • <i>The role of ports in shortening supply chains</i> • <i>The importance of the smart port concept and the deployment of autonomous maritime and inland waterway transport to strengthen supply-chain operational resilience</i> • <i>Integrating transport modes to ensure efficient flow across supply chains</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Pomerania's competitiveness in the context of supply-chain resilience to an increasingly volatile operating environment. 			
20:00	Evening performance and gala dinner (for all congress participants)			
14 May 2026				
Venue	Radisson Hotel, Szczecin, Poland			
8:00 – 15:00	Registration			
	Section I Shipping and ports	Section II Security	Section III Maritime industry	Section IV Ports' intermodal hinterland infrastructure
9:00 – 10:30	<p>MARITIME SHIPOWNERS' OPERATION IN A VOLATILE ENVIRONMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developments on freight markets The impact of armed conflicts and state protectionism on shipping The impact of environmental requirements on the competitive position of maritime shipping companies Maritime education and training for today's shipping industry 	<p>THE SYNERGY BETWEEN SEAPORT DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS INFRASTRUCTURE AS A KEY PILLAR OF THE REGION'S GEOPOLITICAL STABILITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seaports as a foundation for economic growth and a strategic component of national security The pivotal role of access infrastructure in advancing international trade, energy security, and supply-chain resilience critical infrastructure security: the role of local and regional authorities Importance for military mobility and crisis response amid geopolitical tensions Integrating ports with secure inland connections as part of NATO and EU critical infrastructure 	<p>EUROPE'S SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY AND MARKET CHALLENGES</p> <p><i>If shipbuilding output is measured by tonnage, South-East Asia leads the world. If, however, production is assessed by value and technological sophistication – across both vessels and offshore structures – Europe remains a key global player. Europe's shipbuilding and offshore industries encompass highly advanced, high-value vessels as well as structures for the offshore sector, including oil&gas and wind. Against this backdrop, shipowners' evolving requirements – covering emission performance, increasing levels of autonomy (in systems and fully autonomous vessels), and defence-related capability, present the European shipbuilding industry with a fresh set of challenges. The debate will therefore focus on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market and technological expectations in shipping and offshore, and their impact on the scale and scope of Europe's shipbuilding, including in Poland, Development scenarios for the shipbuilding and offshore industry in Europe, including in Poland – drivers of growth and factors contributing to stagnation, Autonomous maritime platforms, including drones, as an emerging field for shipbuilding in Europe. 	<p>INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT: OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS – INFRASTRUCTURE, FLEET CAPACITY, AND INVESTMENT NEEDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modernisation of the Oder waterway: plans or a fully-fledged strategy? Development southward and westward Progress on the German side – the border stretch of Oder, the Oder-Havel Canal, and the Niederfinow boat lift Building shared understanding of inland navigation's important on both sides of the Oder: practical forms of good-neighbour cooperation The Oder's economic significance for the river regions on both banks The Oder in TEN-T: do we need it? Prospects and implications 12.5 metre draught and barges: how larger cargo volumes depend on the right barge capacity Inland fleet management from the perspective of ports and public administration
10:30 – 10:50	Coffee break			
10:50 – 12:20	<p>RAPID CHANGES IN THE SEAPORT ENVIRONMENT: IS IT TIME FOR NEW STRATEGIES?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volatility as a permanent feature of the port environment: geopolitics, the war in Ukraine, and US policy 	<p>SECURING CRITICAL RESOURCES IN THE UNCERTAIN GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Securing the supply of critical resources in the global uncertain environment 	<p>OFFSHORE WIND INDUSTRY: EUROPE AND POLAND AS A HUB FOR MANUFACTURING, TRANSPORT, AND LOGISTICS</p> <p><i>After three to four years of slowdown, offshore wind is regaining its momentum, as evidenced by</i></p>	<p>CALM WATERS AND HIGH-SPEED RAILWAY: TWO FORCES POWERING INTERMODAL LOGISTICS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CE-59 "The Oder Railway Line", the Szczecin-Berlin line and the northern rail

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>EU policy: the EU seaports strategy and military mobility package</i> • <i>Polish ports and today's macro-level challenges: do we need new port strategies?</i> • <i>Port operators: global strategies versus local development plans</i> • <i>Financing port development: port budgets, Private Public Partnerships, and the EU 2028-2034 financial perspective</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How geopolitics and market volatility affect the availability of critical raw materials</i> • <i>Managing the risks of energy and raw material supply crises</i> • <i>Supply chain management and risk mitigation</i> • <i>Diversifying supply sources and routes</i> • <i>The role of stockpiling and strategic reserves</i> • <i>International cooperation as a pillar of raw materials security</i> 	<p><i>the two most recent successful auctions in Poland and Great Britain, totalling 12 GW of capacity. Importantly, among the winners of the UK auction are investors intending to develop floating offshore wind projects. Offshore wind in Europe is a rapidly growing sector that brings together manufacturing, transport, logistics, R&D and education into a single system. It is a system that requires cooperation across Europe, with extensive supply chains for both the construction of offshore wind farms and their long-term operation. The offshore wind debate, involving representative of industry and ports from European countries, will focus on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Net Zero Industry Act as part of EU policy to increase European/local content in offshore wind supply chains,</i> • <i>Key drivers for developing manufacturing within offshore wind supply chains in Europe, including Poland,</i> • <i>Manufacturing, transport, and logistics for the construction and operation of offshore wind farms, including the role of seaports in both construction and O&M stages.</i> 	<p><i>bypass: what can be delivered before the Świnoujście container terminal is built?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The proximity and interdependence of inland shipping and rail: what links fast rail with slow inland navigation?</i> • <i>Fleet and information management and its impact on timely delivery</i> • <i>Modern approach and the future of ferry shipping in connection with rail-based intermodal transport</i> • <i>The fundamental importance of rail for seaport development: why do we need to ensure long-term operation and rapid deployment?</i> • <i>The network linking rail with water transport: rail and shipping, including ferry, ro-ro and container services</i>
12:20 – 12:40	Coffee break			
12:40 – 14:10	<p>INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION DELIVERS TANGIBLE RESULTS FOR THE MARITIME INDUSTRY</p> <p><i>Cooperative projects that reflect the specific nature of maritime borders and sea-basin cooperation often extend well beyond a traditional understanding of the blue economy. As a result, they contribute to broader socio-economic development – not only in coastal areas but also inland.</i></p> <p><i>This session will present examples of major blue-economy projects in which partners work across borders to promote sustainable use of ocean, sea and coastal resources, support UN-led global initiatives, and drive the transformation of maritime-related sectors. These projects aim to strengthen the maritime sector's resilience to climate change and to stimulate innovation.</i></p>	<p>GLOBAL SHIPPING UNDER GEOPOLITICAL PRESSURE: THE VIEW FROM SHIPOWNERS, PORTS, AND TERMINALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The impact of geopolitical tensions on global shipping and supply chains</i> • <i>How shipowners, ports and terminal operators assess today's market-related challenges</i> • <i>Operational consequences of international conflicts and sanctions for the maritime sector</i> • <i>Shifts in trade routes and their impact on port competitiveness</i> • <i>Growing security risks in maritime transport</i> • <i>How geopolitical uncertainty affects infrastructure investment</i> • <i>Adaptation strategies and building operational resilience</i> 	<p>OFFSHORE BEGINS AND ENDS ON LAND: SEAPORTS AS OFFSHORE PORTALS</p> <p><i>Europe's offshore industry is a significant component of the European economy. Its importance was clearly demonstrated in 2022, when natural gas reserves beneath the North Sea helped EU Members States get through the most difficult months of the necessary and rapid diversification of gas supply sources. Brent crude is an important element of Europe's oil supply system. Offshore wind is set to play a key role in the EU's energy transition. Fish and seafood – both wild-caught and farmed – are an important component of Europeans' diets. The sea feeds and enriches, and seaports are the offshore gateway and a key pillar of the blue economy. This session will focus on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The role of seaports and their immediate hinterland in the offshore industry,</i> 	<p>FISCAL COMPETITIVENESS AND BORDER-CONTROL AMONG SEAPORTS: A COMPARATIVE VIEW OF POLAND AND SELECTED EU MEMBER STATES</p> <p><i>The panel and discussion will open with a presentation by the Centre for Eastern Studies, setting out an analysis of current border-control systems, standards and fiscal arrangements. The aim of the session is to present, from a practical perspective, the challenges faced by the Polish importers and reasons why cargo clearance is still often carried out outside Poland. Goods are then brought into Poland by road or via intermodal rail, bypassing Polish ports and, in customs terms, the Polish budget. Decision-making by cargo owners and customers: clearing goods in Poland or another EU Member State?</i></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The importance of maritime-sector cooperation in rapidly changing global environment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Seaports' experience in developing manufacturing, transport, and logistics for offshore operations,</i>• <i>Development scenarios for the offshore support potential of European ports,</i>• <i>Trends in locating offshore manufacturing and distribution centres in seaports and port-city regions</i>	
14:10 – 15:00	Lunch			