



ZWIĄZEK MIAST
I GMIN MORSKICH



Invitation to the International “MariEx on Tour” Conference

New directions for the development of Polish harbour towns into maritime experience spaces for visitors

Organised by the Association of Sea Cities and Municipalities (ZMiGM), Darłowo Municipality, the SOUTH COAST BALTIC Network and the Interreg South Baltic project “MariEx”

The Polish shore and the South Baltic area are hotspots for coastal tourism where working quays, marinas and waterfront villages are key attractions for visitors. For many holiday guests – but also for day visitors – spending time in these ports is an essential part of their stay and often a key reason to come to the region in the first place. Whether in the evenings, during bike trips, as a bad-weather alternative or as a break from the beach, they seek out authentic maritime life and atmosphere: watching boats enter the harbour, observing fishermen at work on the quayside, or simply absorbing the everyday rhythm of harbour life.

However, such experiences are becoming increasingly rare. The decline of coastal fisheries and short sea shipping means that traditional commercial activities, which used to generate maritime experiences “en passant”, simply as part of everyday harbour life, are diminishing or disappearing from many smaller harbours – a development likely to continue in the coming years.

At the same time, many remaining commercial and fishing ports, abandoned harbours and marinas for recreational boating – often former fishing harbours – are undergoing transformation. New activities and actors are moving into these areas: former fishing basins now serve as marinas for leisure boats, restaurants and apartments with harbour views are opening, saunas overlooking the water are being added, and diving platforms and other facilities for local youngsters are being created. In this way, a “new harbour life” is emerging that can be just as attractive for land-based tourists as traditional port activities, provided that these places are opened up to visitors while safeguarding enough space for “genuine port users” and everyday local harbour life of local residents.

Against this background, the “MariEx on Tour” event in Darłowo will bring together international perspectives from the South Baltic area and provide an in-depth look at Darłowo as a concrete example of innovative harbour transformation in Poland. With expert presentations, a panel discussion and a study visit to the local pilot sites of the “MariEx” project, participants will explore different approaches to creating authentic “new harbour life” for land tourists. The exchange will inspire municipalities, harbour authorities and tourism stakeholders from Poland’s Baltic Sea coast to discover how similar concepts and solutions could be applied in other Polish harbours.

Date: Wednesday, 18 February 2026

Time: 10:00 – 15:15 h, followed by a networking coffee

Place: Hotel and Conference Center “Sea Collection by Marina Royale”,
Bulwar Zachodzącego Słońca 2, 76-150 Darłowo, Poland

[Google maps](#)

Language: The event will be held in Polish language. For international speakers & participants, Polish–English interpretation will be provided.

Registration: Please register by [filling in this form](#) before 5 February 2026.

In case you plan to stay overnight in Darłowo, accommodation is available [at the venue](#) as well as further hotels that can be found within walking distance, for example [Hotel Amber Port](#) or [Hotel Lidia](#). On request, accommodation costs of participants may be subsidised by the organisers. Please contact us under mail@ga-ma.de if you would like to make use of this offer!

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

South Baltic

MariEx

Agenda

Wednesday, 18 February 2026

09:00 *Registration of participants and welcome coffee*

10:00 **Welcoming of participants & introduction to the workshop**

Arkadiusz Klimowicz, *Mayor of Darłowo*

Marcin Makowski, *Director of the Office, Association of Sea Cities and Municipalities (ZMiGM)*

Innovative transformations of small harbours at the Baltic Sea

10:15 **The project “MariEx”: Transforming small harbours into inclusive “Maritime Experience Points” for land tourists – How to create authentic “new harbour life” that is appealing to both visitors & locals?**

Julia Chodorowska, *MariEx project management, GA-MA Consulting / DE & PL*

10:45 **Klintholm Harbour on the Island of Møn / DK: Authentic and vivid harbour life as the basis for making the port attractive for land tourists**

Ole Eskling, *Resort Manager of Camp Møns Klint / DK*

Case study: Darłowo harbour as an attraction for land tourists

11:15 **From fishing port to new functions: The changing role of the port of Darłowo**

Agnieszka Lupke, *President of Darłowo Port Authority*

11:35 **Marina Royale as an example of the development of tourist functions in the port area**

Aleksandra Twitchett, *Representative of POC Partners Polska Sp. z o.o., Marina Royale*

12:00 *Joint lunch*

13:00 **Visit to the “MariEx” pilot sites for innovative harbour transformation in Darłowo**

Joint walk through the port area with on-the-spot explanations by the local project coordinator Tomasz Breszka, *Head of the Unit of European Integration & Investments, Darłowo Municipality*

14:00 **Tourism in Darłowo: Current developments and future trends**

Jarosław Lichacy, *President of Darłowo Local Tourism Organisation*

14:15 **Darłowo in the course of time: Lessons from the transformation of the harbour for the development of other smaller ports in Poland** (online lecture)

Łukasz Wysocki, *President of the Board, Gdańsk Tourism Organisation, former resident of Darłowo*

14:30 **How to transform fishing ports in seaside resorts into accessible and attractive spaces for visitors?**

Panel discussion with involvement of the audience

Panelists:

Artur Lijewski, *President of the Board, Port of Kołobrzeg Authority & Small Seaport Association (tbc)*

N.N., *Representative of the Department of Tourism, Marshal's Office of the West Pomeranian Voivodeship or West Pomeranian Regional Tourism Organisation (tbc)*

Prof. Dr hab. Jacek Zaucha, *economist, specialist in macroeconomics, regional policy, spatial (territorial) development, and Baltic integration, University of Gdańsk (tbc)*

Outlook & farewell

15:00 **Wrap up and information on upcoming events & offers of the “MariEx” project**

15:15 *End of the thematic sessions & networking coffee*