

Press release

20/02/2026 – Taranto, Italy

Taranto Hosts the first in-person meeting of the Cruises & Port Cities Working Group

AIVP and MedCruise strengthen their collaboration for Sustainable Cruises and Port-City Development



MedCruise and AIVP, have brought the international Cruises & Port Cities Working Group to Taranto for its first in-person meeting, gathering around 30 port city professionals and experts from Italy, Spain, France, Greece and Portugal.

This initiative, established in 2021, promotes dialogue, best practices and cooperation between cruise ports and cities, supporting more sustainable and inclusive destination management.

Hosted by the Port System Authority of the Ionian Sea (AdSPMI), the meeting focuses on key topics such as governance, mobility and community engagement, with dedicated workshops addressing tourism flow management and collaborative approaches between port-city stakeholders and cruise companies.



The two-day programme kicked off with an official press conference in the Ketos Center, with the President of the Port of Taranto, the representative of the municipality and the harbourmaster. In this opening session, MedCruise President and President of the Corfu Port Authority, Theodora Riga highlighted the importance of a collaborative approach to cruise development, noting that: "It is a huge honour to be in Taranto and to contribute to the important work being carried out in support of sustainable port-city relations." She added: "Cruise development is seen differently depending on perception and our role is to work towards a shared and balanced vision."

On behalf of AIVP, Francesca Morucci the organization's Secretary General, indicated "It is a great honour and a real pleasure for me to have taken part in this in person meeting of the MedCruise and Aivp working group. The first phase of the work, that led to the publication of the Cruise Port City Compass, already demonstrated the value of the collaboration between the two associations. In the second phase we're experimenting that the synergy between the two perspectives-the AIVP port-city approach and the cruise industry vision of MedCruise-is more essential than ever as port cities face complex challenges (ensure sustainability, balance socioeconomics impacts, manage flows, strengthen relationships with local communities, etc.) that need to be tackled with a common language, share knowledge and systematic experiences and solutions that can support a more balanced and sustainable development of the sector. This working group definitely shows how much our two associations, with their complementary expertise, can contribute to shaping innovative models for the port cities of the future."

The second day of the gathering took place at the National Archaeological Museum of Taranto (MARTA), including an Open Lab session with local stakeholders. This moment was key to foster dialogue between international experts and local cruise ecosystem to explore strategies for enhancing cruise destinations from a sustainability perspective and defining the Group's priorities for the year ahead.

Through this joint initiative, MedCruise and AIVP continue to support their members in strengthening port-city relations and advancing the sustainable development of cruise tourism across the Mediterranean and worldwide.

About AIVP

The International Association of Cities and Ports (AIVP) is the world's leading network of cities and ports dedicated to the sustainable development of city-port relations. Since 1988, AIVP has been strengthening dialogue between cities and ports through innovation, cooperation and environmentally and socially responsible practices.

For more information: www.aivp.org.