

## Policy, climate action, and (green) port strategy discussed at the Baltic Ports for Climate Conference in Gdynia

by Andrzej Urbaś, *External Consultant, Actia Forum*

**Moving to Gdynia after the visit to Tallinn last year, the event is becoming one of the staple positions on the Baltic Ports Organization (BPO) event calendar.**

**A**fter a brief welcoming session, featuring speeches by the Mayor of the City of Gdynia, Aleksandra Kosiorek; Katarzyna Gruszecka-Spychała, representing the conference's host, the Port of Gdynia; and Alan Aleksandrowicz, representing both the Port of Gdańsk and BPO as its new Chairman, it was down to business, and the programme was truly packed.

### Climate policy, port strategy, and the shadow fleet

In the context of the impact of port activities on the scope of EU MRV and ETS reporting for shipping, every tonne truly counts. Paying careful attention to emission control, regulatory awareness, and infrastructure readiness will be some of the defining factors for keeping the competitive edge, according to DNV Poland. Their comparison of the recent IMO decision-making process to a long but uneventful coffee break earned quite a few laughs.

An interesting and unique twist on sometimes dry legal and regulatory topics was offered when the conference host took to the stage once again. The presentation detailed the arduous process of removing the abandoned shadow-fleet ship, the tanker Khatanga, from the Port of Gdynia, which included some clever use of the law, particularly declaring the vessel derelict and assuming ownership under the *res nullius* legal framework.

A further case study illustrated the Port of Helsinki's ambitious decarbonization strategy, aiming to be 100% carbon neutral this year and achieve a minimum 30% reduction of total CO<sub>2</sub> emitted in the port areas by 2030. This effort targets four primary sources: vessels, heavy machinery, cargo traffic, and the port's own operations.

### Even the best strategy won't help if you don't act on it

Demonstrating how to move from strategy toward action, Baltic Hub emphasizes rail infrastructure as the future for hinterland

development to lower the carbon footprint. Other key actions include successive electrification of all yard cranes, purchasing CO<sub>2</sub>-free electricity, and planning to replace diesel prime movers with low-emission alternatives by 2030 (to that end, the company is testing hydrogenated vegetable oil).

Carbon tunnel vision was a term coined by Race for the Baltic. Their presentation highlighted pollution pressures impacting the Baltic Sea, including eutrophication (affecting 97% of the sea and causing the world's largest human-induced dead zone), and hazardous substances (with 80% of the Baltic having poor contamination status). The port industry contributes significantly through dredging/dumping (causing seafloor loss/disturbance), discharging scrubber/bilge waters, and spillage of fertilizers when trans-loading them. The core message stressed that these environmental challenges are interconnected.

There were also some palate cleansers of technological and innovative variety, courtesy



Photos: Port of Gdynia

of the event's sponsors – Mobile Monitoring and RedGet – sprinkled in between the other presentations and discussion panels. The former took the audience for a ride into the world of AI cameras, sensors, and drones, while the latter offered their twist on emission calculation via a specialized app.

### Experience is everything – insights from the Blue Supply Chains project

The last segment of the event doubled as the final conference of the Blue Supply Chains project, an initiative funded by the Interreg EU Baltic Sea Region Programme 2021-2027.

The critical need to accelerate the energy transition in the maritime sector stood at the center of the discussions. The transition

remains key, encompassing the shift from fossil fuels to renewable sources such as wind, solar, bioenergy & hydrogen, and connecting directly to green and energy-efficient mobility like shipping and rail, as stated by Hunter Reinhardt (Interreg BSR).

Blue Supply Chains and its rich partner consortium aim to aid port authorities and operators in the Baltic, actively supporting the decarbonization of port & shipping operations by advancing electrification, providing strategies for alternative fuels, and establishing green transport chains.

All interested stakeholders are encouraged to [visit the official project website](#) for more information about its many pilot projects and activities, as well as a more

### [detailed summary of the Blue Supply Chains wrap-up.](#)

#### Containers, containers everywhere!

And suddenly it was a wrap. But the event did not end with the curtains falling on the conference stage. Far from it! The organizer had one more surprise up their sleeve, offering the interested participants a close-up view and first-hand experience of port and terminal operations. This took place during a study visit to both the Port of Gdynia and the Gdynia Container Terminal of Hutchison Ports.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all participants, speakers, and partners for making this event a success and look forward to seeing you all again next year! ■