



Taranto Port Days 2024

The curtain closes on the 2024 edition of Taranto Port Days: thousands of visitors for the *two-day port event* devoted to inclusion.

It just ended the sixth edition of the **Taranto Port Days (TPD)**, an event organised by the **Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea - Port of Taranto** under the patronage of the Municipality of Taranto and the **Southern Interregional Maritime Command of the Italian Navy**, in collaboration with **The International Propeller Club - Port of Taras Association**.

The initiative, which took place on 11 and 12 October, is part of the *Italian Port Days* promoted at national level by Assoporti. In full synergy with the national Port Network Authorities, has identified the themes of **inclusion** and **disability** as leitmotif of the 'Port Days' event, which, from north to south, has given rise to numerous initiatives to disseminate port culture.

Bringing the city closer to the port and the port closer to the city: with this objective, the Taranto Port Days welcomed people of all kinds and ages, aiming to make Inclusion the connecting bridge between the various events that alternated, from morning to evening, at Quay 1. Drawing inspiration from the points of Goal 10 of the UN Agenda 2030, the TPDs also dared to boldly tackle the issues of inequality, involving key stakeholders from multiple spheres of the social, public and private fabric. Thinking big, the Taranto event seems to have been the forerunner to the most important and acclaimed G7 on "*Inclusion and Disability*" (Assisi and Solfignano, 14-16 October 2024), an international forum that brought together in Italy the leaders from seven of the world's leading advanced economies promoting the global commitment to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Taranto port city, in its own small way, also played its part.

The Port of Taranto hosted a huge programme of events: for the edition that has just ended, it was the Quay 1 that acted as a natural stage for the TPDs, physically connecting the port and the city in one big cultural platform. The great participation during the port days resulted in the sea becoming the element that shaped the inclusive dimension of the port of Taranto. The people counter far exceeded the threshold of **5,000 visitors** who, with great enthusiasm, made the 2024 TPD edition unique. Many took part in the port visits by land and sea, discovering the past, present and future history of the port of Taranto. There was no lack of cultural and current events, but also **sports, art, education, music** and **theatre**. The TPDs continue to be a great symposium dedicated to port activities, where the sea takes centre stage, growing year after year in both content and the number of participants. These participants, with a spirit of cooperation and sharing a common goal, have contributed to the success of the last edition of the event.

This year, Taranto Port Days 2024 are supported by: **Vestas Blades Italia Srl** (*main sponsor*), **Banca Intesa San Paolo, SJS srl, Acciaierie d'Italia, Rimorchiatori Napoletani srl, DBA Group, SJS Engineering and Ecologica spa** as sponsors; as well as **Fondazione Taranto25, Jonian Dolphin Conservation, Masseria Cappella, RAFFO, Masseria Frutti Rossi Srl, Antonio Petrocelli s.r.l., Ecotaras Srl, La Casa di Sofia Aps, Associazione nazionale Vigili del Fuoco** (National Firefighters Association), **La Vela – Società Cooperativa Sociale** and **Cooperativa Logos**, as partners.



Let's recall the most significant moments of the two days of [Taranto Port Days](#).

The Port Village

The “**Port Village**” welcomed and enchanted students, citizens and families, associations and institutions in the exhibition area set up at Quay 1 with **16 stands** dedicated to the culture of the sea and the different realities, public and private, that animate the Port of Taranto. These include: Confapi / Confindustria Taranto; Casartigiani; Jonian Dolphin Conservation; ‘O.P.T.I.M.A.’ Confcommercio Taranto; ITS Academy Mobilità; IFondazione ITS Academy IOTA sviluppo; Molo Sant'Eligio; Stella Maris apostolate of the sea; Confindustria Taranto; BALAB - contamination lab of the University of Bari Aldo Moro; Financial Police; Customs and Monopolies Agency - DTVIII Apulia, Molise and Basilicata; Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea - Port of Taranto; International Propeller Club - Port of Taras; Municipality of Taranto / Acclavio Library; Harbour Master's Office - Taranto Coast Guard; National Firefighters Corps / National Firefighters Corps Taranto section; Italian Navy and Taranto Police Headquarters.

In addition to these, the **Puglia Brick** stand welcomed enthusiasts of all ages with hundreds of Lego bricks, inviting visitors to test themselves with flair and creativity. The **press area** was the beating heart both of the organisational secretariat and press office run by **Sirio Srl of Taranto** and the communication team run by **Larry Agency**, which took care of the social communication and graphics of the TPDs.

At the centre of the port village there was the wooden boat model developed by **Francesco Sisto** of Officina Maremosso, that works to spread the maritime carpentry culture, including through the involvement of young people within the juvenile justice system.

Interactive spaces were also set up, with workshops and tastings of typical products offered at sunset in the food area, which this year was set up with the collaboration of various local entities: **Articolo 21- Noi e Voi Association**, **Petrocelli SrL**, **Power Aut**, **Masseria Fruttirossi** with the **Lome** project, **Masseria Cappella**, the **Centrale del latte Puglia** with its ape-car that distributed milk and mozzarella, and **Raffo Bear**.

The Port Village area also complemented port activities with **sports-related** inclusion initiatives. The wide variety of activities, from volleyball to martial arts, from aquatic demonstrations to Pet Therapy - with the pony Ares and the dog Isa from **AsD Ghibli** of Grottaglie, and with the dog Mascha from **Il Parco di Ulisse** of Massafra - wanted to show how well-being passes through sport and connection with animals. A rubberised field was set up within the area, hosting meetings, performances, and demonstrations by numerous sports associations. The activities on land were skilfully coordinated by **Fondazione Taranto 25** while the activities at sea - volleyball, swimming demonstrations, also for people with disabilities - were coordinated by **Mediterraneo Village** and **Enjoy Your Dive**.

The '**Pompieroli**' activity by the **Italian Firemen's Association** was well attended, offering children and adults the chance to become 'firemen for a day', through a playful insight into the Association's activities, promoting the culture of safety.



Finally, for the first time, the many visitors to the port village had the opportunity to board a large vessel, the deep-sea patrol vessel '**Fiorillo**' made available by the **Harbour Master's Office**.

Finally, the young people present on the morning of 11 October had the opportunity to learn about the project 'Study in Apulia: chart your own course', organised by the Apulia Region, ADISU and the Apulian Universities, as part of **Didacta Apulia 2024**. In the presence of regional education councillor **Sebastiano Leo**, Didacta welcomed the Apulia University Village, with exhibition spaces of all Apulian universities where students could talk to university lecturers and guidance experts. The Travelling Village was preceded by a sailing boat tour that followed the borders of the sea, with crews made up of students from high schools reaching Bari for the inauguration of Didacta on 16 October, after having visited, along with Taranto, the cities of Gallipoli, Santa Maria di Leuca, Brindisi and Manfredonia.

Opening ceremony and call for artists 'Taranto: la mia città-porto' ('Taranto: my port-city) with surprise guest "Mandrake"

The Taranto Port Days kicked off with the traditional opening ceremony, attended by leading civil and military, local and regional authorities and enriched by the special musical performance of the **SbandAut** duo, composed by the young musicians Alessandro and Antonio.

Laura Cimaglia, Director General and International Affairs of Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea, introduced the sessions. Institutional greetings from the President of the Port Network Authority the Ionian Sea - Port of Taranto, **Sergio Prete**, preceded the customary ribbon-cutting ceremony. This was followed by speeches by Prefect **Paola Dessì**, for the Southern Maritime Interregional Command of the Navy, Admiral **Vincenzo Leone**, Maritime Director for Apulia, Commander **Fabio Dal Cin**, representing Admiral Vincenzo Montanaro, the Commander of the Taranto Harbour Master's Authority, **Rosario Meo**, the Chief of Taranto Police, **Michele Sinigaglia**, the Regional Councillor for Training and Employment, **Sebastiano Leo**, the Councillor for Urban Planning, Mobility, Innovation of the Municipality of Taranto, **Edmondo Ruggiero**, and the President of The International Propeller Club - Port of Taras, **Michele Conte**.

At the end of the opening ceremony, the floating stage set up on the **Kinetic** motorboat - provided by Ecotaras Srl - hosted the award ceremony for the winners of the call for artists "**Taranto: my port-city**" introduced by Valeria Todaro and Antonio Covella of the Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea.

The competition, promoted by the Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea and reserved for primary and secondary school students of Taranto and its province, has now reached its fourth edition with the participation of **13 schools** and **24 works** inspired by the theme of inclusion identified at national level for the Port Days as a key element of the call. Over 600 students, accompanied by their teachers, reached the port of Taranto to attend the contest's prize-giving ceremony.

Surprise guest for the event was **Mandrake**, a famous comedian and content creator from Brindisi, known for his irresistible characters having a big success on social media. With his unmistakable style,



Mandrake captivated the audience of the Taranto Port Days, involving and entertaining both young and old with his jokes, which were enjoyed by participants of all ages. His sketches and jokes provoked laughter and applause, but at the same time conveyed deep and meaningful messages, demonstrating once again the power of comedy in raising awareness on issues relevant to the new generations such as inclusion and disability.

Speaking on behalf of **OSCAD**, Observatory of the State Police for Security against Acts of Discrimination, **Francesca Capaldo**, Chief Superintendent of the State Police, delegated by the President of OSCAD, illustrated the Observatory's activities. Donato Telesca, an athlete from the paralympic sector of the 'Fiamme Oro' sports groups, bronze medallist at the recent Paralympic Games in Paris, in the discipline of weightlifting, who shared his performance in front of the young audience of students that coloured Quay 1 of the Port of Taranto with fresh cheer during the morning.

The *call for artists* was intended to give students from Taranto and its province the opportunity to develop a pathway of knowledge and appreciation of the Port of Taranto and, in general, of the cultural heritage linked to the sea, strengthening the link between the younger generations and the port culture that examined the 24 works.

The work made by the evaluation committee, composed of **Roberto Settembrini**, Secretary General of the Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea (chairman of the commission), **Michele Conte**, President of The International Propeller Club - Port of Taras (co-organiser of the Taranto Port Days) and **Antonella Convertino** of Masseria Cappella, partner of the Taranto Port Days 2024, was not easy.

The evaluation criteria focused on creativity, originality, effectiveness in representing the theme 'Taranto: my city-port', communicative and emotional effectiveness, rewarding, in particular, those works that best interpreted the inclusion as well as the significance of the port in the city's history and future.

These are the winning schools in the fourth edition of the *call for artists*:

1. for the writing category - **I.C. Carrieri/Colombo** - title "*In viaggio verso un porto sicuro*" (*On the way to a safe harbour*) - group 2° F - secondary school;
2. for the video story category - **I.C. Martellotta** - title "*La rotonda sul mare*" (*The roundabout by the sea*) - group of secondary school students;
3. for the figurative arts category - **Liceo Artistico Calò (Grottaglie)** - title "*Benvenuti in Porto*" (*Welcome to the Port*) - IVD and VA secondary school students.

Lacking a winner for the acting category, the commission finally decided to award a further prize to the video story category and, in particular, to the paper entitled "*Mare senza limiti*" (*Sea without limits*) - produced by **I.T.E.S. Pitagora**.

The jury also decided to award an "**out-of-competition**" award for the originality, creativity expressed and commitment shown by the very young students of the **I.C.** primary school. **Martellotta** to the paper with the title "*PortiAmo il futuro sostenibile e PortiAmo un sogno per tutti!*" (*Let's bring a sustainable future and a dream for all!*), created by the classes of Year 4.

The winners of the Call for Artists "*Taranto: my port city*" will be awarded an artistic creation with ceramic inserts, set on canvas, representing the Taranto Port Days logo: a colourful sailing boat sailing



towards the horizon. The award was offered by the **Bottega San Cataldo**, a workshop of young artists and craftsmen from **Symbolum ETS**, the cultural promotion association set up to redevelop the historic centre of Taranto through the creation of rehabilitation programs for inmates and micro-economies for the young people of this land. The winners of the call will also have the opportunity to make an educational visit to the **Masseria Cappella** in Martina Franca (TA) where they will be taken on a tour of the Masseria, which is also known for its bakery and dairy products.

A round of applause to all the participating institutes, I.I.S. Archimede, I.C. Carrieri-Colombo, Liceo Scientifico Battaglini, I.C. XXV Luglio- Bettolo, I.C. Galileo Galilei, I.C. Martellotta, I.C. Sciascia, I.C.R. Moro -Leonida, I.T.E.S. Pitagora, Liceo Ferraris, I.C.A. Volta, Liceo Artistico Calò (Grottaglie), I.C. Del Bene(Maruggio).

Talks, Conferences and Falanto Awards

On the afternoon of 11 October, the talk and conference area at Quay 1 welcomed **Alfredo Longo**, Mayor of Maruggio and President of the Vanni Longo Foundation, who presented the **Invictus Camp** initiative (<https://www.invictuscamp.it/>). The project aims to create the first place in Apulia where children and young people from 6 to 17 years old living with diseases, even serious ones, can spend their holidays among unforgettable experiences and games, in a safe and supportive environment, with one very serious objective: to use playing as a natural medicine supporting the therapies these children must undergo to look ahead.

There was great interest in the conference “**The Role of Ports in the Country's Energy Development**” organised by **The International Propeller Club - Port of Taras**, which provided an opportunity to reflect on the state of the art of energy transition at a national level and on the contribution of the port system to energy supply innovation processes in an international scenario that increasingly tends to promote sustainable development. After the institutional greetings by the Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea President **Sergio Prete**, **Paola Dessì** - Prefect of the Province of Taranto, **Mattia Giorno** - President Michele Emiliano's delegate councillor for the area of Taranto, **Rinaldo Melucci** - Mayor of Taranto, and **Rosario Meo**, commander of the Harbour Master's Office, the works were introduced and moderated by the Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea Secretary General **Roberto Settembrini**. At the conference were present as speakers **Alessandro Panaro** - Head Maritime & Energy - SRM, **Donato Liguori** - Director General for Ports, Logistics and Intermodality - Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, who focused his speech on the need for digitalising Ports, **Vito Antonio Antonacci** - Director of the Mobility Department, **Davide Tabarelli** - Extraordinary Commissioner ADI in Extraordinary Administration, **Jonathan Hernø** - General Manager Vestas Blades Italia Srl, and **Martina Montinaro** - Senior Scientific Project Manager at the Euro-Mediterranean Center on Climate Change. The works were concluded by **Michele Conte** - President of the Propeller Club - Port of Taras, who, satisfied with the analysis conducted, highlighted how important it is in a port reality such as the Port of Taranto, to pay attention to energy and employment aspects also as a function of inclusion.

The colourful setting of the Taranto Port Days hosted the **Falanto Awards** ceremony for 2024. The event stems from the desire of the Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea to promote the port city of Taranto by giving symbolic recognition to the main stakeholders who are contributing to its revitalisation as advocates of change.



The awards for the 2024 edition were given to the Prefect of Taranto, **Paola Dessì**, the Commander of the Harbour Master's Office, **Rosario Meo**, the San Paolo Business Studies Centre **SRM Studi e Ricerche per il Mezzogiorno**, represented by Alessandro Panaro, and the **TUI** cruise line, represented by the representative of the shipping agency Titi Shipping Srl, Valerio Saponaro. Surprisingly, the Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea also wished to give a final award to President **Sergio Prete** for his commitment over the years to the decisive transition and evolution of the Port of Taranto.

The award is a reproduction of a blue bollard, made by the **Bottega San Cataldo**, a workshop of young artists and craftsmen from **Symbolum ETS**, cultural promotion association set up to redevelop the historic centre of Taranto through the creation of rehabilitation programs for inmates and micro-economies for the young people of this land.

The day of 12 October opened with an in-depth talk entitled **“WorkAbility: tools, skills and values to encourage a culture of inclusion in the workplace”**, aiming to promote topics such as inclusion in the workplace and training. **Roberto Settembrini**, Secretary General of the Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea, introduced and moderated the meeting. Among the speakers: **Anna Cammalleri** - Councillor of the President of the Apulia Region for integrated policies on education, training, work, active citizenship and inclusion in the development of the Apulia system; **Marisa Di Santo** - Justice of the Peace; **Biagio Provenzale** representing ITS Academy Mobility; **Franca Todaro** - Association of Chartered Accountants and Accounting Experts and **Angela Blasi** - Association of Labour Consultants of Taranto. In addition, representatives of three local companies brought their success stories of entrepreneurship and labour inclusion for disadvantaged people: **Emanuele Battista**, CTO of LIMITLESS SRL; **Francesco Sisto**, President of Officina Maremosso and **Antonio Erbante**, President of the Cooperative Noi e Voi and the Art 21 Restaurant.

Closing the in-depth events of the second day was a talk with the title **“Diary of a mermaid: stories of intersectionality and multiple discrimination”**, moderated and curated by **Noemi Frascella** from the Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea.

"Diary of a Mermaid", with a strongly symbolic title, dealt with topics such as intersectionality and multiple discrimination, through testimonies of professionals from different fields. An impressive talk, introduced with a video fragment featuring the testimony of **Maysoon Zayid**, the US comedian and activist of Palestinian origin, who suffers from cerebral palsy. The title itself reflects the symbolic meaning of the mermaid as a metaphor for disability and femininity, challenging common prejudices. Attention was drawn to the need to acquire cultural and professional skills to combat inequalities, thus broadening the debate on social justice. Speakers: **Leonardo Melle**, paralympic hemiplegic athlete, who in the phrase "Will and Power" encloses his great experience of life and of successful disabled athlete; **Luca Pellicoro**, representative and founder of **Enjoy Your Dive**, who shared his passion for the underwater world with the entire community, creating with this purpose an Association; **Valentina L'ingesso** and **Carmen Palazzo** of the Anti-Violence Centre Sostegno Donna/Associazione Alzaia Taranto; **Nicoletta Siliberti**, Director of the Turi Prison/ Vice-Director of the Taranto Prison managed to narrate important aspects of prison life and how rehabilitation activities are necessary for inmates; **Susi Ronchi**, Coordinator of Gi.U.Li.A. Journalists Sardegna and **Monica Golino**, Acclavio Library/ Gi.U.Li.A. Apulia, who highlighted the importance of an appropriate journalistic language when the topic to be addressed is disability; **Adriana Schiedi**, Lecturer at the Ionian Department of the University of Bari, Aldo Moro and **Gemma Lanzo**, Co-Founder Studio MAS - Modern Apulian Style/ELLA President, with her vision not just as a journalist but also as film critic. The talk closed with a presentation of the project [Sensoltre](#) by **Emanuela Ferri** of the **Informatici**



Senza Frontiere Association, showing the multisensory exhibition of tactile pictures equally usable by sighted and blind individuals, beyond sight.

Live music of the Taranto Port Days: Golden Salt and Simona Molinari

The **Kinetic** provided by **Ecotaras Srl** hosted the live music performances on Friday and Saturday evenings, bringing two unmissable evening concerts on the floating stage.

On 11 October, it will be the turn of the rock-crossover duo **Golden Salt** composed of **Arianna Mazzaresse** (violin) and **Eleonora Loi** (electric guitar), boasting an impressive 700,000 followers and more than 20 million views on social media. They bring energy to the biggest international stages, mixing rock, metal, electronic and classical music.

Great audience participation and involvement on Saturday the 12th with a concert masterfully performed by the **Simona Molinari Quintet**, represented by the pop jazz singer-songwriter with six albums to her credit. The artist boasts collaborations with Al Jarreau, Gilberto Gil, Andrea Bocelli, Peter Cincotti, Ornella Vanoni, Renzo Arbore, Massimo Ranieri and Raphael Gualazzi.

Theatre, entertainment and animation

Readings for Children

Once again this year, the TPDs hosted readings and reading promotion activities by the '**Pietro Acclavio**' Civic Library, in cooperation with the volunteer readers of **Nati per Leggere**. One of last year's most magical and unforgettable experiences, by popular demand, once again made the children dream with sunset readings, both at the quayside and on board the *Jonian Dolphin Conservation* catamarans, giving girls and boys a special trip in the middle of the sea that made them the protagonists of a tour among stories and waves, immersed in a magical atmosphere.

Theatre piece "*Eva non è ancora nata*" (Eve is not born yet) by and with Salvatore Cosentino

At sunset on 11 October, the Taranto Port Days hosted the play: "**Eva non è ancora nata**", introduced by Justice of the Peace Marisa Di Santo. The play was an intense theatrical performance, written and performed by Magistrate **Salvatore Cosentino**, Deputy Attorney General at the Lecce Court of Appeal, who offered a profound homage to the figure of women and the injustices they have suffered throughout history. The show took a journey from the biblical story of Eve, the first woman, to the present day, spanning centuries of discrimination, violence and sufferings experienced by women. The "veiled woman", played by **Adriana Schiedi**, as a symbol of women's hidden and often silent suffering.

Theatre - "*L'Arcobaleno di colori*" (Rainbow of Colours) - La Vela Association

The theatrical performance "**L'Arcobaleno di colori**" by the Association "La vela" was impressive. Five colour groups represent different human qualities: reds embody vitality, purples creativity, greens attention, blues sensitivity, and yellows bring joy. Each group easily withdraws into itself, rejecting confrontation with others. This division reflects the fractures we often see in our reality, where incommunicability creates barriers between people. In the recital, the turning point comes



con il Patrocinio



thanks to the “painter of life”, who invites everyone to reflect: *“Think how much more beautiful and colourful life would be if you opened up to each other with friendship and respect”*.

The teaching of this show goes beyond fantasy: it invites us to imagine a future of inclusion, where we can colour our lives, families, workplaces and schools with the richness of our differences.

Press conference - ITS Turismo Puglia

The Taranto Port Days were the showcase of excellence chosen by ITS Turismo Puglia to present the courses of the two-year academic year 2024/2025 starting in Taranto and its province. The workshop was opened by the President of the Port Network Authority of the Ionian Sea, **Sergio Prete**, who applauded the formula of the new tourism and management courses, which among other things include a partnership with Costa Crociere. This was followed by the intervention of the director of the Taranto Department, **Luca Adamo**, who presented the courses of, *“Sales management in the cruise industry”*, *“Innovation management for the development of smart tourism destinations”* and *“Higher technician for the organisation of events and entertainment in the cruise industry”*. **Angelica Lussuoso**, Councillor for culture, events and youth policies of the Municipality of Taranto, highlighted the importance of these pathways for the development of youth policies that allow our young people not to leave the territory and find employment opportunities. The president of ITS Turismo Puglia, **Giuseppa Antonacci**, concluded the press conference by emphasising that these courses, which are based in Apulia, are highly professional. Two-year courses, she specified, which represent a valid alternative to university courses tout court, as thanks to the training internships, they allow for early entry into the world of work, if the student commit to successfully complete the course.