INTERNATIONAL CRUISE summit 2026

PROGRAMME

Programme subject to updates

9 NOVEMBER

19.30 WELCOME RECEPTION
Exclusive event for speakers, sponsors and press, by invitation

SPONSORED BY

Port de Barcelona

10 NOVEMBER

08:00 – 08:45 BADGES COLLECTION

09:00 – OPENING AND WELCOME REMARKS
Virginia López Valiente, CEO CRUISES NEWS MEDIA GROUP

INTRODUCTION TO THE ICS 2026
Figen Ayan, Founder and CEO AYAN CONSULTING - CONFERENCE DIRECTOR

9:15 – 9:30 PRESENTATION: NUMBERS FIRST – WHERE THE INDUSTRY IS LEADING
Where is the industry heading in numbers? Oxford Economics opens the Summit with fresh, independent data on demand, capacity and investment. Clear facts that set the ground for everything that follows. The numbers come first, the opinions after.

Michael Greve, Practice Lead, Cruise Port Development & Investment Advisory TOURISM ECONOMICS, an Oxford Economics company

09:30 – 10:30 THE GREAT DEBATE
Second edition, by delegate demand, inspired by last year's format. Cruise lines, ports and destinations debate one motion: the future of cruise growth depends on closer alignment between destinations and cruise lines. The audience votes and takes the floor.

Moderator: Virginia Quintairos, Managing Director INTERCRUISES SHORESIDE & PORT SERVICES
Chris Hackney, CEO MARELLA CRUISES
Luis de Carvalho, Commercial Cruise Director COPENHAGEN MALMÖ PORT
Samantha Stimpson, Chief Executive Officer FRED. OLSEN CRUISE LINES
Laura Cimaglia, Director of General and International Affairs PORT OF TARANTO

10:30 – 10:45 PRESENTATION: FIRST LOOK, REAL LOOK: THE BARCELONA TERMINAL REVEAL
Olga Piqueras, General Manager BARCELONA PORT TERMINAL G (BPTG)

10:45 – 11:00 PRESENTATION: MYSTERY CRUISES

A ship leaves port and nobody on board knows where she is going. The mystery voyage turns the itinerary itself into the product: guests book the ship and the promise, and discover each destination only en route. How the concept works commercially, what it asks of operations, port agents and provisioning when the schedule stays sealed, who books it and why it sells out, told with the stories only the crew can tell.

Helen Beck, Managing Director - Global Commercial WINDSTAR CRUISES

11:00 – 11:30 COFFEE BREAK FOR ALL THE DELEGATES

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INTERCRUISES SHORESIDE & PORT SERVICES

11:30 – 11:45 JAPAN'S CRUISE INDUSTRY – A NEW CHAPTER FOR ASUKA CRUISE

An overview of the evolution of Japan's cruise industry, from its origins to today's market, exploring the ASUKA brand and its two ships, ASUKA II and ASUKA III, and the future prospects for Japanese cruising.

Nobuhiro Takeuchi, Deputy General Manager Asuka Cruise – NYK Line

11:45 – 12:00 PRESENTATION: UNDER SAIL – CRUISING BY DIFFERENT RULES

Club Med has been operating cruises under sail since the 1990s, longer than almost anyone. A smaller ship, the wind and a very French art de vivre make a product unlike anything else at sea. A first hand account from the operations side, and a story this Summit has never heard.

Jean-Charles Thillays, Director of Cruise Operations Club Med Exclusive Collection

12:00 – 12:45 PANEL: THE NEW MAP – THE FUTURE OF DEPLOYMENT

How Might Cruise Deployment and Itineraries Change Over the next 10 Years? A sustained level of cruise calls is essential for many ports, particularly those that have invested in onshore power supply and other technical and environmental developments. However, the world is continuing to undergo a period of change, uncertainty, and instability. In this panel of global cruise line players, we examine how both controllable and uncontrollable factors might influence deployment and itinerary planning over the next 10 years. Topics will include but not be limited to the order book and ship size, geopolitics, private islands, growth in Asia and much more.

Moderator: David Selby, Managing Partner TRAVELYIELDS
Justin Poulsen, Head of Itinerary Planning, Shore Experiences & Ground Handling EXPLORA JOURNEYS
Davide Truscello, Director of Itinerary, Pricing & Revenue Planning COSTA CRUISES
Ugo Savino, Senior Director, Deployment & Itinerary Planning CARNIVAL CRUISE LINE
Neil Duncan, Head of Planning and Revenue Management MARELLA CRUISES

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12:45 – 13:15 THE SIGNATURE ONE-TO-ONE. A CONVERSATION WITH SAMANTHA STIMPSON

A candid conversation with Samantha Stimpson, CEO of Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, exploring her leadership journey and vision.

Samantha Stimpson, CEO FRED. OLSEN CRUISE LINES
Virginia López Valiente, CEO CRUISES NEWS MEDIA GROUP

13:15 – 13:30 OCEAN HEALTH IN ACTION

A short positive case study - the MSC Foundation seagrass and sand protection. Proof, not promises.

Daniela Picco, Executive Director MSC FOUNDATION

13.30 – 13:45 MASTER ICS – THE SIGNATURE QUIZ – THE SEAL OF ICS

Figen Ayan, CONFERENCE DIRECTOR

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Bilbao PORT

13.45 – 15:00 NETWORKING LUNCH FOR ALL THE DELEGATES

15:00 – 15:30 PRIVATE DESTINATIONS, HONESTLY: THE FULL SPECTRUM

Private destinations are one of cruising's biggest investment stories. What they really are, how the model works, and what earns any destination its place on an itinerary. An honest conversation between the shore side and the ship side of the table.

Ugo Savino, Senior Director, Deployment & Itinerary Planning CARNIVAL CRUISE LINE
Carlos Torres de Navarra, Principal AZUL DESTINATIONS

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15:30 – 15:50 DESTINATION IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Twenty minutes inside one of travel's great growth stories: where Qatar is heading next, and what guests, cruise lines and partners can expect.

Speaker line: **Omar Al Jaber**, Chief of Operations Affairs QATAR TOURISM, in conversation with **Virginia López Valiente**.

15:50 – 16:35 PANEL: CHANGING THE MODEL – A NEW CHAPTER FOR DESTINATIONS

For fifty years the port of call has kept the same shape. Alongside at dawn, away by dusk, the city met at the hottest and most crowded hour of its day. The guest has changed, the climate has changed, and the tolerance of the cities themselves has changed. The call has not. This panel takes the whole shape of the stay rather than the excursion catalogue. Evening arrivals and later departures, overnights and the hours ashore they unlock, pre and post cruise nights that turn a homeport into a destination in its own right, visits that begin when the light softens.

Moderator: Barbara Buczek, Cruise, Ports & Destinations Executive
Leyla Öner Güncavdı, Co-President & CEO TURA TURIZM
Juan Trescastro, Vice President, Itinerary Planning, Destinations and Government Relations VIRGIN VOYAGES
Sandra Neffgen, Director Shore Excursions AIDA CRUISES
Andrea Ferla, Manager, Global S.A.L.T. Destination Experiences & Special Projects SILVERSEA
Craig Everett, CEO and Co-Founder HOLIBOB

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TURA

16:35 – 16:45 PRESENTATION: THE ORDERBOOK & THE NEW SHAPE OF THE FLEET

Every ship on order, in one ten minute read. What is being built, at what size, and what it means for ports and destinations. The numbers that show where the fleet goes next.

Figen Ayan, Founder and CEO AYAN CONSULTING – CONFERENCE DIRECTOR

16:45 – 17:30 PANEL: THE UNCLAIMED VOYAGE – WHO WINS THE ULTRA-LUXURY GUEST?

The ultra luxury traveller has never had more choice, and a cruise is only one of the options on the table. Private yachts, villas and great ships all compete for the same journey. Who really wins this guest, and why? A look inside the most desired segment in travel.

Moderator: Figen Ayan, Founder and CEO AYAN CONSULTING – CONFERENCE DIRECTOR
Spyros Almpertis, Vice President of Port & Shorex Operations, Ground Operation THE RITZ-CARLTON YACHT COLLECTION
Anant Sharma, CEO MATTER OF FORM
Alessandra Cabella, Senior Business Development Manager Europe & Middle East OCEANIA-REGENT SEVEN SEAS CRUISES
Andreas Nüssel, Managing Director UK and EMEA SILVERSEA
Carmen Morosan, Senior Manager, Destination Services AMAN AT SEA

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Port of Vigo
Port Authority of Vigo

17.30 CLOSING OF THE FIRST DAY

20.00 NETWORKING PARTY: LIVE MUSIC, DINNER AND DRINKS

Exclusive event for speakers, sponsors and press, by invitation

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09:00 – 09:15 FOLLOW THE MONEY – THE NEW SHAPE OF CRUISE REVENUE

Twenty years ago a cruise line earned from the ticket, the ship and the shore. It still does. What has changed is the size of the business and the value found inside each of the three. A short, clear read on where cruise revenue comes from today, and what each call brings to the destinations that welcome it.

Davide Truscello, Director of Itinerary, Pricing & Revenue Planning COSTA CRUISES

09:15 – 09:30 PRESENTATION: THE POWER OF ONE – RETHINKING THE SOLO TRAVELLER

Travelling alone is no longer the exception: it is one of the strongest currents in travel, from studio cabins to restaurants rethinking the table for one, and it now spans work, discovery and even matchmaking voyages that sell out in minutes. A short read on who the solo traveller is, why they choose to come alone, and what ships, ports and destinations must offer them, followed by the microphone going to the floor.

Beth Freedman, EVP, Global Integrated Marketing MMGY GLOBAL

09:30 – 09:45 PRESENTATION: THE CALL OF THE UNKNOWN – INSIDE EXPEDITION CRUISING

Expedition cruising is built on access, curiosity and discovery rather than scale. Smaller ships, remote places and a different relationship with the destinations visited. What defines this fast growing corner of cruising and who is choosing it, told from inside one of the polar pioneers.

John McKeon, Founder & CEO POLAR LATITUDES EXPEDITIONS

09:45 – 10:00 PRESENTATION: WORLD CRUISE – THE MOTHER OF ALL ITINERARIES

Months at sea. Dozens of destinations. One of the most complex products in cruising. One extraordinary customer. Who chooses to make a ship their home for an entire season? Who chooses to spend months at sea, and what defines this unique customer? How do you sell and price a voyage of this length? And what are the operational challenges of planning and delivering an itinerary that can span the globe?

Alessandra Cabella, Senior Business Development Manager Europe & Middle East OCEANIA-REGENT SEVEN SEAS CRUISES

10:00 – 10:45 AGILE BY NATURE. HOW THE CRUISE INDUSTRY RESPONDS TO A CHANGING WORLD

The cruise industry operates across borders, destinations and jurisdictions, and is constantly exposed to a changing world. Geopolitical shifts, regional instability, cancelled calls, new regulations and unexpected situations that can all require rapid decisions and close coordination.
This session looks at how the industry responds when circumstances change and how do they maintain confidence among guests, crews and communities while adapting to new circumstances.

Moderator: Mark Robinson, Managing Director BC CRUISE SERVICES (Mobico & Alsa Group)
Leonardo Massa, Vice President Southern Europe Cruise Division MSC GROUP
Raquel Lopez, Director Port Operations INTERCRUISES SHORESIDE & PORT SERVICES
Grant Holmes, Global VP Cruise & Superyacht Sector INCHCAPE SHIPPING SERVICES
Jeļena Burdastova, Cruise Business Support Specialist PORT OF RIGA

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10:45 – 11:00 PRESENTATION: THE SUEZ CANAL – WHAT IF IT DID NOT EXIST?

What would cruising look like if the Suez Canal did not exist? The Suez Canal Authority brings the answer, with real routes and real numbers. A perspective on global cruising heard nowhere else.

Dr. Anas Rakha, Senior Maritime Economist | Cruise Tourism Strategist SUEZ CANAL AUTHORITY

11:00 – 11:15 PRESENTATION: THE INTELLIGENT INDUSTRY – AI IN OPERATION

Beyond the promises, where is AI already working in cruise? Real applications, live cases and measurable results, from guest service to operations. No theory, only what is already changing how the industry works.

Craig Everett, CEO and Co-Founder HOLIBOB

11:15 – 12:00 PANEL: MARKETING & SALES – THE GUEST WHO COMES BACK

Most of the world has never taken a cruise, and that is the industry's biggest opportunity. Where does the next guest come from: new source markets, younger travellers, or the loyal guest who returns? Commercial leaders answer with their own numbers. The closing panel of ICS 2026.

Moderator: Gemma Greenwood, Director CONTENT INC.
Yas McKechnie, Director of Sales UK, Ireland and EMEA PRINCESS CRUISES
Helen Beck, Managing Director - Global Commercial WINDSTAR CRUISES
Kevin Bubolz, Vice President & Managing Director Continental Europe, Middle East & Africa NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE
Janet Parton, Vice President of Marketing, PR and Customer Experience CELESTYAL

12:00 – 12:15 CLOSING REMARKS

Figen Ayan, Founder and CEO AYAN CONSULTING - CONFERENCE DIRECTOR
Virginia López Valiente, CEO CRUISES NEWS MEDIA GROUP

12.30 FAREWELL NETWORKING BRUNCH FOR ALL THE DELEGATES

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