



INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
Transformative Ocean Science

**Transformative Ocean Science:
Reflections and Recommendations**

27 March 2026
Venice, Italy



INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
Transformative Ocean Science

Formal Invitation to ***Institutional Plenary Session, 27 March 2026, Day IV of the First Symposium on Transformative Ocean Science***

Dear Colleague,

It is my great pleasure to invite you to the **Institutional Plenary Session of the International Symposium on Transformative Ocean Sciences**, to be held in Venice on **27 March 2026**, hosted by the National Research Council of Italy (CNR) through its Institute of Marine Sciences (CNR-ISMAR).

The Symposium brings together leading scientists, academic leaders, and institutional representatives to reflect on how ocean science can most effectively contribute to Europe's strategic priorities, including the **European Ocean Pact**, the emerging **Ocean Research and Innovation Strategy**, and the broader framework of EU missions and policies.

While the first three days of the Symposium will focus on scientific reflection and interdisciplinary Working Group activities, **March 27** will be dedicated to a high-level plenary session featuring keynote contributions and roundtable discussions with senior institutional representatives from major European and international institutions. The roundtables will include active contributions from senior representatives of the European Commission, including **Mr James Morrison**, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, and **Ms Delilah Al Khudhairy**, Director for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE).

The plenary session will offer a space for strategic dialogue on the role of ocean science in shaping future research and innovation priorities and supporting the transition from policy vision to implementation. In this particular context, your participation would be most valued.

Recognising the central role of universities and higher-education institutions in advancing ocean knowledge and training future generations of scientists, we would be grateful if you would consider **circulating information about the Symposium within your organisation and/or academic community**, among relevant departments, research groups, and early- and mid-career researchers.

Should you be unable to attend personally, you are very welcome to designate a **senior academic or institutional representative** from your university to participate on your behalf. In this case, we would kindly ask that the designated representative complete the registration using the link provided below.

Attached to this letter you will find a **condensed concept note**, outlining the objectives and scope of the Symposium, together with an **updated programme of the plenary session on Day IV**.

We would be grateful if you could confirm your participation **by registering via the following link** :
[DAY 4 - Registration Form International Symposium Transformative Ocean Science](#)

I sincerely hope you will be able to accept this invitation and contribute to this important moment of collective reflection on the future of ocean science in Europe and beyond.

Yours sincerely,

Mario Sprovieri
Director
CNR - ISMAR



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March 27, 2026

 Venue: La Sala degli Squadratori dell'Arsenale di Venezia

Transformative Ocean Science: Reflections and Recommendations

Preliminary Programme

8:30 *Registration*

9:30 **Welcome and Opening remarks**

Mario Sprovieri, Director of the Institute of Marine Sciences of the National Research Council of Italy (CNR-ISMAR), Italy

9:35 **Institutional Greetings**

Rear Admiral Domenico Guglielmi, Italian Navy, Institute for Maritime Military Studies (Venice), Commander, Italy

Prof. Andrea Lenzi, President of the National Research Council of Italy (CNR), Italy

Gianluigi Consoli, Director General for Internationalisation and Communication, Ministry of University and Research (MUR), Italy

10:00 **Chromosomes, Nerves, Cell Division: Fundamental Discoveries In Biology At Marine Stations. What Next?**

Tim Hunt (Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2001) – followed by Q&A

10:45 **Contribution of the Mission Ocean&Waters to the Ocean R&I Strategy**

Pascal Lamy (Chair of the Board for the European Union's Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030)

11:00 **From the European Mission Starfish to the European Ocean Act**

Geneviève Pons (President and DG of Europe Jacques Delors, Brussels)

11:10 *Break*

11:30 **Highlights and Key Takeaways from the Symposium**

12:15 Questions & discussion (Moderated Discussion with audience interaction via Slido)

13:00 *Light lunch*

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

14:00 **Roundtable 1 - Stakeholders perspectives: Transformative Ocean Science**

Contributions to the Ocean R&I Strategy:

- **Jean-François Doussin** – Deputy Director, Institut National des Sciences de l'Univers (CNRS-INSU), France
- **Anna Rindorf** – Director, National Institute of Aquatic Resources (AQUA-DTU), Denmark
- **Aris Karageorgis** - Director and President, Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR), Greece
- **Bjørn Egil Asbjørnslett** – Director, NTNU Ocean and Coasts, NTNU, Norway
- **Adrian Stanica** – Director, GeoEcoMar, Romania
- **Baris Salihoglu** – Director, Middle East Technical University, Turkey



- **Emma Huertas** – Deputy Director, Institute of Marine Science of Andalusia (ICMAN) Spanish Research Council, Spain
- **Rosa Fugueroa** – Director, Spanish Institute of Oceanography (IEO), Spain

15:00 Questions & discussion

15:15 Roundtable 2 - Stakeholders perspectives: Transformative Ocean Science

Contributions to the Ocean R&I Strategy:

- **Sheila Heymans** – Executive Director of the European Marine Board
- **Adam Soule** – Director, Ocean Exploration Cooperative Institute, NOAA, USA
- **Maria Luz Paramio Martin** – President, EurOcean
- **Simonetta Fraschetti** - Secretary General, EuroMarine Association
- **Peter Haugan** – Chair, JPI Oceans, EU
- **Alan Deidun** – SEA-EU Rector's Delegate at UM and Malta's Ocean Ambassador

15:45 Questions & discussion

16:00 Break

16:30 Roundtable 3 - From the Ocean Pact to the Ocean R&I Strategy and the Ocean Act

- **James Morrison** – Director, Directorate General for Research and Innovation, European Commission
- **Delilah Al Khudhairy** – Director, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), European Commission
- **Katja Matthes** – Director, GEOMAR, Germany
- **John Siddorn** – CEO, National Oceanography Centre, UK
- **François Houllier** – CEO, IFREMER, France
- **Francesco Petracchini** – Director, Department of Earth System Sciences and Environmental Technologies (CNR), Italy

17:15 Questions & discussion

17:30 Conclusion and Closing Remarks



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Transformative Ocean Science - The Ocean Pact in Action

connecting knowledge, ethics, and innovation for a resilient ocean future

Purpose & Vision

The overarching goal of the *Transformative Ocean Science* Symposia is to shape the future directions of ocean sciences by unlocking the ocean's potential to deliver essential solutions to societal challenges.

The Venice Symposium will bring together leading voices in science, policy, and society to co-design actionable ideas for a more resilient, responsible, and innovative ocean future. Envisioned as a biennial international series, it seeks to create a lasting space for collaboration and foresight, where bold thinking meets shared responsibility.

Theme 2026 – The Ocean Pact

The first edition focuses on the **Ocean Pact**, the European Union's new strategic vision for the ocean. It will explore how science, ethics, and innovation can work together to turn this vision into reality, transforming ocean knowledge into concrete pathways for planetary sustainability.

The Symposium will encourage critical reflection on questions such as:

- Can the Ocean Pact truly transform the way societies engage with the ocean?
- How can science reconcile economic imperatives with ethical and environmental responsibility?
- Which research frontiers and communities are best placed to ensure its implementation?

By addressing these questions from scientific, social, and policy perspectives, the Venice Symposium will position the Ocean Pact as both a challenge and an opportunity to rethink the role of marine science in shaping the future.

Format – Four Days of Dialogue and Co-Creation

Over four days, participants will move from global framing to practical pathways, exploring themes that span ethics, transdisciplinarity, observation, deep-sea exploration, biodiversity, and policy innovation.

The Symposium will host around one hundred invited participants (scientists, policymakers, innovators, and early-career researchers) selected to ensure diversity across disciplines, generations, and regions. Plenary keynotes, interactive discussions, and facilitated working sessions will provide the structure for collective reflection and action.

Breakout Working Groups

At the heart of the Symposium, **five interdisciplinary Breakout Working Groups** will run throughout the event to identify grand challenges, transformative methods, and concrete priorities for action. Each group, coled by international experts, will guide participants through dynamic sessions that move from individual ideas to shared recommendations.

The process is designed to be creative and inclusive: participants will collectively define *what* the key challenges are, *how* they can be addressed through innovative tools and ethical frameworks, and *where* action and collaboration should focus in the coming decade. Outputs from these discussions will feed directly into the White Paper on Transformative Ocean Science for the Ocean Pact.



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Expected Outcomes

The 2026 Symposium will deliver three tangible results:

- **White Paper on Transformative Ocean Science for the Ocean Pact**, capturing the Symposium's insights and proposals for the future of marine research and governance.
- **Policy Brief**, summarizing key recommendations for the European Commission, the European Parliament, and international partners.
- **Strategic Roadmap**, identifying priority areas for collaborative research and innovation to guide FP10 and future ocean initiatives.

Strategic Relevance

In a moment when marine science risks being underrepresented within Europe's next Framework Programme, the Venice Symposium serves as both a scientific and strategic platform to demonstrate how ocean research drives innovation, resilience, and human wellbeing.

By connecting knowledge, ethics, and technology, the *Transformative Ocean Science* Symposia aim to redefine the societal role of marine research and strengthen Europe's leadership in shaping a sustainable ocean future.

Scientific Committee

Paula Bontempi, University of Rhode Island, USA

Chris Bowler, CNRS, France

Vittorio Brando, CNR-ISMAR, Italy

Fabrizio D'Ortenzio, CNRS/Sorbonne University, France

Jean-Marc Daniel, IFREMER, France

Siri Granum Carson, NTNU, Norway

Sieglinde Gruber, Active Senior, European Commission DG Research and Innovation

Patrizio Mariani, DTU, Denmark

Alberto Naveira Garabato, University of Southampton, UK

Evangelos Papathanasiou, Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Greece

Francesco Petracchini, CNR, Italy

Aristomenis Karageorgis, HCMR, Greece

Gian Marco Luna, CNR-IRBIM, Italy

Maurizio Ribera, University Federico II, Naples, Italy

Paola Malanotte Rizzoli, MIT, USA

Patrick Roose, Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Brussels, Belgium

Javier Ruiz, Instituto Español de Oceanografía (IEO-CSIC), Spain

Baris Salihoglu, Institute of Marine Sciences, Middle East Technical University, Turkey

Mario Sprovieri, CNR-ISMAR, Italy

Adrian Stanica, National Institute of Geology and Marine Geoecology, GeoEcoMar, Romania

Joaquin Tintorè, Imedea (CSIC-UIB), Spain