



CYPRUS PRESIDENCY  
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EU

**Riding the Wave:  
Advancing the EU Ocean Pact  
through Science, Innovation  
and Cooperation**

**11 and 12 May 2026**

**Ammochostos (Ayia Napa),  
Cyprus**



Formal Invitation to

**Riding the Wave:**

**Advancing the EU Ocean Pact through Science, Innovation and Cooperation**

Dear Colleague(s),

The **Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union** is pleased to invite you and your delegation to participate in the Conference on “Riding the Wave: Advancing the EU Ocean Pact through Science, Innovation and Cooperation” that will take place in Ammochostos, Cyprus on 11 and 12 May 2026.

The conference will bring together representatives from EU institutions, Member States, research organisations, industry, and innovation platforms to explore how ocean science and maritime innovation can more effectively inform European policy, competitiveness, and sustainability.

The first day will focus on translating scientific research into actionable policy, under the theme “**Riding the Wave of the EU Ocean Pact implementation**”. Sessions will explore how ocean observation, marine technologies, and governance tools can support resilient and sustainable policy, in particular the implementation of the EU Ocean Pact. A networking exhibition will showcase projects and innovations from EU research centers and Horizon Europe initiatives as well as umbrella organisations active in the marine and maritime sector. The day will conclude with a high-level closing ceremony, followed by a Gala Dinner “Blue Horizons”. The second day is fully dedicated to the “**Riding the wave from Ocean R&D to Market: the Blue Investment Challenge**” and participants will engage in keynote presentations and discussions on investment opportunities for ocean technologies, technology showcases and demonstrations. The day will provide opportunities to connect innovators with end-users and investors, promoting commercialisation and scaling of maritime solutions.

We expect delegations to **arrive in Cyprus on 10 May 2026**. In anticipation of your arrival, we warmly invite you to the ‘**Speakers Dinner**’ on 10 May 2026, featuring a photo exhibition “From Sky to Seafloor: Discover the Cyprus Marine environment” that will take place at the Adams Beach Hotel in the Famagusta District.

Please also find attached the preliminary agenda of the meeting. The final agenda will be circulated to all delegates prior to the conference, in due time.

We look forward to welcoming you to **Ammochostos, Cyprus** in May for an inspiring conference that will strengthen the bridge between ocean science, policy, and innovation in Europe.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Zacharias Siokouros  
CEO of the Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute (CMMI)



# Riding the Wave: Advancing the EU Ocean Pact through Science, Innovation and Cooperation

## Preliminary Programme

**10 May 2026**

**Venue: Adams Beach Hotel**

18:00 **Welcome Dinner for Speakers** at the Glasshouse Lounge Restaurant, Adams Beach Hotel

**11 May 2026 – Day 1: Riding the Wave of the EU Ocean Pact implementation**

**Venue: Adams Beach Hotel**

08:15 **Registration and Networking Coffee**

**Opening of exhibition area (throughout the day)**

**Photo exhibition ‘From Sky to Seafloor: Discover Cyprus Marine environments’** with contributions from the Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute and Eratosthenes Centre of Excellence (throughout the day).

09:15 **Institutional welcome addresses**

**Dr. Nicodemos Damianou**, Deputy Minister of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy (DMRID)

**Dr. Theodoulos Mesimeris**, Acting Permanent Secretary of the Shipping Deputy Ministry

**Mr. Zacharias Siokouros**, CEO of the Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute (CMMI)

**Prof. Diofantos G. Hadjimitsis**, Managing Director of the Eratosthenes Centre of Excellence

**Opening speech**

**H.E. EU Commissioner Dr. Costas Kadis**

10:15 **Keynote Session: “From Ocean Knowledge to Policy Impact: Implementing the EU Ocean Pact through Science, Data and Innovation”**

The European Ocean Pact calls for stronger integration of science, data, and innovation into policymaking to safeguard ocean health while strengthening Europe’s blue economy. This keynote session will explore how Europe’s ocean knowledge system—from large-scale observation infrastructures to scientific advisory bodies—can effectively support the implementation of the Pact and the upcoming Ocean R&I Strategy. Speakers will discuss



the role of ocean observation, digital tools and scientific cooperation in informing governance, improving policy coherence, and supporting evidence-based decision-making. The discussion will also highlight how initiatives such as EMODnet, Mercator Ocean and European research networks contribute to transforming marine knowledge into operational services, strategic foresight and policy guidance at European and global levels.

**Ms. Wiebke Pankauke**, Head of Unit “Ocean, Seas and Waters”, Directorate General for Research and Innovation, European Commission

**Dr. Vicente Fernandez Lopez**, Policy Officer at the Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), European Commission

**Dr. Karina von Schuckmann**, Senior Advisor, Ocean Science for Policy, at Mercator Ocean International

**Prof. Sheila Heymans**, Executive Director of the European Marine Board

**Prof. Kate Larkin**, Head of the European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet) Secretariat

**Dr. Daniel Hayes**, Marine Sciences Research Director, Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute (CMMI)

**Session moderator: Ms. Tatiana Der Avedissian**, Head of Business development, World Ocean Initiative, The Economist Group

11:15 Coffee Break and Group Picture

11:45 **Plenary 1 – Advancing Ocean Governance through Science and Innovation: Strengthening Ocean Governance for the EU Ocean Pact**

Achieving effective ocean governance under the EU Ocean Pact requires stronger integration between scientific knowledge, research infrastructures, societal perspectives and policy implementation. This session will explore how marine science, innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration can support more coherent decision-making across Europe’s seas, including through strengthened science-to-governance mechanisms and improved access to marine data, services and biological resources. Particular attention will be given to the role of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) as a strategic tool to balance environmental protection, economic activities and long-term resilience in increasingly crowded maritime spaces. Speakers will also highlight how European marine research infrastructures and long-term observation systems contribute to evidence-based policymaking, ecosystem-based management and policy implementation, while social sciences and stakeholder engagement can strengthen governance frameworks by incorporating societal values, improving policy legitimacy and supporting more inclusive and adaptive ocean management across European sea basins.



**Prof. Siri Granum Carson**, Professor at Norwegian University of Science and Technology-NTNU Oceans

**Prof. David Menier**, President of Université Bretagne Sud (UBS)

**Dr. Nicolas Pade**, Executive Director of the European Marine Biological Resource Centre (EMBRC-ERIC)

**Dr. Christodoulos Mettas**, Department Coordinator of the Resilient Society of the ERATOSTHENES Centre of Excellence, Project Manager of the Marine Spatial Planning sector of the Cyprus University of Technology & Eratosthenes CoE

**Session moderator: Dr. Renuka Badhe**, Secretary General of EuroGOOS

13:00 Networking Lunch.  
Exhibition area open.

**14:30 Plenary 2 – Restoring Ocean Health in Europe: From Marine Science to Policy, Innovation and Societal Action**

Restoring marine ecosystems and safeguarding biodiversity are central ambitions of the EU Ocean Pact and the EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters”. This session will explore how scientific knowledge, research infrastructures and innovative solutions can better support effective restoration policies and regulatory frameworks. Speakers will discuss emerging practices for ecosystem restoration, approaches to reducing marine pollution, sustainable aquaculture approaches and the role of biodiversity-positive strategies such as nature-based solutions. The discussion will also highlight how collaboration between research institutions, technology providers and policymakers can accelerate implementation, while strengthening public engagement and ocean stewardship through improved ocean literacy and societal awareness.

**Prof. Richard Sempéré**, Director of Ocean Sciences Institute, Aix-Marseille University, France

**Dr. Christos Arvanitides**, CEO of LifeWatch ERIC, Spain

**Prof. Lina Mtwana Nordlund**, Associate Professor at Uppsala University, Sweden

**Dr. Pantelis Katharios**, Founder, Aquatic Biologicals and Researcher at Hellenic Centre for Marine Research, Greece

**Session moderator: Mr. José Luiz Moutinho**, Consortia and Network Development Advisor, KAUST National Transformation Institute (NTI), Saudi Arabia



16:00 **Parallel Workshops**

**Workshop A: Blue Carbon and Climate Neutrality: Nature-Based Solutions and Ocean Accounting for Europe's Climate Goals**

The EU Ocean Pact recognises the ocean as a key ally in achieving climate neutrality, notably through the protection and restoration of blue carbon ecosystems. This workshop will explore how coastal and marine nature-based solutions—such as seagrasses, saltmarshes and other carbon-sequestering habitats—can contribute to climate mitigation while strengthening ecosystem resilience. Experts will discuss emerging approaches to blue carbon accounting, the role of science in supporting credible carbon markets, and the policy frameworks needed to integrate ocean-based climate solutions into European and regional strategies. Particular attention will be given to Mediterranean dynamics and coastal pressures, highlighting how research and monitoring can inform practical pathways for scaling blue carbon initiatives across European sea basins.

**Dr. Peter Haugan**, Chair of JPI Oceans

**Prof. Dr. Martin Zimmer**, Co-Leader of Research Program Area "Ecosystem Co-Design", Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research, ZMT Bremen

**Dr. Florin Timofte**, Scientific Director of National Institute for Marine Research and Development "Grigore Antipa"

**Ms. Fernanda Ferreira**, Master's student in Law and Economics of the Sea at NOVA School of Law, Early Career Ocean Professional (ECOP) representative

**Session moderator: Mr. José Luiz Moutinho**, Consortia and Network Development Advisor, KAUST National Transformation Institute (NTI), Saudi Arabia

**Workshop B: Decarbonising Maritime Transport in Europe: Innovation, Regulation and Market Incentives for a Net-Zero Shipping Sector**

Decarbonising maritime transport is a central pillar of Europe's climate strategy and a key objective of the EU Ocean Pact. This workshop will examine how innovation, regulation and market incentives can accelerate the transition towards low- and zero-emission shipping. Bringing together industry leaders, policymakers, technology providers and research organisations, the session will explore emerging decarbonisation solutions, including carbon capture, digital optimisation and new propulsion pathways, while ensuring robust assessment of their real climate impact, environmental implications and long-term sustainability. Discussions will also address the evolving EU regulatory framework, the role of emissions pricing and incentive mechanisms, and the importance of safety and operational standards. Particular attention will be given to how collaboration between industry, technology developers and policymakers can support scalable solutions for a



competitive and climate-neutral European maritime sector.

**Mr. Prabhat Jha**, CEO of MSC Shipmanagement Ltd Cyprus

**Mr. Jaap Gebraad**, Secretary General of Waterborne

**Mr. Nikolaos Milionis**, Member of the European Court of Auditors

**Dr. Mathieu Poupon**, Postdoctoral Researcher at CNRS–LOCEAN (IPSL, Sorbonne Université), Early Career Ocean Professional (ECOP) representative

**Session moderator: Mr. Nicholas Rich**, Director of Fleet Management at Bernhard Schulte Shipmanagement Ltd

### **Workshop C: The Mediterranean at a Crossroads: Science, Heritage and Regional Cooperation for a Sustainable Sea Basin**

The Mediterranean Sea faces growing pressures from climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss and competing maritime uses, placing both ecosystems and the region's exceptionally rich cultural heritage at increasing risk. Safeguarding this shared legacy requires integrated sea-basin governance. In the context of the EU Ocean Pact and emerging Mediterranean initiatives, this workshop will explore how science, regional cooperation and policy coordination can address these interconnected challenges. Bringing together research institutions, regional initiatives and civil society, the discussion will examine pathways to strengthen science–policy interfaces, foster collaboration between northern and southern Mediterranean partners, and promote sustainable and culturally aware blue economy solutions across the basin.

**Dr. Antonella Autino**, Programme Manager Partnership for Research & Innovation in the Mediterranean area (PRIMA)

**Prof. Mario Sprovieri**, Director of Institute of Marine Sciences (ISMAR) National Research Council (CNR)

**Ms. Rym Benzina Bourguiba**, President of La Saison Bleue

**Dr. Anna Demetriou**, Senior Associate Scientist at CMMI

**Mr. Giuseppe Provenzano**, Project Manager for Research and Innovation at the Union for the Mediterranean

**Session moderator: Prof. Fraser Sturt**, Director of Southampton Marine & Maritime Institute (SMMI)

17:15 Refreshments Break



**17:30 High-Level Closing Ceremony – “Shaping Europe’s Ocean Future: From the EU Ocean Pact to the Road toward an EU Ocean Strategy 2030”**

In presence of Ambassadors and Delegations from EU Member States and countries accredited to Cyprus

This high-level closing session will reflect on the key messages emerging from the conference and their relevance for advancing Europe’s ocean agenda in the context of the EU Ocean Pact and the forthcoming EU Ocean R&I Strategy. The session will also mark the symbolic handover to the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, underlining the continuity of European leadership in ocean governance. This moment will reaffirm a shared commitment to strengthening science–policy cooperation, advancing sustainable blue economy pathways and ensuring coordinated action across European sea basins.

**Mr. Liam Lacey**, Director of Irish Maritime Development Office (IMDO), Marine Institute, Ireland

**Signing of a Statement of Intent between CMMI and the Marine Institute (Ireland)**

**18:00 Networking & Exhibition Experience: Mediterranean Encounters in the Exhibition Area**

This extended networking session in the exhibition area will offer participants a relaxed and engaging environment to continue discussions and build connections around showcased innovations and initiatives. Through curated interactions and light cultural touches inspired by Mediterranean heritage and hospitality, participants will be invited to explore synergies, exchange ideas and deepen collaborations. The activity aims to foster informal exchanges among participants while maintaining a vibrant link to the cultural dimension of coastal communities and their connection to the sea. It also provides an opportunity to strengthen personal and professional relationships in a welcoming, Mediterranean-inspired setting.

**20:00 Gala Dinner – “Blue Horizons” by invitation**

**Artistic interlude** by the Larnaca Music School “Mikis Theodorakis”, featuring traditional Cypriot songs.

**Keynote address: Prof. Philippos Patsalis**, President of the National Board for Research and Innovation of Cyprus and CEO of Optima Genetics

The “Blue Horizons” Gala Dinner offers an opportunity for reflection, inspiration and high-level networking at the intersection of science, innovation and policy. Bringing together leaders from EU institutions, research organisations, centres of excellence and industry, the evening will celebrate Europe’s commitment to advancing ocean knowledge and sustainable blue innovation. The keynote address will highlight the strategic role of



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 **VENUE: ADAMS BEACH HOTEL, AYIA NAPA**

research and technological excellence in shaping solutions for ocean sustainability and competitiveness. Through dialogue and artistic expression inspired by the ocean's vastness and fragility, the evening will reaffirm a shared responsibility to explore, understand and protect our seas for future generations while strengthening collaboration across Europe's ocean community. Artistic interlude themed on "The Ocean: an immensity to discover and protect"



## 12 May 2026 – Day 2 -Riding the wave from Ocean R&D to Market: the Blue Investment Challenge

### Venue: Ayia Napa Marina

- 08:15      **Morning Coffee & Exhibition**  
Blue Tech Showcase and Exhibition Area Opens (throughout the day)
- 08:45      **Welcome Address**  
**Mr. Demetris Skourides**, Chief Scientist for Research, Innovation and Technology of the Republic of Cyprus
- 09:00      **Keynote: Investing in the Ocean Economy of the Future: Mobilising Capital for Sustainable Blue Growth**  
Achieving a sustainable and competitive blue economy requires mobilising significant public and private investment to accelerate the development and deployment of innovative ocean solutions. This keynote session will explore the strategic role of finance in advancing Europe’s ocean agenda, highlighting how investment institutions, philanthropic initiatives and global partnerships can support the scaling of blue technologies and sustainable maritime industries. Keynote speakers will discuss emerging investment trends, the role of development finance institutions and catalytic capital, and the importance of aligning financial flows with ocean sustainability goals. The session will set the stage for the day’s discussions on the blue investment ecosystem, illustrating how targeted investments can unlock innovation, strengthen Europe’s competitiveness and support the transition towards a resilient and climate-neutral ocean economy.

**Mr. Ioannis Tsakiris**, Vice President of the European Investment Bank (EIB)

### **Fireside chat with Mr. Ioannis Tsakiris, interviewed by Mr. Spyros Kouvelis, member of the Board of the EU Mission ‘Restore our Oceans and Waters by 2030’**

This high-level exchange will explore the role of strategic investment in advancing Europe’s blue economy, with a focus on mobilising capital, de-risking innovation, and scaling ocean solutions. Drawing on the European Investment Bank’s perspective, the discussion will highlight priorities, opportunities and practical pathways for financing the transition from ocean R&D to market deployment.



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 VENUE: AYIA NAPA MARINA

09:30 **Panel 1: Strengthening Europe’s Blue Innovation Ecosystem: Partnerships, Finance and Mission-Driven Opportunities**

Europe has built a growing ecosystem to support the development and scaling of ocean innovation, bringing together public institutions, foundations, mission initiatives and industry platforms. This panel will explore how these actors can work together to accelerate the transition from research to impact, while strengthening Europe’s leadership in the sustainable blue economy. Speakers will discuss the role of initiatives such as the EU Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters”, philanthropic capital, innovation clusters and maritime economy networks in supporting blue innovation. The discussion will highlight current gaps and opportunities within the European investment ecosystem and examine how stronger partnerships can unlock funding, reduce risk for investors and help scale solutions that contribute to ocean restoration, climate action and sustainable economic growth.

**Mr. Frank Schweikert**, Founder and Director of German Ocean Foundation

**Mr. Spyros Kouvelis**, Member of the Board of the EU Mission ‘Restore our Oceans and Waters by 2030’

**Prof. Ruben Eiras**, Secretary General (CEO) of Fórum Oceano – Associação da Economia do Mar

**Prof. Yannis Ieropoulos**, Chair in Environmental Engineering, Head of Civil, Maritime and Environmental Engineering Department, University of Southampton

**Dr. Francesco Camonita**, European Policy & Project Officer at Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)

**Session moderator: Ms. Tatiana Der Avedissian**, Head of Business development, World Ocean Initiative, The Economist Group

10:45 Coffee Break

11:15 **Panel 2 – Financing the Blue Transition: Unlocking and Scaling Investment for Ocean Start-ups and Sustainable Maritime Innovation**

Unlocking investment for ocean innovation is essential to accelerate the transition toward a sustainable and competitive blue economy. This panel will examine how Europe’s financial ecosystem—from venture capital and impact funds to EU financial instruments—can better support the growth of ocean start-ups and scale promising technologies. Speakers will discuss the role of initiatives such as BlueInvest, the European Investment Bank and blended finance mechanisms in mobilising capital and reducing investment risk. The discussion will also explore regulatory frameworks and



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VENUE: AYIA NAPA MARINA

enabling policies that can facilitate the deployment of ocean technologies, while strengthening connections between investors, innovators and market opportunities. By bridging public and private finance, the session aims to identify practical pathways for driving investment into solutions that support climate neutrality, ocean sustainability and maritime innovation.

**Dr. Dilya Bakhtieva** – Economist in the Maritime Innovation, Marine Knowledge and Investment unit of DG for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission

**Mr. Nil Angli**, Space Solutions Maritime Lead, European Space Agency (ESA)

**Mr. Stavros Stavrou**, President of Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry

**Mr. Darko Manakovski**, Founder & CEO, MNK Global; Board Member, EU Mission “Ocean & Waters”; Executive Director, Funders Forum

**Session moderator: Ms. Christina Deligianni**, CEO and Co-founder Verimpack

12:30 **From Research to Market: Innovation Success Stories of European Ocean Technologies**

Europe’s research and innovation ecosystem is generating a growing portfolio of ocean technologies with strong potential to address environmental challenges and create new market opportunities. This session will showcase successful examples of “Made in EU” ocean innovations that have progressed from scientific research and technology development to real-world applications and commercial deployment. Speakers from leading research institutions, innovation centres and technology organisations will present concrete cases illustrating how advanced research infrastructures, space-based services, marine observation technologies and engineering solutions are being translated into scalable products and services. The discussion will highlight enabling factors such as cross-sector collaboration, innovation support mechanisms and partnerships with industry that help bridge the gap between research excellence and market impact in the blue economy.

Showcasing success stories of scaling and commercialization of scientific innovation  
Representative from teams from around Europe

**Prof. Paolo Favali**, R&D Senior Consultant at WSense

**Dr. Konstantina Bereta**, Director of Research Labs, Kpler

**Dr. João Rito**, Founding Partner at SEAentia

**Dr. Rana Abu Alhaja**, Managing Director at Cyprus Subsea Consulting and Services

**Mr. Zacharias Siokouros**, CEO of the Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute (CMMI)



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VENUE: AYIA NAPA MARINA

**Dr. Kyriacos Themistocleous**, External Affairs & Business Development Director, ERATOSTHENES Centre of Excellence – EXCELSIOR Project, and **Dr. Michalis Mavrovouniotis**, Coordinator of the Big Earth Data Analytics Department, ERATOSTHENES Centre of Excellence – EXCELSIOR Project

**Session moderator: Ms. Raluca Ioana Man**, Founder, RSEVEN | Strategic Advisor, Board Consultant & Startup Ecosystem Mentor

13:30 Networking Lunch

14:30 **Funders Forum: Ports, Port Seascapes and the Architecture of Capital**

The Funders Forum is platform for learning, orchestration and capital design, bringing together senior representatives from philanthropy, public institutions, finance, industry and innovation to explore how different forms of capital can be better aligned, sequenced and combined. This second 2026 edition builds on the work initiated at EU Ocean Days in Brussels and focuses on ports and port seascapes as strategic infrastructures at the intersection of maritime transport, energy systems, industrial development, coastal resilience and ocean ecosystems. Rather than approaching these domains separately, the Forum will examine how their interdependencies shape the conditions for investability and scale. Discussions will address how shared intelligence, demand creation, translational pathways and coordinated capital allocation can reduce fragmentation and enable more coherent development of maritime transition pathways. Particular attention will be given to the roles of different capital types—including public finance, private investment and philanthropy—and how they can contribute without collapsing into a single logic.

**Moderated by: Mr. Darko Manakovski**, Founder & CEO, MNK Global; Board Member, EU Mission “Ocean & Waters”; Executive Director, Funders Forum

15:45 **Verimpact next-gen sustainability intelligence platform for the Blue economy**

Verimpact will deliver a workshop showcasing its next-generation sustainability intelligence platform, with a dedicated focus on the blue economy. The session will demonstrate how AI-enabled tools support organizations in assessing ecosystem values, managing non-financial risks, and creating AI-enabled, automatic sustainability reporting aligned with different, leading frameworks. Participants will gain practical insights into how the platform translates scientific, environmental, and compliance data into actionable intelligence, thus supporting investment decisions, regulatory alignment, and sustainable growth across marine and coastal sectors.



16:15 Coffee Break

16:30 **Blue Tech Demonstrations: Showcasing Next-Generation Ocean Technologies in Action**

This interactive session will provide participants with a unique opportunity to experience cutting-edge ocean technologies through live demonstrations both onshore and at sea. Innovators and technology developers will showcase solutions designed to address key challenges in the blue economy, including clean maritime transport, marine observation, sustainable aquaculture and digital ocean services. Demonstrations will feature electric vessels, marine robotics, drones, smart sensors and analytical devices, illustrating how advanced technologies are supporting safer, more sustainable and efficient maritime activities. By bringing innovation directly into the operational environment, the session will highlight the practical applications and market potential of emerging ocean technologies while fostering dialogue between developers, investors, policymakers and end users.

**Closing Ceremony & Networking – “A Shared Way Forward for Europe’s Ocean Future”**

This brief closing moment will mark the conclusion of the conference, offering an opportunity to thank participants and acknowledge the collective engagement of the European ocean community over the two days. It will symbolically highlight the shared commitment to advancing ocean science, innovation and investment in support of a sustainable and competitive blue economy.

Following the closing, participants are invited to continue informal exchanges in a relaxed networking setting on the ‘Plaza’ of the Ayia Napa Marina. This final moment will provide an opportunity to connect, strengthen newly established contacts and explore potential collaborations in an open and welcoming atmosphere, bringing the conference to a close in the spirit of cooperation and shared ambition.



## Purpose and Vision

The Conference “Riding the Wave: Advancing the EU Ocean Pact through Science, Innovation and Cooperation” aims to enhance the translation of groundbreaking research on marine science and technology into actionable policy insights and solutions that meet market needs. In an era marked by urgent environmental challenges, this conference serves as a pivotal platform to connect scientific and technological excellence with strategic policymaking initiatives related to responsible efforts to boost the blue economy while respecting the marine environment, considering the implementation of the EU Ocean Pact, while connecting high-TRL ocean technology solutions with unmet market needs and driving solutions to finance the ‘blue transition’.

Bringing together quintuple helix representatives, the event will foster collaborative dialogues, exchange cutting-edge insights, and promote interdisciplinary partnerships. The conference underscores Cyprus’ and Europe’s commitment to sustainable ocean management and the critical role ocean science and innovation play in shaping informed decisions and policies for the benefit of resilient ecosystems, thriving economies, and coastal communities, while supporting efforts to drive a competitive, resilient and secure Blue economy.

This conference is designed to serve as a dynamic platform that fosters collaboration, accelerates knowledge exchange, and catalyzes tangible outcomes.

The two-day event is designed to ensure continuity from scientific insight to policy development and market impact, reflecting Europe’s strategic priorities in marine research, environmental stewardship, and innovation deployment.

## Overarching theme – Implementing the EU Ocean Pact

The conference is framed under the overarching theme “Riding the Wave: Advancing the EU Ocean Pact through Science, Innovation and Cooperation”, aligning directly with the implementation of the EU Ocean Pact, the upcoming EU’s Ocean R&I Strategy and related ocean governance and research strategies. The event will specifically aim to:

- Promote the integration of scientific evidence into policymaking processes to enhance environmental protection, resource management, and blue economy competitiveness.
- Facilitate dialogues and forge new strategic partnerships among researchers, policymakers, industry leaders, civil society, and environmental groups.
- Demonstrate how “Made in EU” blue innovation can be scaled into market-ready solutions.
- Enable powerful collaboration between funders, investors and solution providers for driving R&D towards the market where untapped business potential exists.
- Explore access to finance, blended finance mechanisms, regulatory pathways



## Format

The conference will take place over two days (11-12 May 2026), preceded by a welcome dinner for Speakers on 10 May 2026, and will be hosted at the Adams Beach Hotel and Ayia Napa Marina in Cyprus.

### Day 1 – Riding the Wave of the EU Ocean Pact implementation (11 May 2026)

Structured around plenary sessions, keynote addresses, panel discussions, and thematic interactive workshops, the first day will explore science-policy interfaces, ocean governance, marine restoration, biodiversity protection, pollution mitigation, climate neutrality, transport decarbonisation, and regional Mediterranean challenges, designed to yield practical recommendations and pathways to tangible impacts. An exhibition and photo display will complement the sessions.

### Day 2 - Riding the wave from Ocean R&D to Market: the Blue Investment Challenge (12 May 2026)

Dedicated to accelerating the deployment of European blue innovations, the programme will include blue investment-focused panels, success stories of EU ocean technologies, live technology demonstrations, pitching sessions, and matchmaking with investors. Demonstrations will be organised around challenge-driven clusters: marine pollution, climate action, maritime safety, and ocean observation. Demonstrations and exhibitions will be organised around challenge-driven thematic clusters addressing marine pollution, climate action, maritime safety, and ocean observation.

Both days will feature networking opportunities and official social events, including gala dinners hosted under the Cyprus EU Presidency.

## Expected Outcomes

The conference is expected to deliver:

- Clear and actionable recommendations for policymakers and market stakeholders
- Strengthened EU-wide strategic partnerships across science, policy, industry, and finance
- Identification of opportunities for technology transfer, innovation uptake, and investment
- Enhanced visibility of EU-funded ocean science and innovation contributions to sustainability
- Increased networking and collaboration among researchers, policymakers, investors, and innovators



## Strategic Relevance

The conference aligns strategically with key policy frameworks and priorities at multiple levels:

### National Priorities (Cyprus):

- Cyprus EU Presidency 2026 programme.
- Smart Specialization Strategy of Cyprus
- Priorities set by the Deputy Ministries for Research, Innovation, Digital Policy, Shipping and European Affairs.

### EU Policies and Strategies:

- EU Ocean Pact / Ocean R&I strategy
- European Green Deal (marine sustainability and climate neutrality).
- EU Mission: Restore Our Ocean and Waters by 2030.
- EU Blue Economy Strategy (sustainable maritime economy).
- Horizon Europe strategic priorities for ocean research, innovation, and environmental resilience.

### International Frameworks:

- UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14: "Life Below Water".
- United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030).
- International climate commitments under the Paris Agreement related to oceans.

This comprehensive alignment ensures relevance, strengthens international cooperation, and maximizes the impact of the conference outcomes across multiple governance levels.



CMMI was established by the CMMI/MaRITeC-X project as a "Centre of Excellence in Marine and Maritime Research, Innovation and Technology Development" and has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No. 857586; and matching funding from the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.



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2021  
2030  
United Nations Decade  
of Ocean Science  
for Sustainable Development

This event is endorsed by the Ocean Decade Actions as part of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.