



INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
Transformative Ocean Science

24-27 March 2026
Venice, Italy

Concept note

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**.

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.



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Transformative Ocean Science -The Ocean Pact in Action

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

Scientific Committee

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