



## Black Sea – Mediterranean Science Connections

International Symposium celebrating  
50 years of Middle East Technical University Institute of Marine Sciences  
Research



## BLACK SEA - MEDITERRANEAN SCIENCE CONNECTIONS INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF METU IMS RESEARCH

October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2025

In 2025, the METU Institute of Marine Sciences (IMS) proudly marks half a century of scientific excellence, innovation, and regional impact. Over the past five decades, the METU-IMS has been a cornerstone of marine science in Türkiye and a respected partner in international research efforts. Nationally, METU IMS has led the development of marine research capacity, informed environmental policy, and supported sustainable management of Türkiye's seas through advanced monitoring, modeling, and ecosystem-based approaches. Internationally, IMS has played a strategic role in regional and global initiatives, contributing to major EU and UN-supported projects, fostering cross-border scientific cooperation, science diplomacy and blue economy efforts in the Black Sea and Mediterranean.

To celebrate this milestone, METU IMS is convening an international symposium under the theme "Black Sea – Mediterranean Science Connections", bringing together leading researchers to reflect on the past, explore the present, and shape the future of marine science and sustainability in the Black Sea and Mediterranean regions.

This event will highlight the critical interlinkages between these two semi-enclosed seas, emphasising the shared environmental challenges, scientific priorities, and blue economy opportunities that connect them. As a regional knowledge hub, IMS has played a pivotal role in advancing cross-boundary marine research, fostering scientific diplomacy, and supporting evidence-based policymaking for sustainable ocean governance.

The symposium will address a broad spectrum of topics, ranging from ecosystem health and climate change impacts to digital ocean innovations, sustainable fisheries, and marine spatial planning. Beyond science, it will spotlight the enabling frameworks for a sustainable blue economy and the importance of international cooperation in building resilient marine and coastal systems.

Looking forward, this celebration is not only a tribute to the achievements of the past 50 years but also a platform to strengthen scientific collaborations, inspire new generations of marine professionals, and reaffirm METU IMS's commitment to integrated, transdisciplinary, and regionally relevant marine research for the decades to come.



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INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF METU IMS RESEARCH**

October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2025 (All times in GMT+3 / local time)

**Agenda**

**Master of Ceremonies (MoC): Mustafa Yücel**

**Registration**

- **09:30-11:00: Registration and Coffee with Posters**
- **11:00-11:30 Opening Speeches**
  - Ahmet Yozgatlıgil, METU President
  - Barış Salihoğlu, METU IMS Director
- **11:30 – 13:00 Key-note Speeches**
  - İlky Salihoğlu, METU IMS & University of Kyrenia
  - Bettina Fach, METU IMS
  - Vangelis Papathanassiou, METU IMS
  - Sigi Gruber, former Head of Unit, Health Seas and Oceans, European Commission
- **13:00-14:00 Networking Lunch and Poster Session**
- **14:00-15:30 Black Sea & Mediterranean Panel: Taking Stock of Past Decades' Progress**
  - Aris Karageorgis, Director, Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR), Greece
  - Adrian Stanica, Director, National Institute for Marine Geology and Geoecology (GeoEcoMar), Romania
  - Phoebe Koundouri, Director, Research Laboratory on Socio-Economic and Environmental Sustainability (ReSEES), Athens University of Economics and Business, Greece (Online)
  - Florin Timofte, General Manager, National Institute for Marine Research and Development (NIMRID), Romania
  - Kremena Stefanova, Head of the Department, Institute of Oceanology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IO-BAS), Bulgaria
  - Mario Sprovieri, Director, National Research Council Marine Science Institute (CNR ISMAR), Italy
  - Joaquín Tintoré, Director, Balearic Islands Coastal Observing and Forecasting System (SOCIB), Spain
- **15:30-16:30 International Collaboration Cases with METU IMS (09:30 USA Eastern Time)**
  - Paola M. Rizzoli, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (TBC)
  - Icarus Allen, Plymouth Marine Laboratory (PML)
  - James Murray, University of Washington (UW) (Online)
  - Mike St John, Technical University of Denmark (DTU/METU)
  - Ulrich Niermann, former METU visiting scientist
- **16:30-17:30 The way forward: Next 50 years?**

Closing Remarks with the participation of young IMS scientists
- **18:00-21:00 Closing and Networking Dinner**