

Programme of the symposium to launch the UNESCO Chair in Ocean and Sustainable Coastlines at La Rochelle University (France), from 28 to 30 April 2026

**April 28
Reception and opening**

5:30 p.m.: Welcome drink at the City Hall of La Rochelle

**April 29
Discovery and imagination of the ocean: the universe of the sensible
*Discover, imagine, anticipate, protect***

9:00 am: Opening by Gérard Blanchard

9:10 am: Introduction by UNESCO in conjunction with the France Commission of UNESCO

9:10 am: Introductory remarks by Agnès Michelot and Laurent Testut, heads of the UNESCO Chair in Sustainable Coastline

10 a.m.: Messages from partners

Round table 1

**10am-11am: *The ocean or the discovery of humanity:
An ocean of sensitivities***

Pilot: Jean-Sébastien Noël, Associate Professor in History, LIENSs

Objective: To analyze the way in which human societies have perceived, represented and explored the ocean through time, mobilizing the sensitive, cultural and scientific dimensions of the relationship to the ocean.

Speakers:

- Camille PARRAIN, geographer, specialist in Atlantic territories and offshore navigation
- Laurent VIDAL, historian, specialist in Atlantic history and the history of Brazil, director of the "Ocean Humanities" Ethnopolis
- Michel REDOLFI, composer and sound artist
- François FREY, Spirit of Velox
- Helga Synnevag, Psychologist, Volda University College

Participants:

- Louis Gaucher Primary School, Sainte-Marie de Ré

Round table 2

**11:20-12:30: Ocean Science: (R)Evolutions and Revelations:
An ocean of imagination**

Pilot: Cécile Vincent, biologist, CEBC

Objective: To present recent advances in ocean science and related technologies, showing how they are renewing scientific knowledge and opening up new fields of innovation and imagination.

Speakers:

- Françoise Gaill, IPOS, oceanographer
- Claire Hellio, Professor at the University of Brest Occidental,
- Yan Ropert-Coudert (CEBC) La Rochelle University
- Frederike Hanke, Rostock University
- Prof. Noisette, Chaire Unesco on Marine Sciences

12:30pm- 2pm: Lunch

Round table 3

**2pm-3:15pm: Humanity under pressure: coastal societies on alert.
A risky ocean?**

Pilot: Éric Chaumillon, geophysics, sciences of the universe (LIENSs)

Objective: To examine the climate risks affecting coastal areas and coastal societies, by comparing the scientific observation, prevention and adaptation capacities of territories.

Speakers:

- P. Walsh, Professor, Graduate School of Oceanography
Coastal & Ocean Analysis of Sediments and Transport Lab (COASTL), University of Rhode Island
- Dr. Oula AMROUNI, Senior researcher
Coordinator UNESCO IHP FRIEND-Water Mediterranean (MEDFRIEND), Laboratory of Marine Environment, University of Carthage, Tunisia
- Dr. Anna Hurova, Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (to be confirmed)

Participants: Collège Missy, Collège Beauregard, Collège Aliénor d'Aquitaine, Collège de la Tour de Montguyon

Round table 4

3:40-5:20 pm: Vulnerabilities and inequalities: what kind of humanity for tomorrow? An ocean of responsibilities

Piloting: Bleuenn Guilloux, legal sciences, (LIENSs)

Objective: To question social, territorial and generational inequalities in the face of the impacts of climate change in coastal areas and to analyse the associated legal, political and ethical responsibilities.

Speakers:

- Nathalie Long, Geographer, CNRS Research Director,
- Cecilia Paradiso, anthropologist, teacher, researcher La Rochelle University
- Tomislav Oroz, Professor Zadar University.
- Yamissa Ouattara, LIENSs, La Rochelle University

Participants: Marcel Pagnol College

5 p.m.: Screening of the film at the Aquarium of La Rochelle: "Women on the front line for the future of the ocean" (Women action for the ocean)

April 30

Ocean science at the service of humanity

Decide, repair, plan, imagine

Round table 5

9am-10:30am: Humanity in Action: An Ocean of Capabilities

Pilot: Emilio Bastidas Arteaga, engineering sciences (LASIE)

Objective: To highlight the capacity of companies to act in the face of coastal risks, through technical, legal and governance solutions resulting from research and public action.

Speakers:

- Xavier Bertin, CNRS research director co-leader of the FUTURISK project, Joint Research Center (EU)
- Stéphanie Hourdeau, Senior Lecturer, Insurance Law Specialist
- Cécile Glémaint, head of major risks for the city of La Rochelle;
- A PhD student, international master's student "No risk"

Participants: Valin High School in La Rochelle

Round table 6

11am-12:15pm: Future Humanity, Tomorrow's Ocean System: An Ocean of Possibilities

Pilot: Agnès Michelot, legal sciences (LIENSs)

Objective: To explore prospective approaches to anticipate the future relationship between humanity and the ocean, by mobilizing scientific knowledge, legal frameworks and collective imaginations.

Speakers:

- Laurent Testut, oceanographer at La Rochelle University,
- Julien Viaud, Lecturer in Management Sciences,
- Vivi Marie Lademo Storsletten, Ass. Prof. in Ecological Economy and Ethics, Nord University Business School (Bodo, Norway)

International partners:

- International Centre for Comparative Environmental Law (Prof. Michel Prieur)
- Quebec Institute of International Affairs (Dr. Robinson Tchapmegni)
- Pierre Failler, Professor of Economics, UNESCO Chair in Ocean Governance (UK) (to be confirmed)

Participants: Lycée Merleau Ponty, Lycée du littoral et de la mer de Bourcefranc

12:30 pm: Lunch

2pm-2.45pm : two parallel sessions

-PAMELI drone demonstration at the Espace Encan (public session)

-Round table of international students of La Rochelle University

3:30 p.m.: Statement by the UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Youth Oceans and Coastlines for decision-makers and UNESCO bodies (Merleau-Ponty and Valin high schools, Lycée du Littoral et de la mer, Aliénor d'Aquitaine, Beauregard, Missy, Marcel Pagnol, Tour de Montguyon, La Genette and Sainte-Marie-de-Ré primary schools)

4:30 p.m.: Conclusions Agnès Michelot, Laurent Testut, Gérard Blanchard, UNESCO representative

5 p.m.: Closing of the event