

PROGRAMME

BBNJ ROUNDTABLE SEMINAR IN RECOGNITION OF THE BBNJ AGREEMENT ENTERING INTO FORCE

Co-hosted by Athens PIL, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
and the WWMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute

 **Friday 16
January 2026**

09:00 - 18:00 EET

 **Athens,
Greece**

National and Kapodistrian
University of Athens



In honorable memory of
Dr. Kristina Maria Gjerde



**Government
of Ireland**
International
Development
Programme



INTRODUCTION

The Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) was adopted on 19 June 2023 by the Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction convened under the auspices of the United Nations. The BBNJ Agreement becomes the third implementing agreement to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

With more than 80 ratifications, the BBNJ Agreement enters into force on the 17 January 2026.

With this success, Athens Public International Law Center (Athens-PIL) of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and the WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute (WMU-GOI) will co-host a BBNJ Roundtable Seminar in Athens and online on 16 January 2026 to celebrate the signatures and ratifications of the BBNJ Agreement to date and recognize the role of

non-parties, adjacent states and non-state actors in the process.

The Seminar will gather key experts to engage in fruitful discussions on the elements of the Agreement as well reflect on the upcoming the first Conference of Parties and how states can prepare for it.

The Athens Public International Law Center (Athens PIL), founded in July 2015 and operating within the Faculty of Law of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, is an academic research institution dedicated to the study and promotion of international law, including in particular the law of the sea. Its mission focuses on advancing international law through teaching, research, and scholarly activities, fostering an international academic community, and contributing to the development of international law through seminars, conferences, training programmes, and cooperation with academic institutions and international organizations worldwide.

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION

ONSITE

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Central Building, 30 Panepistimiou, Athens

ONLINE

Participation via Zoom: *link here*

- Meeting ID: 830 0654 1092
- Passcode: 021755

LOGISTICS

RELEVANT LINKS

Athens Public International Law Center
<https://athenspil.law.uoa.gr>

BBNJ Clinic Programme Website here:
<https://bbnjclinic.wmu.se>

CONTACT INFORMATION

In case of any queries, please write to WMU at goievents@wmu.se (cc goisecretariat@wmu.se)

PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 16 JANUARY 2026 |

09:00 - 18:00 (EET) |

ONSITE IN ATHENS & ONLINE VIA ZOOM

09:00 | Registration

09:30 | Welcome

Moment of silence in honor of late Dr. Kristina Maria Gjerde (1957 - 2025)

SPEAKERS

| **Professor Photini Pazartzis**, Director, Athens Public International Law Center – Athens PIL, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens

| **Professor Ronán Long**, Director, WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute

| **Professor Maria Gavouneli**, Faculty of Law and Deputy Director, Athens Public International Law Center – Athens PIL, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

09:50 | Keynote Address

SPEAKER

| **Maria Damanaki**, Independent Advisor on Climate-Oceans, Former European Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, European Commission

10:15 | Panel 1: Creating the BBNJ Agreement: The current picture

CHAIR

| **Professor Petros Liacouras**, University of Piraeus

SPEAKERS

| **Dr. Anastasia Strati**, Expert Minister Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic

| **Professor Constantinos Yiallourides**, Associate Professor of International Law, Macquarie University; Senior Research Fellow in Law of the Sea, British Institute of International and Comparative Law

| **Professor Vasco Becker-Weinberg**, Assistant Professor, University of Lisbon, Portuguese Institute of the Law of the Sea – IPDM

| **Dr. Mustafa Başkara**, Chief Executive Officer, Ankara University National Center for the Sea and Maritime Law (DEHUKAM)

DISCUSSANT

| **Professor Ilias Plakokefalos**, Assistant Professor of International Law, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens

11:45 | Coffee break

12:00 | Panel 2: Construing the BBNJ Agreement: The Mediterranean context

CHAIR

| **Professor Sofia Galani**, Assistant Professor, Panteion University

SPEAKERS

| **Professor Irini Papanicopulu**, British Academy Global Professor, School of African and Oriental Studies, University of London

| **Sahan Abeysekera**, Environment policy & strategy, Technical Directorate, Lloyd's Register

| **Dr. Tatjana Hema**, MAP Coordinator, Mediterranean Action Plan, UN Environment Programme - UNEP

DISCUSSANT

| **Dr. Stavros-Evdokimos Pantazopoulos**, Athens PIL

13:30 | Lunch Break

14:15 | In Memoriam Remarks - Dr. Kristina M. Gjerde

SPEAKERS

● **Dr. Kristina Maria Gjerde - Mother of the High Seas' and Defender of the Deep Ocean**

| **Professor David Freestone**, Executive Secretary, Sargasso Sea Commission

14:30 | Panel 3: Implementing the BBNJ Agreement: Area Management Tools (ABMTs) and Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs)

CHAIR

● | **Professor George Theodoridis**, World Maritime University

SPEAKERS

| **Professor David Freestone**, Executive Secretary, Sargasso Sea Commission
and **Fae Sapsford**, Marine Research Fellow, Sargasso Sea Commission

| **Dr. Mariamalia Rodríguez Chaves**, Senior Postdoctoral fellow, WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute

| **Dr. Ángeles Jiménez García-Carriazo**, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Cadiz / The Nippon Foundation Lecturer on Global Ocean Governance, the IMO International Maritime Law Institute (2018–2023)

| **Dr. Sofia Kopela**, Nature Policy Officer, WWF Greece

DISCUSSANT

| **Dr. Vicky Tzatzaki**, Athens PIL

16:00 | Coffee break

16:15 | Panel 4: Implementing the BBNJ Agreement: Ocean technology and capacity building development and Small Island Developing States - SIDS

CHAIR

● | **Professor Mustafa Yücel**, Middle East Technical University – METU

SPEAKERS

| **Dr. Aspasia Pastra**, Assistant Professor, WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute

| **Professor Akis Papastavridis**, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law & Athens PIL, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens

| **Marianna Nathanail**, Head of Office for Greece and Cyprus, European Investment Bank

DISCUSSANT

| **Tatiana Der Avedissian**, Head of Business Development, World Ocean Initiative, The Economist Group

17:45 | The voyage ahead

SPEAKERS

● | **Dr. Kahlil Hassanali**, Senior Postdoctoral, WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute

| **Professor Ronán Long**, Director, WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute

| **Professor Maria Gavouneli**, Faculty of Law and Director Athens Public International Law Center – Athens PIL, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

18:00 | Drinks Reception

PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 16 JANUARY 2026 I

09:00 - 18:00 (EET) I

ONSITE IN ATHENS & ONLINE VIA ZOOM

LIST OF DISCUSSANTS

- **Vera Alexandropoulou**, The Thalassa Foundation
- **Ahmad Assasleh**, Royal Jordanian Navy
- **Ivan Werneck Sanchez Bassères**, Nippon Foundation Fellow, Athens PIL
- **Nikos Charalambidis**, Greenpeace Greece
- **Dr. Maria-Louiza Deftou**, Athens PIL
- **Dr. George Dikaios**, Assistant Professor elect, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens
- **Scheyra Djaziri**, Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne
- **Dr. Markos Karavias**, Assistant Professor elect, University of Piraeus
- **Kostas Kinas**, Athens PIL
- **Theodota Nantsou**, WWF Hellas
- **Professor Evi Nomikou**, National & Kapodistrian University of Athens
- **Professor Orestis Schinas**, Associate Professor, University of the Aegean
- **Professor Ioanna Pervou**, Assistant Professor, Democritus University of Thrace
- **Dr. Voula Polymenakou**, Hellenic Centre for Marine Research



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The World Maritime University was established in 1983 within the framework of the International Maritime Organization, a specialized agency of the United Nations.

