

Hellenic Republic



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PRESS RELEASE

**“Blue Innovation Day” Hosted by the Agricultural University of Athens
under the Joint International Interdisciplinary Master’s Programme in Marine Biotechnology**

The Agricultural University of Athens (AUA) successfully hosted Blue Innovation Day on Thursday, 9 July 2026, at the University’s Library Auditorium, bringing together leading scientists, innovators, entrepreneurs, industry representatives, policymakers and students to explore the latest developments in marine biotechnology, aquaculture, sustainability and the blue economy.

The event forms part of the **Graduation Week activities of the Joint International Interinstitutional Master's Programme in Marine Biotechnology, delivered by the European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (EU-CONEXUS)**, of which the **Agricultural University of Athens is a founding member**. The programme is **co-funded by the European Union as an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's programme**. It provides an outstanding platform for knowledge exchange and networking among the academic community, industry stakeholders, and public authorities, while showcasing innovative solutions that foster sustainable development in the marine and coastal sectors.

Among those in attendance was the **Deputy Mayor for Financial Planning of the City of Athens, Mr Georgios-Konstantinos Giannaros**.

The programme opened with welcome addresses by Professor Eleni Miliou, Vice-Rector for the European University, Internationalisation and Student Affairs of the Agricultural University of Athens. Professor Eleni Miliou emphasised the strategic importance of innovation, research excellence and international cooperation in strengthening Greece’s and Europe’s blue economy.

The event was moderated by Dr Emmanouil Malandrakis, Assistant Professor, who guided the discussion and introduced the speakers throughout the programme. A distinguished panel of speakers presented cutting-edge developments in marine science and biotechnology.

Mr Kostas Tzokas, R&D Manager at Avramar, discussed advances in selective breeding in Mediterranean marine aquaculture, highlighting the role of genetics in improving sustainability and productivity.

Dr Pantelis Katharios, Founder and CEO of Aquatic Biologicals and Research Director at the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR), presented innovative alternatives to antibiotics in aquaculture, focusing on phage therapy, autogenous vaccines and the pathway from research to commercialisation.

The audience also heard from Dr Costas Tsigenopoulos, Research Director at HCMR, who showcased how seascape genomics can reveal population structure, genetic diversity and genotype–environment relationships, providing valuable tools for ecosystem management and conservation.

Addressing sustainability from a business perspective, Ms Christina Zantioti, PhD Candidate at the Agricultural University of Athens, explored how Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles and business ethics practices can contribute to creating net-positive impacts for society and the environment.

Innovation in the circular bioeconomy was highlighted by Mr George Lignos, Founder and CEO of ITS ALIVE, who presented the concept of urban biorefineries and their potential contribution to sustainable resource utilisation.

The final keynote presentation was delivered by Dr Nicolas Pade, Executive Director of EMBRC-ERIC, who introduced participants to Europe’s research infrastructure for biological research and innovation, emphasising opportunities for collaboration and access to state-of-the-art facilities supporting marine biotechnology research.

The programme also included the ARI video contest, a poster session showcasing student and researcher projects, and a networking lunch that encouraged dialogue and future collaborations among participants.

Blue Innovation Day reaffirmed the commitment of the Agricultural University of Athens and the EU-CONEXUS Alliance to fostering excellence in research, education, innovation and entrepreneurship while addressing the global challenges facing marine and coastal environments. The event highlighted the critical role of interdisciplinary collaboration in advancing sustainable solutions for the blue economy and inspiring the next generation of marine biotechnology professionals.



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