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## Press Release

### French National Assembly publishes report on the establishment of a UNU Ocean Institute in France

**5 February 2025, Paris** — The United Nations University (UNU) Paris Office is pleased to announce the publication of the information report on the modalities for establishing a UNU Ocean Institute in France, which marks a renewed political momentum for the project: it builds on the diplomatic momentum generated by the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC), reflects broad parliamentary support, and clarifies concrete pathways for implementation. The document also opens new perspectives for academic, geographic and financial partnerships, in line with the priorities of the United Nations system, while calling for a clear positioning by the French Government in support of the Institute's establishment.

On 21 January 2026, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French National Assembly proceeded with the examination, open to the press, of the “*flash*” information report on the modalities for establishing a United Nations University Ocean Institute in Brest and an operational unit in French Polynesia. As rapporteur, [Mr. Pierre-Yves Cadalen](#) presented the report resulting from the ‘flash’ fact-finding mission entrusted to him in November 2025 to demonstrate the rationale for the Institute's creation and to assess the ways and means of financing it.

The report sets out several possible scenarios for establishing the Institute and guaranteeing its long-term sustainability while emphasising the need for a diversified and progressive funding approach. Beyond financial considerations, the report underlines the importance of bringing together academic institutions, public authorities, and private and philanthropic partners, in line with the Institute's vocation as a national asset serving all French maritime spaces, both metropolitan and overseas. The report constitutes the culmination of a collective effort that has benefited from the support of members of parliament from several parliamentary groups. At the conclusion of the session, the Committee voted unanimously the publication and distribution of the report, thereby underscoring and reaffirming the project's national legitimacy.

This report follows the unanimous adoption by the National Assembly, on 2 April 2025, of the [proposed resolution to create a United Nations University Ocean Institute in France](#), which formally placed the project back on the national political agenda.



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UNU's current global network comprises 13 institutes located in 12 countries worldwide. At present, there is no UNU institute dedicated to ocean issues and no institute in France or in the Pacific region.

[Access the report](#)

## **Press Conference**

[Link to the video](#)

On 28 January 2026, during a press conference at the National Assembly, Mr. Cadalen presented the conclusions of the information report, which outlined various financing scenarios for the Institute.

MP Mereana Reid Arbelot highlighted the historic opportunity this represents for French Polynesia to host an operational unit dedicated to ocean governance and to serve as a strategic anchor for international action. The President of French Polynesia, H.E. Moetai Brotherson, reiterated the Government of French Polynesia's position in support of this initiative, underlining the importance of including Pacific and island perspectives in global ocean governance.

## **Introduction to the UNU Ocean Institute Initiative**

International ocean governance is at a pivotal moment. The Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3), held in Nice in 2025, marked a turning point in global mobilisation for the protection of marine spaces. Long-standing academic initiatives and renewed parliamentary engagement have contributed to re-activating the discussion on the establishment of a UNU Ocean Institute in France – an initiative strongly supported by the UNU Governing Board and key United Nations partners and a key priority for the United Nations University. The creation of this UNU training and research institute dedicated to the ocean and humanity will complement existing efforts while addressing critical gaps in ocean science and governance.

## **Contextual Developments in 2025**

The project gained renewed diplomatic momentum on ocean issues following UNOC3 and the National Assembly's resolution in support of the Institute. The subsequent 'flash' information report provides a structured assessment of the project's rationale, governance options and financing modalities, and has helped consolidate a broad consensus around its relevance and feasibility.



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Building on the conclusions of the report, the UNU Paris Office is now working closely with academic, parliamentary, territorial and international partners to advance the report's recommendations and support the progressive implementation of the project. A key recommendation of the report remains a formal positioning by the French Government in favour of the establishment of the Institute.

“This report marks an important milestone for the UNU Ocean Institute initiative,” said Dr. Sabine Becker-Thierry, Director of the UNU Paris Office. “It provides a clear framework to move forward, building on strong parliamentary support and renewed political momentum. UNU Paris stands ready to work with academic, institutional and governmental partners to ensure that this collective ambition can be translated into action.”

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