

Statement on the Possible Closure of the Centre de Droit Maritime et Océanique (CDMO)

ASCOMARE wishes to express its deep concern regarding the possible closure of the Centre de Droit Maritime et Océanique (CDMO) of Nantes Université, as recently mentioned in the public sphere.

For many years, the CDMO has represented a leading academic institution in the field of public international law and the law of the sea. Through its research, teaching, and outreach activities, the Centre has made a substantial contribution to the development of legal scholarship on maritime and ocean governance, both in France and internationally. Its work has also played a key role in training generations of scholars and practitioners who now serve in academic, institutional, and professional capacities around the world.

The CDMO's reputation rests upon rigorous legal analysis, an interdisciplinary approach, and sustained international cooperation. At a time when the seas and oceans are at the centre of major global challenges — including climate change, environmental degradation, maritime security, fisheries governance, and the sustainable management of marine resources — the preservation of specialised academic centres such as the CDMO appears not only desirable, but essential.

In this context, the prospect of closing the CDMO raises concerns that extend well beyond internal organisational considerations. Such a decision would risk weakening a field of legal expertise whose strategic importance continues to grow, while also diminishing the historic contribution of Nantes Université to law of the sea scholarship at both the European and international levels.

ASCOMARE therefore respectfully, yet firmly, calls upon the competent academic authorities to reconsider this course of action and to explore alternative solutions capable of ensuring the continuation and strengthening of the CDMO's activities. The establishment of a transparent dialogue with the academic community and the Centre's partners could help identify constructive paths forward that reconcile scientific excellence with institutional coherence.

ASCOMARE sincerely hopes that Nantes Université will choose to preserve this essential centre of expertise, in line with its academic mission and international responsibilities.

Brussels, 22 January 2026