



## The World Underwater Federation (CMAS) is meeting in France for the first time.

**100 countries are expected in Bordeaux April 15th to 19th, 2026.**

*Press release, March 23, 2026 – From April 15th to 19th, 2026, Bordeaux will host the regular general assembly of CMAS (World Underwater Federation) for the first time in France.*

*The FFESSM, headquartered in Marseille, is organizing this international event, bringing together nearly 100 countries.*

This event is part of **a strong French momentum centered on the ocean**. Following UNOC3 (United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice, June 9–13, 2025), co-organized by France and Costa Rica, France is thus reaffirming its commitment to major international forums related to the sea and underwater activities. It also echoes a major historical milestone: the French Navy, which celebrates its 400th anniversary in 2026.

### ***The global forum for the governance of underwater activities***

CMAS brings together national diving and underwater activities federations from around the world. It represents **nearly 130 nations**—including France through the FFESSM—among its 180 members, representing several million practitioners worldwide.

<https://ffessm.fr/la-ffessm/la-ffessm-a-l-international>

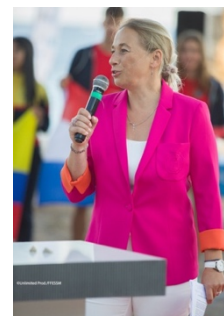
**The 2026 General Assembly will be a key moment for dialogue and decision-making on a wide range of topics and themes:** international cooperation, development of practices, safety, innovation, sustainability, and the promotion of underwater sports.



president of the FFESSM.

*“Our federation was a founding member of the World Confederation in 1959, but it has never hosted the CMAS General Assembly. This historic oversight in the world of diving and underwater sports has now been rectified! The FFESSM contributes to France’s global influence in the sporting, scientific, and technical spheres. CMAS embodies unity in diversity, the strength of a collective of which we are one of the main pillars and for which the French model is a beacon of the future,”* states Frédéric Di Meglio,

*“In 2026, we celebrate the CMAS General Assembly in Bordeaux, France. FFESSM is our important partner, helping us highlight the city’s rich maritime heritage and vibrant aquatic culture. This gathering brings together our global underwater sports community to exchange knowledge, recognize outstanding achievements, and chart the future of CMAS. We look forward to advancing CMAS’s mission, fostering international collaboration, and highlighting excellence, safety, and innovation across the global underwater community”* announced Anna Arzhanova, President of CMAS.



## **CMAS: A History Born in Monaco, Under the Leadership of Jacques-Yves Cousteau**

Founded in 1959 in Monaco, **CMAS's first president was Jacques-Yves Cousteau**, a leading figure in underwater exploration.

Hosting the General Assembly in France in 2026 underscores this historical connection and **the continuity between heritage, innovation, safety, discovery, and protection of the marine environment.**

In the wake of these pioneers, **diving has gradually become more accessible**: from an adventure reserved for a select few, it has evolved into a practice that is accessible, supervised, and shared with the widest possible audience. In France, this momentum is embodied daily in the work of the FFESSM, which organizes access to underwater activities through its network and training programs, from the first introductory dive to the highest competitive levels, as well as for instructors and supervisors.

### **A French momentum strengthened since 2025**

At the 2025 CMAS Elective General Assembly, **France, led by the FFESSM, marked a significant return to the international stage**, notably with:

\**Frédéric Di Meglio*, president of the FFESSM, elected vice president of the CMAS Board of Directors;

\**Michel Gaunard*, president of the CMAS Sports Committee;

\**Alain Foret*, President of the CMAS Technical Committee;

\**Alain Germain*, CMAS Honorary Vice President and Financial Advisor.

### **A General Assembly with a rich and engaging agenda**

The General Assembly will take place at the Renaissance Hotel\*\*\*\* in Bordeaux. Over four days, the program will alternate between forums, regular General Assembly sessions, and meetings by geographic region (Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe). Discussions will be conducted in multiple languages (French, English, Spanish). Social events will punctuate the program, including a presidential cocktail reception (April 15) and a gala dinner (April 17).

#### **Practical Information**

**CMAS 2026 Ordinary General Assembly**

**April 15–19, 2026**

**Renaissance Hotel\*\*\*\*, 16 rue de Gironde, 33000 Bordeaux**

Organizer: FFESSM (headquarters: 24, quai de Rive-Neuve, 13284 Marseille Cedex 07)

#### **About the FFESSM**

*Founded in 1948, the French Federation of Underwater Studies and Sports (FFESSM) is the oldest diving federation in the world. It has nearly 135,000 members spread across 2,500 affiliated clubs and 400 certified commercial organizations. Each year, it awards 65,000 certifications and introduces nearly 300,000 people to underwater activities. Committed to competitive sports, the FFESSM is the governing body for four recognized high-level disciplines: finswimming, pool freediving, open-water vertical freediving, and underwater hockey. As the leader in underwater activities in France, the FFESSM offers a wide range of recreational activities with fins to be practiced in open water or in a pool, alongside scuba diving in all its forms. The FFESSM contributes to the sustainable development goals outlined in the United Nations 2030 Agenda (life below water, reduced inequalities, and good health and well-being). As a member of IUCN-France (International Union for Conservation of Nature), it shares and supports the “One Health1” initiative, which aims to promote the interdependence of animal health, human health, and ecosystem health. In addition, it carries out numerous initiatives, such as those promoting health-focused sports. The FFESSM holds the Terres de Jeux and Engaged for Ocean 2024 certifications*

<https://ffessm.fr>

### **About CMAS**

*An international federation bringing together underwater sports federations from around the world, representing 110 nations across 5 continents and more than 3 million active divers. Known as the World Underwater Federation, it was founded on January 11, 1959, in Monaco, with Commander Jacques-Yves Cousteau as its first President. Its logo features a mermaid with a forked tail, symbolizing the seas and oceans. The CMAS's first headquarters was located on Rue du Colisée in Paris; it moved to Rome in 1993. In 1964, the CMAS symbolically took possession of the seabed and oceans on behalf of humanity. The United Nations (UN) followed this initiative in 1965, designating the seabed and oceans as part of humanity's heritage. It was recognized by the IOC in 1986 and by UNESCO in 2001. It operates through three committees composed of various commissions:*

*\*Technical Committee (standards, education, safety, etc.),*

*\*Sports Committee (finswimming, freediving, underwater hockey, spearfishing, underwater orienteering, underwater photography and videography, recreational pool diving, underwater rugby, target shooting),*

*\*Scientific Committee (biology and nature conservation, underwater archaeology, marine geology, etc.)*

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