



## Science Diver in the Blue Economy Era - International Conference

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### Scientific diving as part of UCH management in Greece. The Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities, new challenges, and perspectives.

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#### ABSTRACT

The protection of Cultural Heritage in Greece is a Constitutional Obligation. Underwater Cultural Heritage (UCH) since the last decades of the 19th c. has been an important field of interest, as well as a concern, for archaeologists even in times when accessibility was extremely limited. Since 1976, and the creation of the Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities (EUA) of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture the management of UCH became the primary goal of the agency. Underwater archaeologists, conservators, engineers, technicians and other professionals have been organizing and taking part in various research endeavours focusing on discovery, excavation, conservation and communication of the underwater archaeological archive. The EUA is the competent authority on research, protection, promotion, and accessibility of UCH in Greece and has been regulating and supervising all relevant underwater activity regarding the safety of the people involved and the preservation of the underwater cultural landscape as the basic principles of UCH management. However, a lot is still to be done in Greece. The potential in UCH management that derives from the country's ancient and recent history is substantial and the need for more well trained and skilful diving scientist that will engage this field is imminent. Greece does not have a concrete scientific diving framework. Thus, it is extremely important to work towards the creation of a national framework that will support UCH management and will give to Greek scientific divers the opportunity to collaborate with other UCH professionals in Europe and the rest of the world.