Between 15 and 18th September 2025, the MARBEFES delegation, including both senior and early career researchers, participated in the ICES Annual Science Conference (ASC) in Klaipeda, Lithuania. As stated by the organisers, ASC is a platform for marine scientists to “present new and innovative research, share ideas, and establish partnerships”. And that’s exactly what we did!

The event kicked off with Mike Elliott’s keynote talk: Emerald Growth and the importance of connectivity in transitional waters between the catchment and marine areas. You can watch the recording below or here .

Session Q of the conference, convened by Julie Bremner, Cristina Huertas-Olivares, and Emma Verling, focused on Marine biodiversity and ecosystem services for a sustainable future. The session examined how to balance protecting marine ecosystems with sustaining their ecosystem services and societal benefits.

Cristina Huertas-Olivares gave a talk on[1] [p2] the development of the MARBEFES toolbox, which is designed to integrate ecosystem services into marine and coastal management. This was followed by a presentation from Artūras Razinkovas-Baziukas on the inclusion of Socio-Ecological Systems in marine management.[3] During the Q&A session, a discussion was raised on the sustainability of the toolbox and the added value of the MARBEFES toolbox

Session Q also featured presentations on EUNIS habitat classification in functional analysis (Tiina Salo), Marine Physical Accounts (Beñat Egidazu-de la Parte), mangrove carbon stock estimation with ARIES (Pearlin Sam Jinoj), ecosystem services associated with pico-phytoplankton in the Eastern Mediterranean (Ioannis Tsakalakis) and a review of methodologies used in benthic ecosystem function research (Laia Illa-López).

The poster session showcased several MARBEFES tools, including the broadscale biological trait method in the Curonian Lagoon (presented by Andrius Šiaulys), trait-based microplankton analyses (Renata Pilkaitytė) and ZooScan (Evelina Grinienė) in the Baltic Sea, Ecological Value Assessments in both Curonian Lagoon (Jūratė Lesutienė) and the Irish Sea (Dorota Kołbuk), the travel cost method as applied to the Lithuanian coast (Nan Zhang), and zooplankton image analysis alongside DNA-metabarcoding in the Eastern Mediterranean (a poster by Ktistaki et al., presented by Ioannis Tsakalakis).

We thank the organisers - ICES and Klaipeda University (Artūras Razinkovas-Baziukas and the team) - for providing us with the space to share and discuss MARBEFES research!

While MARBEFES is still very much an active project, we want to signal the next event which will summarise the outcomes of several marine-oriented Horizon Europe projects: ECSA 61 (24-27 August, 2026; Brussels).

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