

PRESS RELEASE

Boulogne-sur-Mer, 13 July 2023

ANSES and ULCO launch a partnership on the safety of seafood products

ANSES and the Littoral-Côte d'Opale University (ULCO) have signed a partnership agreement to strengthen their cooperation on the safety of fishery and aquaculture products. This partnership is formalising the long-standing collaboration initiated by their respective teams based in Boulogne-sur-Mer.

In the presence of local elected officials, Benoît Vallet, Director General of ANSES, and Hassane Sadok, President of ULCO, signed the agreement on 13 July in Boulogne-sur-Mer during the *Fête de la Mer* (Festival of the Sea), in which the two organisations were involved.

The partnership between ULCO and ANSES aims to improve scientific knowledge on fishery and aquaculture products, from fishing net to fork. It will focus on the following themes:

- the safety of fishery products, including the study of potentially pathogenic micro-organisms and parasites present in the marine ecosystem,
- how production practices affect the nutritional quality and safety of food, and the economic impact of these practices on the production sectors,
- the effects of human activity on ecosystems and the quality of marine products, with a particular focus on nano- and microplastics,
- the implementation of more environmentally friendly techniques for producing fishery and aquaculture products, and the health impact of these new practices.

A partnership driven by the teams in Boulogne-sur-Mer

The teams most involved in the partnership are based in Boulogne-sur-Mer. They include the Bacteriology and Parasitology of Fishery and Aquaculture Products (B3PA) unit and the Physico-chemistry of Fishery and Aquaculture Products (PCPPA) unit of ANSES's Laboratory for Food Safety, as well as ULCO's Biochemistry of Aquatic Products (BPA) unit – which has also been a contracted unit in partnership with ANSES since 2014 and is accommodated on the Agency's premises – and its Laboratory for Oceanology and Geosciences (LOG). The partnership may be extended to other teams depending on the project.

The teams in Boulogne-sur-Mer have already carried out joint research projects on biological and chemical contaminants related to marine resources and ecosystems. In particular, they took part in the MARCO State-Region plan contract (CPER), from 2016 to 2021. The strengthened partnership over the upcoming period will encompass research under way as part of the Ideal CPER, scheduled to run until 2027, which is focusing in particular on microplastics, *Vibrio* bacteria, and whole-genome sequencing (WGS).

Strengthening scientific cooperation and bringing the teams closer together

The partnership agreement provides for the continuation of scientific cooperation, with the funding and implementation of studies and research projects, the supervision of doctoral students, the production and provision of data, and the shared use of equipment and biological materials.

There are also plans to bring the teams closer together, particularly within contracted units (USCs) and through staff exchanges.

Moreover, ANSES and ULCO intend to organise joint scientific events and encourage their scientists to participate in each other's committees and expert groups.

Press liaisons

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The French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES) provides public decision-makers with the scientific benchmarks needed to protect humans and the environment against health risks. It studies, assesses and monitors all the chemical, microbiological and physical risks to which humans, animals and plants are exposed, thereby helping the public authorities take the necessary measures, including in the event of a health crisis. A national agency working in the public interest, ANSES comes under the responsibility of the French Ministries of Health, the Environment, Agriculture, Labour and Consumer Affairs.

Since 1991, the **Littoral-Côte d'Opale University (ULCO)** has been a major player in higher education and research in the Hauts-de-France region of France. Multidisciplinary and multipolar, ULCO is characterised by its human dimension. With its innovative teaching methods and close links with its teams, ULCO offers a framework conducive to knowledge acquisition and dialogue, for the full development of each individual's potential.

ULCO has made research a key component of its development policy, which revolves around three main units: the Institute for Marine and Coastal Sciences, the Centre for Technological and Environmental Change, and the Centre for Humanities and Integrated Territories.