

## PREFACE

This is the 'Book of Abstracts' of the 15th edition of the VLIZ Young Marine Scientists' Day, a one day event that was organised on 20 February, 2015 in VIVES, Brugge.

This annual event has become more and more successful over the years. With more than 300 participants and circa 130 scientific contributions, it is fair to say that it is the place to be for Flemish marine researchers and for the end-users of their research. It is an important networking opportunity, where young scientists can meet and interact with their peers, learn from each other, build their personal professional network and establish links for collaborative and interdisciplinary research.

Marine scientists from all Flemish universities and scientific institutes – and representing all marine science disciplines – have contributed to this volume. The book thus illustrates the diversity, quality and relevance of the marine sciences in Flanders (and Belgium): it provides a beautiful and comprehensive snapshot of the state-of-the-art of marine scientific research in Flanders in 2015. Young scientists present their research in an exciting way and communicate their fascinating science – and its importance to society – to the wider public. We thus hope to demonstrate the excellence of Flemish marine science and to increase its national and international visibility.

The volume of research that is presented here holds a great promise for the future. It shows that marine science is a very lively discipline in Flanders, and that a new generation stands ready to address the grand challenges and opportunities that our seas and oceans represent.

I want to congratulate all participants with their contributions, and I invite them all to actively participate in VLIZ-events and activities in the future.

Brugge, 20 February 2015

Prof. Dr Jan Mees  
General Director VLIZ