

49/2020 | **Under embargo until Friday 2 October 2020, 2:30 PM CET (UTC + 2)!**

“Our world is the ocean”

Professor Katja Matthes takes over the leadership of GEOMAR

2 October 2020/Kiel. Climate researcher Professor Dr. Katja Matthes took over the scientific leadership of GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel on 1 October. Today, during the official handover ceremony, Professor Matthes outlined the plans for a new research strategy that focuses on the relationship between humans and the sea.

In her inaugural speech, Professor Dr. Katja Matthes focussed on the future: "I am looking forward to the challenge of providing GEOMAR with an excellent research environment at the highest international level in order to contribute with our ocean research to sustainable solutions for urgent societal questions". She outlined a new research strategy, which has been jointly developed with a wide range of scientists at GEOMAR over the past months. One of her first central tasks is the finalization and implementation of the strategy, said the new director.

"At the core of our research is the ocean and its complex interaction with us humans," said Professor Matthes. "This is why we have adopted a new central slogan for GEOMAR: 'Our world is the ocean'. In the future, we will classify our research and its results under this slogan". She takes over the leadership of GEOMAR from Professor Dr. Peter Herzig, who is retiring after more than 16 years as director.

In a series of greetings, spokespeople from the federal government, the state of Schleswig-Holstein, the city of Kiel and the Helmholtz Association honored the achievements of Professor Herzig and conveyed their best wishes to the new director. Schleswig-Holstein's Prime Minister Daniel Günther underlined in his video message: "Under the direction of Peter Herzig, GEOMAR has grown to a real lighthouse of marine research, which shines far beyond the borders of Schleswig-Holstein. I am pleased that with Professor Matthes, such a competent and committed successor has been found who will provide new impulses at GEOMAR".

The Chairman of the Board of Trustees of GEOMAR Ministerial Director Volker Rieke from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research: "On behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, I would like to thank Professor Herzig very much for the impressive commitment with which he developed GEOMAR from a Leibniz Institute into an internationally successful and visible Helmholtz Centre over the past years. I am sure that with Professor Matthes we have found a worthy successor who will advance ocean research with great commitment and enthusiasm to sustainable solutions for the urgent future questions of protecting coasts and seas".

Congratulations were also conveyed by the Minister of Science Karin Prien. "With Prof. Katja Matthes, Schleswig-Holstein was able to win a renowned scientist as new director of GEOMAR. I absolutely support her idea to actively get involved and to help shape the dialogue between science, society and politics. Networking with educational institutions and the economy, is the only way to meet global challenges such as climate change or the world food situation. I am looking forward to this dialogue and to a new chapter for Kiel's marine sciences.

Kiel's Lord Mayor Dr. Ulf Kämpfer said that he is very happy to have with GEOMAR such an important and internationally recognized marine research institute in Kiel. "I thank Professor Herzig very much for his outstanding work in the past years. And I am very much looking forward to working with

Professor Matthes", said Kämpfer. "I know that the topics of marine and climate protection are of particular importance for Professor Matthes - and I am sure that her expertise will help us greatly in taking the next steps towards consequent climate protection."

"I thank Peter Herzig from the bottom of my heart for the impressive commitment with which he has significantly shaped the GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel over the past 16 years. During his tenure, GEOMAR has developed into one of the world's leading institutions in the field of marine research", said the President of the Helmholtz Association, Prof. Dr. Dr. hc mult Otmar D. Wiestler. "I am convinced that with Katja Matthes we have found an ideal successor. She is an outstanding scientist and will continue to develop the excellent research environment at GEOMAR at the highest international level with commitment and dynamism. I wish her every success in her new position and look forward to our future collaboration".

About Prof. Dr. Katja Matthes

Born in Berlin, she studied meteorology at the Freie Universität Berlin and worked for several years at the renowned National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder/Colorado, USA, following her doctorate. In the next step she headed a Helmholtz-University Young Investigators Group at the Helmholtz Centre Potsdam, German Research Centre for Geosciences. In 2011, Dr. Katja Matthes was appointed to a W2 professorship for "Atmospheric-Hydrospheric Systems" at the Freie Universität Berlin. In 2012 she was appointed to a W3 professorship for meteorology at GEOMAR and Kiel University.

From 2018 until her nomination as the new director she was head of the research division Ocean Circulation and Climate Dynamics at GEOMAR. Professor Matthes is an expert in the field of climate variability and climate change, especially the influence of the sun on the climate. She is author or co-author of more than 75 peer-reviewed articles in scientific journals, co-author of the current 6th IPCC report and member of various national and international committees. Her research contributes to a more accurate determination of anthropogenic climate influence and to the improvement of short-term climate predictions.

Links:

www.geomar.de GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel

<https://www.geomar.de/kmatthes> Webpage of Professor Matthes

Images:

At www.geomar.de/n7294-e images are available for download after the end of the handover ceremony.

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