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## **Professor Ulf Riebesell awarded Leibniz-Prize GEOMAR researcher receives the most highly endowed German science award in Berlin**

**Feb. 27, 2012/Berlin, Kiel.** During a ceremony at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences the German Science Foundation today awarded eleven scientists with the renowned Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize. Among the awardees is Prof. Ulf Riebesell from GEOMAR | Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel. The prize is endowed with 2.5 million Euro.

At the beginning of December 2011 as the German Science Foundation (DFG) announced the winners of the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize, the excitement in Kiel was great. Prof. Ulf Riebesell from GEOMAR | Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel was on the list. But the awardee himself was at first hard to reach. At the time he was on board an American research vessel in the Pacific studying the effects of environmental change on plankton organisms. In the meantime the 52 year old scientist has returned from this research trip. During the ceremony at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences in Berlin he, along with ten other awardees, was presented the official reward. It carries a prize of 2.5 million Euro in research funds. The Leibniz Prize of the DFG is thus the most highly endowed scientific prize in Germany.

“Ulf Riebesell is being rewarded the Leibniz Prize for his research on ocean change, one of the most wide-reaching side effects and consequences of anthropomorphic climate change” stated the nomination committee of the DFG. Professor Riebesell’s research focuses mainly on the fundamentals of the marine food web and the biologically driven energy and material cycles in the ocean. Starting with laboratory experiments and later with specially designed experiments in the world’s largest, free-floating experiment stations, the so-called offshore mesocosms, he has been able to demonstrate the effects of ocean acidification and ocean warming on organisms and ecosystems and what feedbacks there could be on the climate system. He has carried out field experiments in the Baltic Sea, in Norwegian fjords, in Arctic waters and in the Pacific off the coast of Hawaii. “Climate change and ocean acidification will have wide reaching consequences for marine biocenoses and food webs. We humans are at the end of the chain,” emphasizes Professor Riebesell. For this reason it is very important to him not only to further the research, but also to increase public awareness of ocean acidification as one of the most acute threats to the marine ecosystem. During the ceremony in Berlin Prof. Riebesell expressed his gratitude for the award, the recognition associated with it and of course the additional research funds. “The topic of ocean change is very complex; the effects are very different depending on the ecosystem and the ocean region. There is a great need for further study.” With the award money he plans to further expand his research area, “We have to get a better understanding of how the ocean will develop in the future in order to be able to estimate risks and perhaps even prevent dangers to unique ecosystems.”

### **Background information: Ulf Riebesell**

Prof. Ulf Riebesell studied Biology and Biological Marine Science in Kiel, Seattle und Rhode Island, USA. He earned his doctorate at the University of Bremen and did work at the Alfred-Wegener Institute of Polar and Marine Research. As a visiting researcher he spent time at the University of California Santa Barbara before moving to the Institute for Marine Science (now GEOMAR) in Kiel in 2003. He is a Professor of Biological Oceanography at the Christian Albrechts University in Kiel (CAU). Professor Riebesell is a member of many national and international committees. In addition to heading the BMBF project BIOACID (Biological Impacts of Ocean Acidification) and working as deputy coordinator in the EU project EPOCA (European Project on Ocean Acidification) Riebesell

is also active in the Kiel Cluster of Excellence “The Future Ocean” and the collaborative research center 754 “Climate Biogeochemistry Interactions in the Tropical Ocean”. He is the author of more than 100 peer-reviewed publications.

**Background information: Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize**

The Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize has been awarded annually by the DFG since 1986. It honors outstanding scientists for their research in all scientific fields. They are awarded a cash prize of usually 2.5 million euro, which they can use for their scientific work as they see fit with minimal bureaucratic burden within seven years of receiving the reward. This is the sixth time that a Kiel marine scientist has been awarded the renowned Leibniz Prize. The previous winners were Prof. Michael Sarnthein (1989), Prof. Jörn Thiede (1989), Prof. Hans-Ulrich Schmincke (1991), Prof. Peter Herzig (2000) and Prof. Wolf-Christian Dullo (2002).

**Links:**

[www.geomar.de](http://www.geomar.de) GEOMAR | Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel

**Images:**

Images are available for download at [www.geomar.de/go/kommunikation](http://www.geomar.de/go/kommunikation)

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