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A fruitful decade for marine research in Kiel Successful merger of IfM and GEOMAR 10 years ago

1st January 2014/Kiel. Exactly ten years ago a new era began for marine research in Kiel, Germany. The Institute for Marine Research and the GEOMAR Research Centre for Marine Geosciences, teamed up to the Leibniz Institute of Marine Sciences (IfM-GEOMAR). Retrospectively this decision has provided a positive impetus for the entire marine research in Germany: today's GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel is one of the world's leading institutions in the field of marine sciences.

Mergers are initially often viewed critically. Thus, there was also scepticism as whether or not the merger of the two marine research institutes in Kiel, the Institute for Marine Research and the former GEOMAR, was really a good idea. But very soon it became apparent that this merger was actually very fruitful. Today, after ten years, the GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel ranks - as recently judged by an international commission of experts - amongst the top 5 of marine research institutions worldwide .

"We have merged two smaller, but very good established institutions and thus created the conditions for new interdisciplinary fields of research," says founding director Professor Dr. Peter Herzig. In particular, the area of Marine Biogeochemistry benefited from the merger, as different working groups from two predecessor institutions now interact more closely. This reflects also in the Collaborative Research Center 754 "Climate - Biogeochemistry Interactions in the Tropical Ocean" operated since 2008 in collaboration with partners at Kiel University. "The merger has been the basis to get projects such as the SFB754 and the Cluster of Excellence 'The Future Ocean' to Kiel and finally paved the way to develop GEOMAR to a research institution of national importance as a member of the Helmholtz Association", Herzig continued.

The momentum of the merger is also visible by the number of employees which has more than doubled in ten years to currently almost 900 staff and students. Meanwhile, GEOMAR is a major employer in Kiel and its development affects a large number of other jobs in the region. In addition, the budget has grown significantly but still lagging behind a bit, as Administrative Director Michael Wagner points out. "Due to the transition to the Helmholtz Association in 2012 the range of tasks has changed and expanded and in particular the necessary administrative structures have not yet grown to the same extent as science. Here we need some catching up" the Administrative Director GEOMAR states, "because good science also needs professional management. "

Another big challenge that still remains is to bring the research centre under one roof. "Since 2004 we are working on this project," Professor Herzig says. "In the beginning we had to ensure the finances for this project. Meanwhile, 90 million euros are available for a new building on the east shore campus of GEOMAR, formerly the Kiel sea fish market," explains Professor Herzig " Now we are working hard on the implementation of the project and we hope to start with the construction next year," Herzig continued. He expects that in a few years time, there will be a major research campus providing the basis for further fruitful developments for marine sciences in Kiel.

Links:

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

Images:

Under www.geomar.de/n1662 images are available for download.

Contact:

Prof. Dr. Peter Herzig pherzig@geomar.de

Dr. Andreas Villwock (GEOMAR, Communications & Media) Tel.: 0431 600-2802
avillwock@geomar.de