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Prestigious Award presented to the Director of GEOMAR **Prof. Dr. Peter Herzig is presented the Federal Cross of Merit by German Federal President Joachim Gauck**

01.10.2015/Kiel/Berlin. Today, the Director of GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel, Prof. Dr. Peter Herzig, was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit 1st class of the Orders of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany. It was presented to him by the German Federal President Joachim Gauck to honor his long-standing commitment in the field of marine sciences. As the dedication says, "His work has given major impetus to marine research and contributed to solving societally relevant problems." Thorsten Albig, Prime Minister of the German Federal State of Schleswig-Holstein, joined in congratulating: "Professor Herzig's outstanding merits are honored by this prestigious award. His success in marine research has earned a worldwide reputation – not only for himself, but also for the city of Kiel and the whole of the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein".

When Peter Herzig came to Kiel at the end of 2003 to become director of the newly founded Leibniz Institute for Marine Research (IFM-GEOMAR), he was already looking back on a long and successful career as a geologist specialized in raw materials. After his studies at RWTH Aachen University and extended stays abroad in Toronto, Ottawa and Southampton, he came to Kiel from the Saxonian TU Bergakademie Freiberg. Professor Herzig was specialized in the search for mineral resources in the seafloor. Among others, he had discovered promising deposits of gold and copper in the waters off Papua New Guinea. In 2000, he received the well-respected Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Award of the German Research Foundation for his scientific work. In Kiel, he expanded IFM-GEOMAR, which had been founded through the merger of two smaller institutes, into one of the leading institutions in marine science worldwide. Its entry into the Helmholtz Association of German research institutes in 2012 was the ultimate consequence of the institutes' development into a marine research centre of national importance and high social relevance. Today, GEOMAR has approximately 900 employees and an annual budget of 70 million Euros. In addition to the efforts he put into the Kiel institute, Professor Herzig has spent a lot of personal commitment in giving major impetus to marine research: As coordinator for maritime affairs of the federal state government of Schleswig-Holstein, as part of the German Marine Research Consortium which he himself was a co-founder of, as maritime ambassador of the EU-commission in Brussels and in many national, European and international committees and boards.

"Marine Research is research for our future. It contributes to safeguarding the bases of life on Earth for future generations. Thus, it is essential to contribute to solving global and societally relevant questions concerning the seas and the oceans", Prof. Herzig says as a first reaction. "The oceans will play a key role in the survival of Earth's continually growing population", Herzig continues. He thus deems it more important than ever to get acquainted to the chances offered and risks posed by the oceans. Questions concerning the supply of food and raw materials, generation of energy, but also protection of those who live in coastal areas from marine natural hazards such as storm tides and tsunamis as well as the effects of climate change are global challenges which require co-ordinated research and action of the international community – such is Herzig's appeal.

"It is therefore of special concern to me that the largest habitat of our planet, the knowledge of which is still far too small, should become the subject of long-lasting research efforts and that more focus should be put on the seas – we still know more about the dark side of the moon than about the depths of our oceans“. Professor Herzig himself has participated in more than 25 international expeditions on all the world's oceans and is one of the pioneers in the use of manned and unmanned submarine vehicles. "I am, of course, deeply honored to receive such a distinctive award from the Federal President himself. In accepting it, though, I would like to do so just as a representative of all the colleagues out there who spend high personal effort on studying our oceans every day."

Links

<http://www.geomar.de/de/mitarbeiter/d/phezic/> Professor Dr. Peter Herzig

Images:

www.geomar.de/n4017 offers images for download.

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