



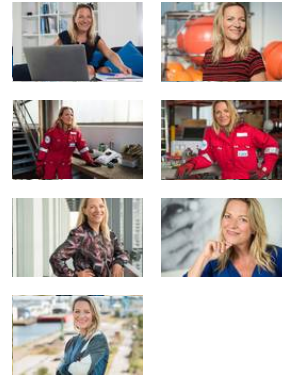
Highest-valued European environmental award

Prof. Antje Boetius receives the 2018 German Environmental Award

Federal President Steinmeier to honour the deep-sea and polar researcher at the end of October

[23. August 2018] The 2018 German Environmental Award goes to Antje Boetius and a team of wastewater experts from Leipzig. The Director of the Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research (AWI) is glad to see the deep seas and polar regions, the last great expanses of unspoiled nature, attracting more attention. Helmholtz President Prof. Otmar D. Wiestler has praised Boetius as a strong advocate for preserving our oceans.

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"I was very surprised, and am delighted to receive this important award," said AWI Director Antje Boetius when the winners of this year's award were announced by the German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU). With the largest monetary prize in Europe, the DBU honours individuals who have made exemplary contributions to protecting the environment. "Being selected for the 'Pioneer of Environmental Protection' is a tremendous honour. It draws attention to my research area, the deep seas and polar regions, and increases awareness of the environmental problems in our last great expanses of unspoiled nature. The prize is also a welcome acknowledgment of how important directly communicating advances in fundamental research is for environmental protection," Boetius adds.



AWI Director Prof. Dr. Antje Boetius (Photo: Kerstin Rolfes)

On 28 October 2018, Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier will officially award the prize, which has a total worth of 500,000 euros, in Erfurt. In addition to Boetius, a team of Leipzig-based wastewater experts will be honoured. When

asked what she would do with her 250,000-euro share, Boetius replied: "For some time now, I have been supporting artists whose projects put the spotlight on societal problems, or uniquely portray the beauty and value of nature. I also consider projects by and for young people that do their part to promote a better world to be very important. As such, I can put this generous prize money to good use."

Prof. Otmar D. Wiestler, President of the Helmholtz Association, had the following to say about the announcement: "The sustainable use and availability of clean drinking water, and protecting our oceans, are certainly two of the most important global challenges. That's why I'm particularly pleased that this year, the DBU is honouring the long-standing research efforts of several Helmholtz researchers in these areas. I wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the marine biologist and AWI Director Antje Boetius, and to the interdisciplinary team of experts led by UFZ researcher Roland A. Müller. With her findings in deep-sea and ecosystem research, Antje Boetius has made a major contribution to the general awareness of our oceans' importance. For years now, she has tirelessly worked to communicate how the results of human activities like greenhouse gas emissions, water pollution and overfishing impact our oceans. In addition, she possesses a wonderful talent for explaining her research and the broader contexts involved in language that is accessible for the general public. This combination makes her a strong advocate for preserving our oceans.



The Alfred Wegener Institute pursues research in the polar regions and the oceans of mid and high latitudes. As one of the 19 centres of the Helmholtz Association it coordinates polar research in Germany and provides ships like the research icebreaker Polarstern and stations for the international scientific community.

