

The Climate of the Arctic: an Early Warning System for Global Warming

Words of Welcome

by Gernot Wilhelm¹

“The climate of the Arctic: an early warning system for global warming”: The subject of this two-day symposium is not only a fascinating field of scientific research but also highly relevant and interesting to the general public. In formal regard, this symposium shows several aspects. On the one hand, it is an event within the scope of the current “Science Year” 2016/2017, which the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research has named “Oceans and Seas”. In order to participate in this programme, the Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities has applied for financial support for this and two more events, which was commendably granted by the ministry.

At the same time, this symposium is also the final event of a long-term project in the academy programme named “Early warning systems for global environmental changes and their historical documentation in natural climate archives”. This project of excellence was directed by Professor Jörn Thiede, member of the *Academy of Science, Humanities and Literature* in Mainz, and was carried out at *GEOMAR*, the *Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research* in Kiel, and at the *Institute of Polar Ecology* of Christian Albrecht’s University in Kiel in cooperation with the *Alfred Wegener Institute (AWI)*, *Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research* in Bremerhaven.

For twelve years, from 2003 to 2015, this project was supported by the German Academies’ Programme for long-term research projects. The termination of such a long-term research project is usually received with mixed feelings on the side of the researchers involved. Joy and pride about the results achieved after long years of work rival with feelings of regret that now an era will come to an end in one’s own research biography. Fortunately, this is different in the case of this project. Last year, an agreement of co-operation was signed by the representatives of the Alfred Wegener Institute, GEOMAR and the Mainz Academy in order to continue the project’s line of research.



Fig. 1: Gernot Wilhelm, 2013–2017 President of the Mainz Academy of Sciences and Literature welcoming the participants of the Symposium “The Climate of the Arctic”.

The preamble of the agreement states that the project-based co-operation of two renowned Helmholtz Institutions whose main research focuses are closely related to the topics and problems of the project represents a model and is connected with the claim of scientific excellency. The three parties of this agreement decided to organize an international colloquium on the results and perspectives of the joint project in 2016. This plan is being realized today and tomorrow.

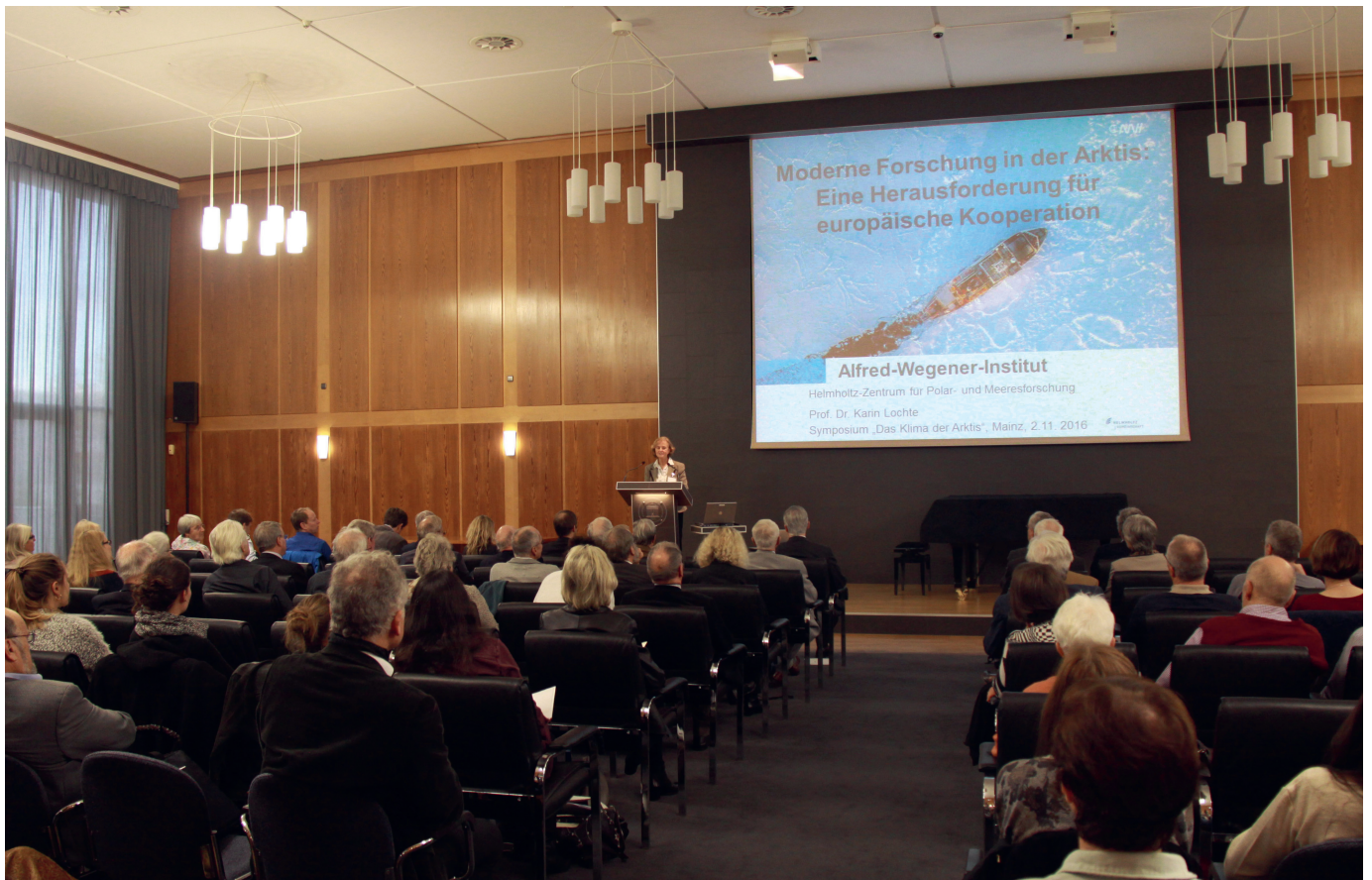


Fig. 2: Professor Karin Lochte, director of the Alfred Wegener Institute Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research in Bremerhaven presenting the opening lecture of the symposium on “Modern research in the Arctic – a challenge for European cooperation”.

At Mainz Academy an advisory committee will be formed by members of the involved institutions as well as of external experts. It will be chaired by Professor Volker Mosbrugger, General Director of the *Senckenberg Gesellschaft für Naturforschung*, Director of the *Senckenberg Research Institute and Museum* (Frankfurt am Main) and member of this Academy.

I am glad about this joint effort to maintain a first-rate research project. I am grateful to all who have contributed to this successful solution, in particular to Professor Karin Lochte, Director of the *Alfred Wegener Institute*, Professor Peter M. Herzig, Director of *GEOMAR*, Professor Thiede and Professor Mosbrugger.

I wish you a successful and productive symposium and hope you will feel comfortable in our premises!