

Editorial

Dear colleagues,

I would like to welcome you to the first issue of the European Polar Board's Newsletter. Active communication is very important to ensure transparency of all our activities and assists in connecting European level Polar research activities with the international community and the public at large. The Polar Regions have been prominent at the political level and are in the public eye, because of the rapid environmental changes in the Arctic and Antarctic that we are witnessing and their impact on populations around the world. We hope that you will find the information on the scientific and coordination activities of the European Polar Board valuable and that it will give you an insight into the important scientific and strategic issues that we are addressing at the European level.

These last years the European Polar Board increased its activities and visibility. For instance, we were mentioned in a 2008 European Commission Communication to the European Parliament and Council on the European Union and the Arctic region. Furthermore, the strong statement on the development of Arctic Observatories that resulted from the EU presidency conference on the Arctic (Monaco, November 2008) explicitly indicates the role of the European Polar Board and European Polar Consortium in this regard. All this was possible thanks to the hard work initiated by the past Chairmen Jörn Thiede and Gérard Jugie, and implemented by the Executive Director, Paul Egerton, and the past Executive Committee members.

The International Polar Year 2007-2008 has officially come to a close in a ceremony at the WMO headquarters in Geneva having achieved great success and an astonishing period of science and public outreach and culminating in a ministerial statement at the Antarctic treaty meeting in Baltimore, United States on the suc-

cess of the International Polar Year and the imperative for continuing and future actions.

Looking to the future, we are convinced that the post-IPY legacy phase that we are now entering will continue on the same basic principles: Excellence in science, interdisciplinarity and international cooperation. The EPB is engaged in implementing, for the first time, a multinational 10 Million Euro research programme PolarCLIMATE and in carefully accompanying the development of the Aurora Borealis icebreaker initiative during the crucial step from the feasibility study to the construction phase.

The European Polar Consortium, a project financed by the European Commission, has culminated in the development of a 'European Polar Framework' realised through a dedicated Memorandum of Understanding that will be implemented by the European Polar Board. This MoU will provide a pathway and vehicle for future strategic planning, research calls and the coordination of research infrastructures between the 27 participating funding agencies and national polar authorities.

All these items are on the agenda of the new EPB Executive Committee and portfolios have been assigned to the vice chairs: Antarctic and global science; research infrastructures; capacity building and programmes in new EU member states; bi-polar marine issues; terrestrial Arctic research and Scandinavian countries.

What we have to face in the next few years are, at the same time, challenges and opportunities. We hope that through the strong engagement of the new Executive Committee and of all the EPB delegates, we will achieve enhanced actions at the European level.

Kind regards,
Carlo Alberto

Professor Carlo Alberto Ricci, Chair EPB



Professor Ricci and Dr. Egerton meeting with Commissioner Janez Potočnik at the Berlaymont Building to discuss European Polar affairs

Publications

Towards the Strengthening of European Coordination between Polar Environmental Observatories in the Arctic Region



Published
October 2008

[Download on the EPB Website:](#)
www.esf.org/epb

The Landscape of European Polar Research Volume I: An assessment of current strategic management, polar programme definition and processes



Published October 2007,
as part of EUROPOLAR
ERA-NET

[Download on the EPB Website](#)
www.esf.org/epb

Aurora Borealis Information Pack



Published by the
Alfred Wegener Institute,
2008

[Download on the EPB Website](#)
www.esf.org/epb

The landscape of European Polar Research Volume II: European polar capacity – an overview of research infrastructures in the Arctic and Antarctic



Published October 2007,
as part of EUROPOLAR
ERA-NET

[Download on the EPB Website](#)
www.esf.org/epb

News

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council – The European Union and the Arctic Region

On 20th November 2008, the European Commission released a communication to the European Parliament and the Council about the European Union and the Arctic Region. This communication specifically cites the European Polar Board and the Aurora Borealis project.

[Download the EC Communication](#)



Aurora Borealis Podcast: Professor Jörn Thiede on the European Research Icebreaker Aurora Borealis

Professor Jörn Thiede from the University of Copenhagen, who is also the former director of the Alfred Wegener Institute (1997-2007), speaks about the European Research Icebreaker Aurora Borealis. The development of Aurora Borealis, the first European research vessel for the Arctic, is the main objective of the new 7th Framework Programme (FP7) project ERICON, coordinated by the European Polar Board. Aurora Borealis will be a unique vessel, a combination of a heavy icebreaker, a scientific drilling ship and a multi-purpose research platform that can operate year-round in all polar waters.

[Read the full article and listen to the Podcast.](#)
8th January 2009

The technical design of the European Research Icebreaker – Aurora Borealis

(Berlin) The Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research in the Helmholtz Association and the engineering company Wärtsilä Ship Design Germany (formerly Schiffko, GmbH) today presented the technical design of the European Research Icebreaker “Aurora Borealis” in Berlin. Aurora Borealis will be a unique vessel, a combination of a heavy icebreaker, a scientific drilling ship and a multi-purpose research platform that can operate year-round in all polar waters.

[Read the full article.](#) 3rd December 2008

What is really happening to Greenland ice cap?

The Greenland ice cap has been a focal point of recent climate change research because it is much more exposed to immediate global warming than the larger Antarctic ice sheet. Yet while the southern Greenland ice cap has been melting, it is still not clear how much this is contributing to rising sea levels, and much further research is needed. A framework for such research was defined at a recent workshop organised by the European Science Foundation.

[Read the full article.](#) 4th November 2008

Activities

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The EPB Delegates in Bergen, March 2009

EUROPEAN POLAR BOARD

The European Polar Board's spring plenary meeting was held over two days during the Arctic Science Summit Week in Bergen, Norway. The ASSW was a successful and cooperative week with the other international polar organisations.

On Sunday 22nd March 2009, the EPB delegates met at the Institute of Marine Research to carry out business issues such as conducting elections and determining the budget. Professor Carlo Alberto Ricci was re-elected as the Chair of the European Polar Board and five members were elected to the Executive Committee. It was decided that the EPB would receive and implement the Memorandum of Understanding on a 'European Polar Framework' after being signed by the participating parties at the European Polar Summit of 24th June.

On Monday 23rd March 2009, the EPB delegates and invited guests gathered at the Scandic Bergen City Hotel for a scientific and strategic initiatives session. This session examined the EPB's developing Green Paper on European Polar Research, updated attendees on the PolarCLIMATE Programme, looked at the ERICON Aurora Borealis project and demonstrated the communications plan.

The next plenary meeting will be held in Autumn 2009 (date and location to be determined).

PolarCLIMATE

On 26th September 2008, the European Polar Consortium launched the Call for Pre-Proposals: European Partnership in Polar Climate Science (PolarCLIMATE). This call, sup-

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ported by 20 ministries and funding agencies from 18 European countries generated a lot of interest and 36 multinational Pre-Proposals.

In late November, 19 Pre-Proposals were invited to submit Full Proposals, with a deadline for submission of 6th March 2009. From March to May, the proposals underwent Peer Review, at the end of which the Project Coordinator had the opportunity to respond to the anonymous assessments.

The Review Panel meeting will be held on 8th and 9th June at the ESF/COST Offices in Brussels, Belgium. The Review Panel's recommendations will then be relayed to the Programme Board. At the Programme Board meeting on 23rd June, also at the ESF/COST Offices in Brussels, final funding decisions should be taken.

ERICON AURORA BOREALIS



Launch of the Financial Advisory Panel:

The ERICON Aurora Borealis project moved another step forward this year with the creation of the Financial Advisory Panel aiming at establishing the financial framework necessary for government commitments.

The project is financed by the European Commission under Framework Programme 7 and coordinated by the European Polar Board Unit inside the ESF.

To reach this objective the panel will first define the verifiable estimate of total construction cost and forecast future running costs for the operation of the Aurora Borealis. Composed mainly of experts from our European partners but also from Japan and the United States, the panel gathers the expertise from research vessels operators, ship designers and heads of logistics.

Later in the project the Financial Advisory Panel will prepare the business planning foreseen for the funding of the icebreaker and converge with the work of the legal work package to feed in the decision process defining the legal structure and governance to be implemented for the Aurora Borealis.

Its first meeting was held on 27th May 2009 in Brussels and its outcome will be presented to the Stakeholder Council on 22nd June.

EUROPOLAR ERA-NET

The EUROPOLAR ERA-NET started in March 2005 and just recently ended in February 2009. This project was financed by the European Commission Framework Programme 6. The project achieved many outputs including the first comprehensive survey of the landscape of polar programmes and infrastructures, the launch of a joint multinational research programme Polar CLIMATE and a forward look

Activities

investigation on decision support systems in the Polar Regions. One of the final deliverables of this project is a Memorandum of Understanding. At the European Polar Summit of 24th June, this Memorandum of Understanding for a 'European Polar Framework' will be signed by around 27 national funding organisations and Polar operators. This Memorandum of Understanding is an important way forward in creating a European Polar Framework to launch future joint calls, enhancing the coordination of European research Infrastructures and engaging in strategic discussions regarding future and science priorities. The European Polar Summit will officially close the EUROPOLAR ERA-NET as well as recognise the work achieved and deliverables accomplished throughout the project.

► To receive more information on the European Polar Summit, please contact Katie Luck.

INFRAPOLAR

European Research Infrastructure Platform for Climate and Environmental Monitoring in the Polar Regions

The European Polar Board is in the process of designing and submitting a large scale 7-8 Million Euro integrating activity to the European Commission in December 2009. This will involve a series of flagship research sites in the Arctic and the Antarctic to promote transnational access and networking of these facilities in the context of joint research programmes and priority scientific topics. A number of countries with large and developing polar programmes plus international partners have expressed an interest. The project is likely to be coordinated under the European Science Foundation's EPB unit.

► Further details on this initiative can be obtained by writing to epb@esf.org.

Meet the Team



EPB Team in Berlin. Photos by Jan Meier, Bremen



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Focus on: Carlo Alberto Ricci



In March 2009, Professor Carlo Alberto Ricci was re-elected Chairman of the European Polar Board (EPB) for the period 2009-2012. Following up on the initiatives he started during his first term is one of his top priorities. The Green Paper on European Polar Research, the Memorandum of Understanding and the INFRAPOLAR proposal are only a few of the activities Ricci headed up. "There is a great need for a more solid European level of networking and I am confident that the EPB is working to meeting this need," said Ricci.

Since 1980, Ricci has been a Full Professor of Petrology at the University of Siena. Petrology is the study of the origin, composition and structure of rocks. Ricci started his career working on Elba Island (his island of origin), Sardinia, several other areas in southern Europe and in Africa. It was not until 1985-86 during the first independent national Italian Antarctic expedition that he was introduced to the Polar Regions. Despite originating from a Mediterranean climate, performing a detailed analysis of over 1000 polar rock samples resulted in a real passion for the Polar Regions and the analysis of samples collected during the second expedition.

In 1988-99, Ricci made his first expedition to the Antarctic and coordinated all the Earth science research with the aim of understanding the role of Antarctica in the process of assembly and break-up of Gondwana (a supercontinent that some hundred million years ago assembled all the land masses of the southern hemisphere: South America, Africa, India, Australia and Antarctica). He looks back fondly at this expedition despite living in such extreme conditions in a distant field camp that required melting snow and ice to produce water.

Now, many expeditions later, Ricci shares his passion for rocks with his students. At the University of Siena, he also teaches earth system science to students of M.Sc. level and coordinates a PhD school on polar sciences, unique in Europe. At the same time, he is actively involved in the scientific community. Ricci currently serves as the President of the Italian National Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, the Editor of *Terra Antartica*, the International Union of Geological Sciences' representative to the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), the Italian national delegate to the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), as well as the Chairman of the European Polar Board. In his free time, he returns to Elba Island as often as possible to relive wonderful childhood memories, visit family and swim (when the sea is not too cold!).

We wish Professor Ricci a successful second term as the European Polar Board Chairman.

The European Polar Board Executive Committee 2009-2012



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European Polar Summit

European Polar Summit • 24 June 2009

at The International Auditorium,
Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 5,
1210 Brussels, Belgium

This event will highlight the outputs of EUROPOLAR ERA-NET, a major project funded by the European Commission, bringing together 27 Funding Organisations from 19 countries. This project culminated in a Memorandum of Understanding for a 'European Polar Framework'. We will also look to the future and the implications for the development of the European Research Area and its impact on a future European Union Arctic Policy.

► Please note that this event is **by invitation only**. Should you like an invitation, please contact Katie Luck. Upon receipt, you will need to register your presence online by 12 June 2009.

The agenda is as following:

Event starts at 9:00

- Official Launch of the European Polar Summit
- Surveying of National Polar Programmes and Infrastructures
- Policy Advice
- PolarCLIMATE Programme
- 'Histories from the North – environment, movements, narratives': BOREAS EUROCORES Programme – new approaches to Polar Research
- Background Context of the Memorandum of Understanding for a 'European Polar Framework'
- Signing Ceremony and Passage to the European Polar Board
- Official Closure of the EUROPOLAR ERA-NET

Buffet Lunch

- ERICON AURORA BOREALIS Information Session
- Conclusion

Event ends at 15:00

**EUROPEAN
SCIENCE
FOUNDATION**
SETTING SCIENCE AGENDAS FOR EUROPE

**EUROPEAN
POLAR BOARD**



**European
Polar
Consortium**



European Polar Summit

Establishing a European Framework for Polar Research

Wednesday 24 June 2009

The International Auditorium, 9:00-15:00
Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 5 • 1210 Brussels

The European Polar Consortium was financed under a Contract from European Commission Framework Programme 6 Contract No 517842.
The ERICON project is supported by the European Commission under Framework Programme 7 Contract ERAC 211796.



Upcoming Meetings, Conferences and Events

- ▶ **6-11 June 2009:**
Mechanisms of Quaternary Climate Change: Stability of Warm Phases in the Past and in the Future (ESF-FWF-LFUI Conference)
Obergurgl University Centre • Obergurgl, Austria
<http://www.esf.org/index.php?id=5310>
- ▶ **8-9 June 2009:**
PolarCLIMATE Review Panel Meeting
ESF-COST Offices • Brussels, Belgium
This meeting is open to Review Panel members only.
- ▶ **22 June 2009:**
ERICON Stakeholder Council Meeting
ESF-COST Offices • Brussels, Belgium
This meeting is open to ERICON Stakeholder Council delegates only.
- ▶ **23 June 2009:**
PolarCLIMATE Programme Board Meeting
ESF-COST Offices • Brussels, Belgium
This meeting is open to Programme Board members only.
- ▶ **24 June 2009:**
European Polar Summit
The International Auditorium • Brussels, Belgium
This event is by invitation only. Please contact Katie Luck (kluck@esf.org) if you would like an invitation.
- ▶ **6-7 July 2009:**
European Polar Board Executive Committee Meeting
Ministry of Education, University and Research • Rome, Italy
This meeting is open to Executive Committee members only.
- ▶ **6-7 July 2009:**
IPICS Workshop on “Science and Technology for the Next Generation of International Ice Coring”
Oregon State University Corvallis • Oregon, USA
<http://www.pages.unibe.ch/ipics/meetings.html>
- ▶ **7-11 September 2009:**
First Antarctic Climate Evolution (ACE) Symposium
Parque de las Ciencias (Science Museum) • Granada, Spain
<http://www.acegranada2009.com>
- ▶ **11-13 September 2009:**
The Ditchley Foundation Conference
“The Arctic Region in the Twenty-First Century” • Quebec City, Canada
- ▶ **Autumn 2009:**
European Polar Board Plenary Meeting • Dates and Location To Be Determined
This meeting is open to EPB Delegates only.
- ▶ **30 November – 3 December 2009:**
Antarctic Treaty Summit
Smithsonian Institution • Washington DC, USA
<http://www.atsummit50.aq>
- ▶ **14-18 December 2009:**
AGU Fall Meeting 2009 • San Francisco, California, USA
- ▶ **24-29 January 2010:**
Arctic Frontiers – Living in the High North • Tromso, Norway
<http://www.arctic-frontiers.com>
- ▶ **13-16 April 2010:**
Arctic Science Summit Week 2010 • Nuuk, Greenland
- ▶ **8-12 June 2010:**
IPY Oslo Science Conference 2010 • Oslo, Norway
<http://www.ipy-osc.no>



Aurora Borealis by night

ERICON AURORA BOREALIS Delegation visit to Moscow

The ERICON Management team recently visited Moscow for a series of high-level meetings with Russian Federal Agencies, major Scientific Institutions and political officials regarding Cooperation in Arctic research and especially in relation to the research icebreaker AURORA BOREALIS. A Roundtable was arranged at the German Embassy with representatives of the science councilors from many European Embassies to discuss the prospects for European Russian Cooperation in Arctic research.



Visit to the PP Shirshov Institute for Oceanology with the Director Academician Robert Nigmatulin, Academician Alexander Lisitsyn and the ERICON management team.



Dr. Egerton and Professor Thiede meeting the Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for International cooperation Arctic and Arctic Affairs Dr. Artur Chilingarov for political discussions at his offices in the State Duma



Meeting with the Vice President of the Russian Academy of Sciences Professor Nikolai Laverov

The European Science Foundation (ESF) provides a platform for its Member Organisations to advance European research and explore new directions for research at the European level. Established in 1974 as an independent non-governmental organisation, the ESF currently serves 80 Member Organisations across 30 countries.