



ALFRED-WEGENER-INSTITUT
HELMHOLTZ-ZENTRUM FÜR POLAR-
UND MEERESFORSCHUNG

Statement

The Alfred Wegener Institute supports the “March for Science”

A statement by AWI Director Prof Karin Lochte

[18. April 2017] On Saturday, 22 April 2017, there will be a worldwide “March for Science”: in more than 300 cities, people will take to the streets, demonstrating for the freedom of science and research. The Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research (AWI) welcomes this initiative, which it is raising awareness for with posters at several locations. Institute staff will send messages of support to those participating in the “March for Science” - from the Open Ship Polarstern event in Bremerhaven, from on board the research ship Heincke, from the Antarctic research station Neumayer III, and from the Arctic research station AWIPEV. Some members of staff will also personally join in the “March for Science”. AWI Director Prof Karin Lochte has issued the following statement:

Science represents one of the most important pillars of our society. It helped to spawn the Enlightenment and democracy, shapes countless aspects of our day-to-day lives, and will remain indispensable for the prosperity of future



AWI Director Prof Karin Lochte (Photo: Martina Buchholz)

generations. Further, science thrives on the freedom of opinion, on tolerance and international exchange, and on the shared goal of understanding the world we live in and using peaceful means to make it just a bit better every single day. In short, science is one of our most valuable resources, which is why the Alfred Wegener Institute supports the “March for Science”.

In numerous countries around the globe, populist movements are currently manipulating the facts to support their own views and goals. “Undesirable” research is being hampered and good science is being called into question – a trend that could seriously jeopardize important achievements like the Paris Agreement. Further, there is a risk that the public will lose faith in science in general, when scientific findings are disputed at higher, influential political levels. Though many areas are affected, climate and environmental research – and with it, the core duties of the Alfred Wegener Institute – are especially at risk. One of our declared missions is to document and predict climate changes in the Earth’s polar regions as accurately as possible. Scientists are obligated to, and must enjoy the freedom to point out the truth, even if it is inconvenient: research conducted in the Arctic and Antarctic, but also closer to

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The Alfred Wegener Institute pursues research in the polar regions and the oceans of mid and high latitudes. As one of the 18 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.

home in the North Sea, clearly shows the impacts of climate change.

These are facts that we have to take seriously. We use them as the basis for making recommendations on how society can best respond to changes in the environment. But suitable responses will ultimately only be achieved if scientific findings are also accepted as being valid. As such, it is vital that the scientific community remains a dependable, trustworthy and independent source of information to guide many of society's most important decisions. That's something we all have to fight for - as researchers and as citizens.

More information

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