

Press Release



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Kiel Marine Scientists welcome H.S.H. Prince Albert II. to Cape Verde Sovereign of Monaco presents a three-year research project at GEOMAR's Ocean Science Centre Mindelo

21 September 2017 / Mindelo. High-ranking visit at the new Ocean Science Centre Mindelo of the GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel on the Cape Verde Islands.

H.S.H. Prince Albert II. of Monaco presents a three-year circumnavigation around the globe with the Monegasque research vessel YERSIN. During the expedition, scientists will conduct investigations in all world oceans. With the project Prince Albert II. is aiming to draw public attention to growing environmental problems of islands off the coast of West Africa.

His great-grandson, Prince Albert II of Monaco is continuing this tradition and he has now launched a unique research project, the "Monaco Exploration Campaign", during which all tropical oceans and seas will be visited by the Monegasque research vessel YERSIN in a period of three years.

The first of nine major research areas of the expedition with MV YERSIN is "Macaronesia" which encompasses the island of Madeira and the Cape Verde Islands. Scientists from GEOMAR and the Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel support the Monegasque team during the expedition campaign around the Cape Verde archipelago.

"Jointly with 'Monaco Explorations' we will launch state-of-the-art measuring platforms such as an autonomous glider and a surface lander and wave glider to collect, physical, chemical and biological data which are important for the identification of future marine protected areas", Dr. Björn Fiedler from GEOMAR, who is currently on a six-month research stay in Mindelo, explained. "GEOMAR has been active around Cape Verde for many years with intensive measurement campaigns, which ultimately led to the construction of a research station on the island of Sao Vicente", Fiedler continued.

During a symposium held on 21 September at GEOMAR's new research centre, the Ocean Science Centre Mindelo, Prince Albert II. presented the research campaign in the presence of the Cape Verdean President. Afterwards, Prince Albert II. and Dr. Björn Fiedler will board RV YERSIN to accompany the research programme around the Cape Verde Islands.

"The decisions we have to make for the future of our planet are based on knowledge", said Prince Albert II. "With the 'Monaco Exploration Campaign', we are continuing the long tradition of marine research in Monaco and want to promote knowledge and awareness about the state of our oceans", the Prince continued.

The areas of the "Monaco Exploration Campaign" were selected by a Scientific Steering Committee headed by Professor Patrick Rampal of the Monaco Scientific Center. Comparative studies with the historical work shall allow an analysis of the impacts of the use of the oceans in the context of global change. The mission around the West African island group focuses on the investigation

protection of megafauna, including endangered species: turtles, whales, monk seals and sharks. The researchers will investigate biodiversity in the still underdeveloped deep sea and its sensitivity to global warming. The other scientific missions will lead the YERSIN and its scientific crews through the Caribbean, the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean before the ship will return to Monaco in mid-2020.

“We are pleased to welcome H.S.H. Prince Albert II. as the first guest at the new Ocean Science Centre Mindelo and are very happy to support his project”, said Prof. Dr. Peter Herzig, Director of GEOMAR. “The connection of Kiel's marine research with the Monaco dates back to the work of Prince Albert I.” In this respect, we have been partners in the exploration of the oceans for more than 100 years”, Herzig continued.

The Ocean Science Centre Mindelo will officially be opened on 14 November during a scientific