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20 Years AWIPEV The French – German Arctic Research Base

A successful cooperation in international polar research celebrates its 20th anniversary.

In 2003, the German Alfred Wegener Institute (AWI) and the French Polar Research Institute Paul-Émile Victor (IPEV) merged their stations Koldewey and Rabot on Svalbard to form the AWIPEV base. Since then, scientists from both countries have jointly been conducting research there on the effects of climate change in the Arctic as part of the Ny-Ålesund research station coordinated by Norway. The anniversary of the successful partnership will be celebrated on June 14, 2023, at a festive event at the French Embassy in Berlin.

Sixty years ago, the signing of the Élysée Treaty sealed the friendship between France and Germany. Since then, the treaty has become a symbol of a strong and trusting partnership in all areas of society - including science. A very special testimony to joint research celebrates its 20th anniversary this year: the Franco-German research station AWIPEV in Ny-Ålesund on Svalbard.

In 2003, the German Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research (AWI) and the French polar research institute Paul-Émile Victor (IPEV) combined their previously independent research stations Koldewey and Rabot to form the AWIPEV base. The station in Ny-Ålesund is located at 79°N in a key region for understanding climate change. There, in the Arctic, temperatures are rising almost four times as fast as the global average over the past 40 years - a phenomenon known as "Arctic amplification."

"AWIPEV's research focuses, among other things, on climate change-induced alterations of the atmosphere, permafrost, and glacier systems, as well as the responses of Arctic marine life to rising temperatures and increasing ocean acidification", the Director of AWI, Prof. Dr. Antje Boetius, says. "To this end, the station provides numerous laboratories for physical, biological and chemical studies, an atmospheric observatory, and living and recreation rooms for researchers", the Director of the French Polar Institute, Dr. Yan Ropert-Coudert, adds. The station also serves as a base for expeditions to the Ny-Ålesund area and to West Svalbard.

The Svalbard archipelago is located east of Greenland in the Arctic Ocean. Svalbard, also known as Spitsbergen, belongs to Norway. The term "Svalbard" means "cool coast". The archipelago is home to Ny-Ålesund on the Kongsfjord, one of the northernmost settlements in the world. Depending on the season, between 30 (winter) and 120 (summer) people live there. Today, the small town houses the Ny-Ålesund research station, a hot spot for international Arctic research, as eleven countries operate stations and research laboratories. Scientists from all over the world and all disciplines of polar research therefore meet there.



On June 14, 2023, the 20th anniversary of the AWIPEV station will be celebrated at the French Embassy in Berlin. At the festive event, among other things, the most important results of atmospheric, glacier, permafrost and marine research at AWIPEV from the last two decades will be presented in the context of short lectures. In addition, the Director of AWI, Prof. Dr. Antje Boetius, and the Director of the French Polar Institute (IPEV), Dr. Yan Ropert-Coudert, will sign an agreement for enhanced joint cooperation ("Memorandum of Understanding"). The AWIPEV-team on Svalbard will be connected via video link from the Arctic to share their experiences and answer questions "live". A get-together and a photo exhibition in the French embassy will round off the anniversary event.

More information:

- <https://www.awipev.eu/>
- <https://institut-polaire.fr/fr/arctique/la-station-awipev/>
- <https://nyalesundresearch.no>

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