



PRESS RELEASE
INTERNATIONAL POLAR FOUNDATION
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PRINCESS ELISABETH ANTARCTICA AWAKES FROM ITS WINTER SLEEP

“ZERO EMISSION” RESEARCH STATION TO WELCOME INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC PROJECTS AND SCHOOL TEACHER DURING BELARE 2011-2012

On November 16th, the first BELARE expedition members landed in Utsteinen, marking the opening of the 2011-2012 Antarctic season. Upon their arrival, the team's first focus was to clear the accumulated snow and kick the station back into high gear for another thrilling scientific season.

This season, the research teams, national and international will relay each other and take full advantage of the station's location. This year will also be in the sign of increased international collaboration with the *Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe* (Germany) and the National Institute of Polar Research (Japan). The German delegation will come in full attire, complete with airplane and helicopters, in time for Christmas.

Around the same time, the *Mary Arctica* icebreaker that was chartered in previous years should arrive in Crown Bay with all the necessary equipment for the structural additions and updates foreseen for the Princess Elisabeth Station. From additional and more efficient solar panels to increased battery capacity or testing new wind turbines, no effort will be spared to maintain the Princess Elisabeth Station as an example for energy efficiency and sustainable technology.

A scientific platform first and foremost, the station facilities will also see substantial upgrades to their information technology and communications structures, as well as to in-field support. The additions to be made include stand-alone GPS systems in the mountains and the installation of radio antennas and repeaters for communications with the coast, the plateau or the air strip at Utsteinen.

Exciting news for this new season will be the presence of a Belgian teacher. Koen Meirlaen and his class of the Leiepoort Campus Sint-Hendrik Deinze were the winners of the PolarQuest contest, an educational project of the IPF. The story of Koen will be followed closely by his class and school in an effort to raise awareness on climate change and related actions.

NOTE TO THE EDITOR

The scientific projects to be conducted this season at the Princess Elisabeth Station in Utsteinen, Antarctica include the BELATMOS, BELDIVA, BELISSIMA, BGR, GIANT/LISSA, and NIPR projects, as described below. Or visit www.antarcticstation.org.

The teams that will conduct research at the Princess Elisabeth Station in 2011-2012 are the following:

NIPR (November 9th, 2011 – February 21st, 2012)

This season, the main objective for the NIPR geologists will be to do a geological survey of the Central Sør Rodane Mountains. They will try to determine the age of the various rock formations and analyze the movement of glaciers through these rock formations.

BELISSIMA (November 22nd, 2011 – December 22nd, 2011)

This glaciology project aims at better understanding the glacial flow towards the ocean, a phenomenon which could accelerate as a result of climate change and contribute to the sea level rise.

GEA II (December 20th, 2011 – January 31st, 2012)

The German scientists from the BGR will conduct follow-up research to last year's expedition. Heading to the Sør Rondanes, they will conduct an aero-physical survey of the region, as well as helicopter-supported geological and geophysical research.

BELDIVA (January 30th, 2012 – February 21st, 2012)

Microorganisms thrive around the Princess Elisabeth Station. The aim of this project is to explore the microbial diversity within a 200 km radius around the station.

BELATMOS (January 30th, 2012 – February 21st, 2012)

These researchers observe the composition and chemistry of the atmosphere at the Princess Elisabeth Station with the aim of monitoring ozone and related trace gases, UV radiation and aerosol particles.

GIANT/LISSA (January 30th, 2012 – February 21st, 2012)

Combines GPS data, gravimetry and seismology techniques to trace horizontal and vertical deformations of the Earth's surface with the aim of studying the relation between these and the ice mass variations.

For additional news and information on the BELARE expedition, on the Princess Elisabeth Station or the International Polar Foundation, please consult the following websites:

www.antarcticstation.org

www.polarfoundation.org

Background information on the IPF:

The International Polar Foundation is a public utility foundation, which aims to promote polar research as a tool for raising public awareness and fostering understanding of the fundamental mechanics of our climate. The IPF also encourages the adoption of innovative solutions that will enable us to respond to the challenges associated with climate change in a sustainable manner.

The IPF is the mandated Antarctic Operator for the Belgian Polar Secretariat.

IPF Media Contacts:

To arrange an interview with team members of the BELARE 2011-2012 Expedition, please forward your request to our Press Officer Ben Huyge via e-mail (ben.huyge@polarfoundation.org) or phone (+32 2 543 06 98).