



Media Release
International Polar Foundation
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Princess Elisabeth Antarctica Station: The Team Returns after a Successful Expedition

The Princess Elisabeth Station's inauguration on February 15th, 2009, has placed Belgium back on the Antarctic map with a new and unique research station: the first to operate without releasing any greenhouse gases. The second construction phase of the Antarctic station turned out to be extremely successful, owing Alain Hubert, President of the International Polar Foundation and Director of the station project, and the entire construction team.

The last members of the BELARE (Belgian Antarctic Research Expedition) 2008-09 team returned to Belgium on Friday March 13th, 2009, after installing the station's technical systems and inside equipment. Despite the technical and meteorological challenges the team had to face during the expedition, everyone was high-spirited and extremely motivated to complete the final phase of the station's construction, which lasted a little over 4 months.

Unique in its design and conception, the Princess Elisabeth Station has also proven to be a unifying project in its capacity to bring together people from all walks of life. Furthermore, the skills of many craftsmen and experts were needed to carry out the station's construction. The outcome would not have been possible without the support and confidence of the station's private partners, its individual donors and the Belgian Federal Government, many of whom regarded this project as an exemplar for sustainable development at an international level.

“By bringing new hope to our society, the Princess Elisabeth Station project demonstrates that with a positive attitude and the technological means we have at hand today, it is possible to confront tomorrow's climate challenge. The socio-economic scope of this project has also played a major part in the project's success,” explains Alain Hubert.

Having participated in research at the station under aegis of BELSPO (Belgian Science Policy Office), the first scientists came back complimenting the qualities of the station, its location and its adjoining facilities. As soon as November 2009, the station will accommodate new scientific teams. Preparatory discussions are currently taking place at an international level, showing evidence of the interest that exists amongst the scientific community to carry out research in East Antarctica.

The Princess Elisabeth Station will then be managed by a Polar Secretariat, a public/private agency that will officially come into existence following the signature of the Royal Decree establishing it.

Images



High resolution pictures of the expedition and Princess Elisabeth Station are available to the press free of charge. They can be downloaded at: www.press.polarfoundation.org after first contacting the IPF's press officer, Lise Johnson

Princess Elisabeth project and news:

www.antarcticstation.org

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International Polar Foundation (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 in a sustainable manner to the challenges associated with climate change.