

**Welcome address for the opening of the 10th International Meteorological Conference at the AWI 'GCOS Reference Upper-Air-Network' (GRUAN) on (23.4.2018)**

Dear Professor Thorne and Professor Rex,  
dear Professor Rahmstorf (PIK) and Professor Wickert (GFZ),  
dear Mr Becker and Mr Dirksen,  
dear conference attendees,  
dear employees of the Alfred Wegener Institute,  
**ladies and gentlemen!**

I would like to give you all a warm welcome to **Brandenburg** and the **state capital of Potsdam!** We are delighted to be able to host the 10th International Meteorological Conference of the '**GCOS Reference Upper-Air-Network**' (GRUAN) here!

We meet at a scientific location with a long history of tradition: in 1832, an optical telegraph station was constructed on Potsdam's Telegrafenberg. This represented

the first step on a path of impressive development to become a research location, which is now respected around the world.

The '**Albert Einstein Science Park**' is home to outstanding centres of research: besides the **Alfred Wegener Institute**, you will also find here the **German Research Centre for Geosciences** (GFZ), likewise part of the Helmholtz Association, the **Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research** (part of the Leibniz Association), and the **Leibniz Institute for Astrophysics Potsdam**. All four institutes operate at an excellent level – and I am sure that this congress will further promote the **international networking** that is essential for their work!

This is particularly important for **issues concerning meteorology and climate**, which form the focus of your discussions here: these are **topics of global significance**, which transcend national borders. They are challenges that call for global cooperation – not only in research, but also in the political sphere.

The **Alfred Wegener Institute** focuses particularly on the relationship between climate and environmental changes – as manifested in the world's periglacial regions

dominated by permafrost. For reliable and dependable investigations in this field, model-based analyses are critical as part of major international projects.

As an example, I would like to mention the '**Multidisciplinary drifting Observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate**' (MOSAiC) – a platform for the geohydrological survey of near-surface areas: in just over a year, a team directed by the Alfred Wegener Institute will embark on a (genuine) adventure on the research vessel Polarstern and examine the Arctic climate more extensively than ever before. As part of this endeavour, the Polarstern will drift through the Arctic ice over the course of twelve months. But who can explain it better than yourself, **Professor Rex**, who is coordinating the major international research project from the Alfred Wegener Institute in Potsdam...

Without a doubt, it is worth mentioning that **sponsors from around the world** are<sup>1</sup> funding<sup>2</sup> this international consortium of top-class research institutions – such as the

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<sup>1</sup> 50 organisations from 14 countries are involved in MOSAiC.

<sup>2</sup> with more than 60 million euros (as at: 03/2017 = 63.222 million euros)

German federal government and the federal states, including Brandenburg, which also co-finance the Alfred Wegener Institute.

I am absolutely convinced that this is money well-invested – and that you will be able to obtain from the ice important insights **for all climate zones!**

The **Alfred Wegener Institute** distinguishes itself both nationally and internationally with its research – a current testament to this is the excellent result in the recently conducted **scientific evaluation**, which I would also like to mention at this point.

**(Ladies and gentlemen!)**

The state of Brandenburg has advanced to become a **high-profile location for research.**

Together with Berlin, it offers one of the greatest densities of scientific institutions and research institutes throughout Europe. Not only here on Telegrafenberg, but also many other locations in Brandenburg are home to excellent research institutes and top-performing universities.

**Universities and non-university research** enjoy a very high level of networking. Following the transfer strategy adopted last year, the state places a key focus on the close integration of research and development, as well as on the transfer of knowledge in research and society. Thanks to its outstandingly qualified specialists, the scientific landscape here makes the region highly appealing to companies. It attracts young people from all corners of the globe.

**Society and politics** depend on the success of research and the insights gained, in order to solve the problems of today and tomorrow. This is why we have invested considerably in facilities and infrastructure across a wide range of our research institutions over recent years.

If you have time to take a walk on Telegrafenberg, you will see a number of new buildings and developments. (For example, the new wings to the main building of the Alfred Wegener Institute; the new research building for the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, and – of course – the extensions to the German Research Centre for Geosciences). The vibrancy of the scientific landscape can also be seen in

many other places in the state of Brandenburg – including in the new research buildings with state-of-the-art technology.

**And** – last but certainly not least – **Potsdam** is not just a **superb venue for your conference** for its strong focus on research: the **World Heritage Site of Prussian Palaces and Parks** likewise provides a perfect setting for a visit, as do the city's exhibitions and museums. I would also like to mention the Max Beckmann Exhibition currently running in **Museum Barberini** in the rebuilt Old Market Square of the state capital. Take this opportunity to discover Potsdam and the state of Brandenburg – we would love to welcome you back!

I would like to wish you all a successful congress with plenty of stimulating scientific discussion, fascinating insights and new contacts – and, of course, a **wonderful time here in Brandenburg!**