

## PRESS RELEASE

**The award winner is Prof. Antje Boetius, Alfred Wegener Institute**

### **Award of the Klüh Foundation for further research into climate change**

Düsseldorf, 22.10.2021 – This year, the Klüh Foundation for the Promotion of Innovation in Science and Research honours a scientist whose sensational research has made a highly relevant contribution to understanding climate change. The award, endowed with 25,000 Euros, goes to Antje Boetius, Professor of Geomicrobiology at the University of Bremen. The director of the Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research (AWI) in Bremerhaven, is currently researching the effects of climate change on the Arctic Ocean and biodiversity in the deep sea.

As part of an international team on board the research icebreaker Polarstern, in 2012 she recorded the most extensive decline in Arctic sea ice since satellite records began.

The far-reaching effects on all life in the Arctic, right down to the deep sea, moved her to join further major research programmes. In 2014, for example, she received funding from the European Research Council for a project to study unknown biodiversity in the Arctic deep sea and its significance for climate change.

#### **Unknown deep-sea habitats**

Extensive funding from the Helmholtz Association allowed her to establish a unique underwater observation infrastructure in the Arctic at the Alfred Wegener Institute. Further expeditions enabled the discovery of previously unknown deep-sea habitats with a unique biodiversity.

As director of the AWI, she supported the MOSAIC expedition, the largest North Pole expedition to date, in which the research icebreaker allowed itself to be trapped in the Arctic ice for a year in order to research the interaction between atmosphere, ice and ocean during the polar winter in an international collaboration.

Antje Boetius and her team are currently investigating the direct influence of sea ice dynamics on unicellular life in the Arctic Ocean. The rapid decline of Arctic sea ice is one of the consequences of global warming and is directly linked to human CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, as the current Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stresses. The first ice-free summer could already be possible around 2030. Antje Boetius therefore considers the comprehensive observation of the effects of the decline in sea ice on biodiversity, material cycles and the climate system to be a central task of research.

**Personal details:**

*Antje Boetius is Director of the Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research (AWI) in Bremerhaven and Professor of Geomicrobiology at the University of Bremen. She also heads the Bridge Group for Deep-Sea Ecology and Technology at the Max Planck Institute for Marine Microbiology and is a member of the MARUM Cluster of Excellence at the University of Bremen. Boetius is a member of the National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, the Academy of Sciences and Literature Mainz and various international academies. The marine researcher has received many awards, including the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize of the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Communicator Award of the DFG and the Donors' Association and the German Environmental Prize, and is a recipient of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany. Boetius has taken part in almost 50 expeditions on international research ships. She supports science communication, the collaboration of art and science and is a member of UNICEF.*

**About the Klüh Foundation:**

*The Foundation for the Promotion of Innovation in Science and Research, established in 1987 by the company's owner Josef Klüh to mark the 75th anniversary of the Düsseldorf-based family business Klüh Service Management has, since then, awarded foundation prizes totalling 780,000 Euros. In recent years, the foundation has supported a wide range of medical research projects.*

**About Klüh:**

*Klüh Service Management GmbH is a global multi-service provider from Düsseldorf. Founded in 1911, the company has decades of experience in the area of infrastructural services. The departments Cleaning, Catering, Clinic Service, Security, Personnel Service, Airport Service and Integrated Services offer both individual services as well as multiservice concepts. With more than 49,000 employees in eight nations, the company achieves sales of over 807 million Euros (2020). For further information see [www.klueh.de](http://www.klueh.de).*

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