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Here we go - finally!

After having some problems with the journey (delays in the flight schedule, loss of luggage) which are usual for us meanwhile, our 8-member "advance troop" reached Longyearbyen in the afternoon of September 13th. The following day was primarily used to prepare the large equipment to be deployed during the expedition. The majority of the participants finally arrived (complete and with luggage!) in the night from Friday to Saturday. After a short breather, we started to setup the laboratories and prepare the various measuring, recording and sampling devices.

In the early evening of September 15th we finally set sail. The cruise will take us to the LTER (Long-Term Ecological Research) observatory HAUSGARTEN in Fram Strait. This area is revisited by us annually already since 20 years. The multidisciplinary work at HAUSGARTEN observatory is carried out to investigate the impact of Climate Change and the continuously retreating sea-ice on the Arctic marine ecosystem.

Today, HAUSGARTEN resembles a network of 21 stations at water depths ranging between 300 and 5.500 m, which were sampled by us in the water column as well as at the seafloor. The stations are sampled every year during the summer months both in the water column and on the seabed. The planned work will be carried out in close cooperation between the HGF-MPG Joint Research Group for Deep Sea Ecology and Technology, the PEBCAO Group ("Phytoplankton Ecology and Biogeochemistry in the Changing Arctic Ocean") of the AWI and the Helmholtz-University Young Investigators Group SEAPUMP ("Seasonal and regional food web interactions with the biological pump") and will make valuable contributions to various national and international research and infrastructure projects (e.g. INTAROS, ICOS, ARCHES, FRAM, and SIOS). Furthermore, the work contributes to the research programme PACES II ("Polar Regions and Coasts in the changing Earth System") of the Alfred Wegener Institute Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research (AWI), which was started in 2014.

On the morning of September 16th at around 8:00 a.m. we reached the first station and started this year's "gardening work", of which we will report in detail in the following weeks.

With the best regards of all participants,
Thomas Soltwedel