

RV METEOR

M179/2 FjordFlux (GPF 19-1_077)

15.01. - 20.02.2022, Punta Arenas - Montevideo

1st weekly report (10. - 23.01.2022)

Although the cruise had not yet started, two pieces of bad news reached us: 1) one of the ten German scientific cruise participants was tested positive for covid after arrival at Santiago de Chile, so the whole group was sent into quarantine as direct contacts and 2) on January 11, while entering Punta Arenas, we received the diplomatic permit for Chile, which included a research ban for three of the four requested fjords. Both pieces of news necessitated a complete rescheduling of the cruise plan, although the new framework conditions (duration of the quarantine and practical implications of the diplomatic approval) were not clear for a long time.

The METEOR initially lay in the roads off Punta Arenas for two days until it was able to move to the pier on the evening of January 12. There, because of a ban by the Chilean authorities, all hopes for a shore leave were disappointed relatively quickly.

On Friday, January 14, the embarkation of the South American participants and a protocolary visit of Mrs. Marie-Joséphine Vecchio as representative of the German embassy in Santiago with a two-headed film team took place on the METEOR. In the talks with Mrs. Vecchio the current situation on-board and problems were discussed, while the film team interviewed cruise participant Dr. Gemita Pizarro and the chief scientist for outreach activities.

On January 15, 5:00 local time, the METEOR departed to return to roadstead, where the weekend was used by all new boarders to set up the laboratories and prepare scientific equipment. On January 17, news reached us that at the end of quarantine, another colleague had tested positive for covid and would also be unable to participate in the cruise, but all others would be able to leave quarantine on Jan. 18 and travel to Punta Arenas for embarkation. Two of the four participants who dropped out (two Argentine colleagues also were tested positive) could be replaced at short notice by a Chilean scientist and a scientist from cruise M179/1 who will remain on board.

In addition, on January 18, the Chilean Minister of Science, Dr. Andrés Couve, announced a last minute protocol visit to METEOR for the evening. The minister arrived on board at 19:00 accompanied only by his photographer Hector Millar. Immediately after the welcome by Captain Korte, the Minister, Humberto González, Director of the IDEAL Center, and the chief scientist had a conversation on deck about the current situation of the diplomatic permit. The conversation took place in a very open, factual and trusting atmosphere. After the talk, a short tour of the ship including the bridge and some laboratories followed. Finally, a group photo was taken with the Minister and all Chilean participants and directly afterwards Captain Korte said goodbye to the Minister.



Fig.1: Chief scientist Bernd Krock, Minister of Science Andrés Couve and Humberto González (from left) in conversation on deck.



Fig.2: Group photo with Minister Dr. Couve and the Chilean cruise participants

Early in the morning of January 19, the voyage could start with four days delay in best weather with almost cloudless sky and around noon, the first station at the mouth of the Seno Almirantazgo was reached. As expected, the deck work at the first station was still somewhat uncoordinated and took a relatively long time at eight hours. But already on the second day the next two stations at the head of Bahía Parry, which is characterized by several sea-terminating glaciers, were completed much more smoothly and especially faster. On 21.01. the work was completed in Bahía Parry and continued on 22.01. in Seno Almirantazgo.



Fig.3: METEOR at the first station at the inner end of Bahía Parry.

All participants are well and send greetings home. They also continue to inform about the research activities and life on board on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/ThoelenClaudia>) and in blog posts (<https://icbm-auf-see.uni-oldenburg.de/>).

Bernd Krock

Alfred-Wegener-Institute, Helmholtz-Centre for Polar and Marine Research (AWI)

(Chief scientist M179/2)