

Weekly Report No. 6

SO260/2

12.02.2018 – 16.02.2018



On Monday February 12, 2018, we completed the third and last MeBo drill site in the area of the Southern Ewing Terrace at a sediment depth of 20 meters and the MeBo70 drill rig was brought back on deck of the RV SONNE around lunch time. The retrieved sediments were mostly sand with a layer of coarse sand and shell fragments at the base. The remaining station time was used to deploy the gravity corer and the giant box corer in an area where – based on Parasound surveys – we expected a coral mound structure. The 5 m long sediment core and the sediments retrieved by means of the box corer contained numerous fragments of cold-water corals and sessile fauna at the sediment surface and thus confirmed our assumption.

Coring activities of RV SONNE cruise SO260 were completed February 12 in the late afternoon and we left the working area towards Buenos Aires. After reaching the pilot station located within the inner Rio de la Plata mouth at around 10:00 pm of February 13 we entered port in Buenos Aires at 8 am the next day. Unfortunately, due to the very complicated custom formalities loading of containers could not start immediately on February 14 as initially planned but had to be postponed to the next day. Also loading of an additional container with our expedition equipment was not possible. The transport boxes containing our lab equipment had to be transported into a warehouse. The boxes are still stored within the warehouse and we hope very much that loading of the container and transport of our equipment back to Germany will start soon.

In the evening of February 16, 2018, a reception took place on board of the RV SONNE on invitation of the German ambassador in Buenos Aires, Jürgen Christian Mertens. Among others the reception was joined by the Argentine parliamentarian Cornelia Schmidt-Liermann (Cambiemos), representatives of MinCyT, of the port authorities and numerous universities and research institutes, the Master of RV AUSTRAL (the former/old SONNE) and ambassadors of several G20 countries (AUS, EU, FRA, GBR, ITA, MEX). After the welcoming speeches of Master Oliver Meyer and Ambassador Mertens as well as a short scientific presentation of RV SONNE expedition SO260 by chief scientist Sabine Kasten, the guests of the reception had the opportunity to tour the ship and talk to members of the crew and the scientific party to find out about research and life onboard the RV SONNE. After the Open Ship Event in January 2018 also this reception was again a great success because of the perfect organization by the ship's command, the German Embassy in Buenos Aires – in particular by Mrs Kathrin Megerle – the Ship Agency AMI / Ultramar, as well as the wonderful help of the crew and science party.



Figure 1: Guests of the reception on board the RV SONNE – among others the master of RV AUSTRAL, the former/old SONNE (3. from the right) (Photo: German Embassy).



Figure 2: The German Ambassador Jürgen Christian Mertens (right), Oliver Meyer (Master of RV SONNE; 4. from the right), Sabine Kasten (Chief Scientist of SO260, 2. from the left) and guests of the reception on board the RV SONNE on the evening of February 16, (Photo: German Embassy).

On behalf of all scientific cruise participants, I would like to use this last weekly report to again thank Master Oliver Meyer and the crew of the RV SONNE for their excellent support and helpfulness during cruise SO260. Only with their great help we were able to carry out our research and sampling activities as planned and to collect data and samples of great scientific value. All cruise participants have enjoyed the friendly and supportive atmosphere on board of the ship and for some of them – in particular some of the younger colleagues of whom some were on board of a ship for the very first time – the cruise will be a memorable, lifetime experience.



Figure 3: Scientific Party of the second leg of RV SONNE cruise SO260 (Photo: Hermann Pregler).

Greetings from the crew and scientific party of expedition SO260 on the RV SONNE,

Sabine Kasten (Chief Scientist)