

Research vessel POLARSTERN

PS119: 13.04. – 31.05.2019

Punta Arenas - Port Stanley

First weekly report: April 13/15 April, 2019



Departure to our research area in the Scotia Sea

On Monday, 15th of April 2019, at 13:48 local time RV POLARSTERN left her mooring at position C in front of the harbour of Punta Arenas for a 3-day transit toward her first research area in the waters of the sub-Antarctic island of South Georgia. Ahead of the departure for her 119th expedition, RV POLARSTERN had a week of mooring at different positions in the harbour of Punta Arenas to fulfil various logistic challenges. The first hurdle had already to be taken in Germany, as the participation in the vote for the European election on the 26th May is impossible while being on board. In the state of Bremen, the European election will be together with the vote for the state's house of representatives, and therefore we wanted to vote already before leaving. Despite the fact that the candidates for representatives were only announced on 1st April and the voting forms had still to be printed, the voting office in Bremen did their best and enabled us to vote in the state office at An der Weide 14-16 on the 8th of April (Figs. 1 and 2). Our major acknowledgements go to the Head of Office, Mr Martin Kesper, who together with his team prepared the voting for us and we were able to fulfil our citizen right and duty to vote.



Figure 1: The voting office in Bremen especially prepared for participants of the POLARSTERN expedition PS119 for the European and state elections on 26th May 2019.



Figure 2: Deputy Head of Voting Mrs Laura Kersting with participants of PS119, who were pleased to be able to vote on the 4th April already.

The further challenges that the vessel and her crew had to master were directed by harbour logistics. The previous cruise with RV POLARSTERN had to arrive earlier than planned but the vessel had to stay on an outer mooring as the only deep-water wharf, the Mardones Wharf, was occupied by freight vessels. The disembarking scientists had to be shuttled to land by the pilot boat and only 3 days later on Thursday, 11th April, loading of cargo, especially of the four containers carrying the ROV and its equipment, could start at Mardones Wharf (Figs. 3 and 4). Arriving bad weather forced the move of the vessel to an outer mooring and not until on Saturday 13th April the last two containers commenced, after RV POLARSTERN was able to moor at Mardones Wharf again.

Sunday was spent with the vessel bunkering fuel at the pier of the Cabo Negro refinery near Punta Arenas, where we received 2,000 tons of marine fuel during the day, so the vessel can be sailed for the following weeks. During the night, RV POLARSTERN moved again to an outer mooring position which enables us to

finish the last pre-departure tasks on the working deck on Monday, 15th April. After the last piece of airfreight had been delivered by the local agent at 13:30, the vessel was checked out and able to leave anchorage.



Figure 3: RV Polarstern at Mardones Wharf in Punta Arenas (© vdl).



Figure 4: Winch of the MARUM ROV QUEST 4000 just before being loaded onto RV POLARSTERN (© vdl).

In grey weather conditions and winds of 5-6 Beaufort, we steam, helped by a strong tidal current, at present with high speed through the Magellan Strait and expect to reach the mouth to the open ocean around 21:00. All on board are well.

Best wishes on behalf of all expedition participants,
Gerhard Bohrmann

RV POLARSTERN Monday, 15th April 2019