



Statement

by Rudolf Leisen

Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)

EuroOCEAN Conference

**Session „National perspectives for marine science
contribution to Sustainable Development Goals“**

12 June 2019

Paris, France

*(Speaking time: approx. 5
minutes)*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is widespread consensus on the benefits of European cooperation in education and research. We intend to build on this positive sentiment during the German Presidency and shape the coming decade of European research and education policy. We will put a focus on improving the way that education, research and innovation interact smoothly at European level. In short, the priorities of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research during the German EU Presidency will be to strengthen the role of education *and* science to develop and identify viable solutions for a digitalized future.

Digitalization will have a fundamental and lasting effect on society - comparable to the invention of electricity or the steam engine. The economic wellbeing of Europe will strongly depend on the capabilities of our societies to cope with the ongoing changes related to digitalization.

Thus in the context of education, one of our priorities is vocational education and training as it is crucial in times of shortages of skilled labour and changing demands due to digitalization. The equality of vocational and academic education and permeability are getting more and more important - this is one key topic of our minister in general.

Also research and science - and especially data-intensive sciences like oceanography - are affected by digitalization. The digital revolution has transformed the creation, storage and transfer of knowledge. We have to make sure that marine research data are available and accessible for future analysis. Thus Germany fully supports an Open Access Policy on Data Management and Publication. We are working on a national concept under the newly initiated "German Alliance for Marine Research". Additionally, the National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI) Initiative in Germany aims at systematically managing scientific and research data, providing long-term data storage, backup and accessibility, and networking the data both nationally and internationally.

Let me give you an example: In 2020 the German research vessel POLARSTERN will come back from the MOSAiC expedition, the

largest and most expensive central Arctic expedition ever with a total of more than 600 participants from 17 countries. Its goal is to comprehensively investigate, for the first time, local processes within the climate system. So, it is obvious that innumerable terabytes of climate data have to be made available to the whole research community for further analysis and decision making.

European integration is already well-developed in the marine and maritime sector. Germany supports the Joint Programme Initiative “Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans”. By creating a legal entity last year, JPI Oceans, as a joint initiative of 21 European countries, is now well-prepared to play a major role within the next framework programme.

JPI Oceans is an ideal platform to develop joint initiatives, not only on a scientific level, but also for a better use of marine infrastructure, for knowledge exchange as well as capacity building.

Germany, as a founding member of the newly established AISBL, is ready to further support this process for a better European integration of marine sciences. The German Ministry of Education and Research is convinced that granting smaller countries with lower research budgets access to larger research facilities is a major task for such an intergovernmental body. This helps to create a European research landscape. A good example for such a co-operation is given by the joint research activity BONUS in the Baltic Sea region.

The future of mankind depends on the wellbeing of our Seas and Oceans. Germany has therefore committed its framework programme “MARE:N” for coastal, marine and polar research to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Germany wants to participate actively in the ocean decade. Thus we will host the kick-off conference for the ocean decade in Berlin in early 2021. The planning process has only just begun, and Germany appreciates comments and suggestions on how to make this conference a great success.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much for your attention!