

German Ocean Award for Prince Albert II of Monaco



In recognition of his long-standing commitment to research and the preservation and protection of the oceans, the President of the Scientific Commission of the Mediterranean (CIESM) H.S.H. Prince Albert II has received the German Ocean Award ('Deutscher Meerespreis') in Kiel, Germany. The prize, which is jointly awarded by GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel and the Deutsche Bank, is given annually and comes with a cash prize of EUR10,000. The award ceremony formed part of the opening ceremony of the 41st International Congress of the Mediterranean Commission, a scientific congress attended by more than 500 scientists from 50 countries.

During the inauguration of the 41st CIESM Congress on 12 September in Kiel, Germany, H.S.H. Prince Albert II received the German Ocean Award ("Deutscher Meerespreis") in the presence of the patron of the German Ocean Award, Prime Minister of Schleswig-Holstein Torsten Albig and the Federal Minister of Education and Research Professor Johanna Wanka.

Marine Research History

Kiel and Monaco have a common history in marine research. More than 100 years ago, Prince Albert I of Monaco and Kiel Professor of marine science Otto Krümmel met with Italian, Spanish and French colleagues in the recently opened Oceanographic Museum of Monaco in order to design a common strategy for the exploration of the Mediterranean. Based on this initiative, the Scientific Commission of the Mediterranean (Commission Internationale pour l'Exploration Scientifique de la Méditerranée, CIESM) was founded in 1919. It was and still is an intergovernmental organization, based in Monaco, whose objective is to promote, coordinate and plan scientific research in the Mediterranean. Today, the organization has 23 members although, despite the early commitment of Otto Krümmel, Germany was only able to join CIESM in 1969. The Presidency of CIESM is currently assumed by Monaco, in the person of H.S.H. Prince Albert II who for many years has been personally engaged in protecting the oceans. In 2006, for instance, he established the Fondation Albert II de Monaco for the protection and preservation of globally threatened ecosystems which draws attention to problems such as global warming and acidification.

In his citation, transmitted via video message, EU-Commissioner Vella underlined the importance of multinational cooperation, especially in the field of marine and maritime research, which the EU supports by more than EUR200 million per year. He expressed that with his long-time commitment and support for the exploration, conservation and protection of the oceans, His Serene Highness Prince Albert II has made exceptional contributions, making him a worthy winner of the German Ocean Award.

High Priority

Dr. Cornel Wisskirchen, Regional Head of the Deutsche Bank AG for Northern Germany, also recognized the efforts of the Princely Monegasque family and especially of Prince Albert II, emphasising he is not aware of any other country where marine research has received such a high priority for more than 100 years as in Monaco.

In a first reaction, H.S.H. Prince Albert II. of Monaco said to be very honoured and accepted this award also on behalf of all scientists active in CIESM, the Mediterranean Science Commission. "We must continue our fight for marine research and exploration in order to save the oceans and their biodiversity. They are vital for the future of our planet. Without them, we will not be able to survive".

The 'Deutscher Meerespreis' (German Ocean Award) is awarded by the GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel and the Deutsche Bank under the patronage of the Prime Minister of Schleswig-Holstein.

With a value of EUR10,000, the 'Deutscher Meerespreis' is awarded to well-known individuals from the fields of politics, business, science or the media who have shown special commitment to the cause of preserving and protecting the world's oceans or to communicating knowledge and educating the public about them. Awarded since 2009, the 'Deutscher Meerespreis' is the successor prize to the Elisabeth-Mann-Borgese-Meerespreis of Schleswig-Holstein that from 2006 to 2009 was likewise awarded to notable public figures. Past prize winners include Dr. Joe Borg, formerly the EU commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries; Prof. Dr. Boris Worm, renowned internationally as a marine ecologist, and Prof. Dr. Klaus Töpfer, formerly the executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

