

Tragic Loss for International Hydrographic Community



On 31 August, the survey ship *Level A* collided with a Belgian-propelled barge on the Rhine at Basel, Switzerland, and capsized. The four crew members fell overboard. Although Professor Dr Volker Böder, director of the project and professor of geodesy and hydrography at the HafenCity University Hamburg (HCU), was rescued, he sadly died in hospital the following day as a result of his injuries. Despite a large-scale search operation, the skipper of the *Level A* has not yet been found. The two other crew members survived the accident.

The *Level A* was commissioned by the Basel urban construction and transportation departments and in collaboration with the Swiss Rhine ports active in Basel, tasked with testing new equipment and technologies for measuring the shipping lanes in the Rhine.

Boat and crew had arrived at Basel earlier that week and were due to remain working on the Rhine in Switzerland for a further two weeks.

Professor Dr Volker Böder made an enormous contribution to encouraging young professionals to join the hydrographic industry. He was one of the driving forces behind the international hydrographic exchange programmes that were established between higher educational institutes throughout Europe. Professor Dr Volker Böder realised that the hydrographers of the future would be operating in a global industry and that it was therefore important for students to gain international experience at an early stage – an initiative which deserves to be remembered. He also introduced special hydrographic summer camps in Germany to promote the profession of hydrography, and on an international level he contributed to the FIG by demonstrating how hydrographers benefit the global economy, not to mention his work for FIG Commission 4.

Dr Walter Pelka, president of the HCU, comments: "At this dreadful time, our thoughts and our sympathies go out to the families of Volker Böder and the captain of the *Level A*. We are terribly sorry to hear about this disaster. With the loss of professor Böder, we lose someone who was a great expert in his field, whose reputation extended far beyond the HCU Hamburg. Above all, we mourn a sincere, helpful and popular colleague. Words cannot truly express what this loss means to the HCU and the world of geomatics in particular."

The hydrographic community has lost an ambassador for the modern-day hydrographic surveyor. Let us hope that we can continue his legacy.

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