

## 1. Weekly Report

### RV Pelagia Expedition 64PE-445, SaltAx

On Sunday, August 26, 2018 our small team of (for the beginning) 7 scientists from Germany, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and Sudan boarded the research vessel Pelagia in the port of Limassol, Cyprus and got a warm welcome by the ship's crew. Some of our scientist even spotted some "known faces" which is one of the nice side effects when doing a lot of research at sea.

After the science crew moved their luggage into their cabins we directly started with the first preparations for our expedition. The shipping container that came from Kiel with the needed equipment was opened and the first lab space was prepared and setup.

Due to a necessary test run of the ship's generator, Pelagia left port in the afternoon for about three hours. This test was finished successfully and after the last paperwork was done, a pilot came one more time on Monday afternoon to finally guide us out of the port of Limassol and our journey started.

Since our working area is in the central Red Sea, we first headed into direction of Port Said, which marks the northern mouth of the Suez Canal that connects the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea. This canal is one of the world's most frequently used water ways and thus we had to anchor in the afternoon of August 28<sup>th</sup> at our waiting position. Close to midnight our convoy direction south entered the canal and we reached the Bitter Lakes in the morning hours of the following day. These lakes are used as waiting area for the ships to let go through the ships that pass the canal in the opposite direction and Pelagia was allowed to continue its passage in the afternoon of the same day. In the evening we reached the city of Suez at the northern end of the Red Sea in the Gulf of Suez.

Since then we are on the way to are working area and to Port Sudan, where 4 more Sudanese scientists from the Institute or Marine Research at the Red Sea University will join our expedition.

During transit we build up the labs and had the first scientific discussion and talks. Also, a detailed introduction to the Geology of the Red Sea and our main goals of the expedition was given to the scientists and the very interested crew.

We all were very happy when we got the written research permission of the Sudanese government mailed from the embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Khartoum.

Unfortunately, we had one drawback last week as well – the ship's internet fell out. Due to the loss of this communication way, we realized very fast, how much we nowadays rely on an internet connection for our daily work routine, also on a research ship. However, the IT-crew is working hard to find the problem and since Saturday evening we have at least the ship's own mailing system working again.

On the morning of September 02, we reached Port Sudan after a bit more than three days of transit. After clearance from the port authorities, we welcomed four Sudanese colleagues and one safety observer from the local authorities on board of Pelagia. Due to the tight working program we kept the visit as short as possible and left Port Sudan in the afternoon, heading towards the working area.

The scientific team is now complete, and we shall arrive in at our first station in the late Sunday evening where we will directly begin our research with detailed seafloor mapping and magnetometer measurements before we can do the first sparker seismic profiles, which we are awaiting with great excitement.

All in board are well and we are looking forward to the coming days.

With best regards,

Nico Augustin





*RV Pelagia waiting to leave towards the Red Sea in the Port of Limassol, Cyprus. Picture: J. Preine, University of Hamburg*



*In the morning hours the Egyptian fisherman sail onto the Bitter Lakes where the big ships are waiting in the haze to continue their Suez Canal passage. Picture: N. Augustin, GEOMAR*