

On the 8th of April Prof. Jürgen Sündermann, formerly director of the Centre for Marine and Climate Research of the University of Hamburg, was honored in Danzig with the Jubilee Medal of the Polish Academy of Sciences. This was in recognition of his decade-long work to promote German-Polish cooperation in the fields of oceanography and coastal engineering.

The cooperation began at a conference on "Advances in Sediment Transport" in Jablonna, near Warsaw, at which Jürgen Sündermann - a freshly appointed professor at the University of Hamburg - was invited speaker. There proved to be a number of common research interests between the Institute of Physical Oceanography of the University of Hamburg and the Institute of Hydraulic Engineering of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Danzig. In May of 1979, the Directors of both institutes (Prof. Jürgen Sündermann and Prof. Piotr Wilde) signed a "Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Scientific Cooperation" with the goal of cooperating in the following areas:

- * numerical simulation of currents and transports in shallow water areas,
- * verification of hydrodynamic-numerical models with observational data.

This cooperation was to be accompanied by an exchange of scientists and regular seminars on cutting edge research topics. The German Research Council and the Polish Academy of Sciences funded this cooperation from the very beginning and have continued to do so for 30 years now. The collaboration proved to be very fruitful with regard to scientific results and with regard to the lasting friendships forged. It was the starting point for a wide-scoped scientific cooperation in coastal research. Gradually, new partners, such as the GKSS Research Centre in Geesthacht, the Franzius Institute in Hannover, the Institute for Baltic Research in Warnemünde, the Institute for Oceanology of the the Polish Academy of Sciences in Sopot and the University of Stetin, became involved. Thus evolved a platform for communication and coordination of coastal science, particularly in the Southern Baltic, which led to further bilateral and European research projects. This was an especially significant source of dependability and trust in the 1980s, during the "cold war".

Up to now a total of ten seminars have been carried out concerning topical themes in coastal research (e.g. Odra flood, regional effects of climate change): 1982 in Hamburg, 1985 in Danzig, 1988 in Hannover, 1991

in Sopot, 1993 on the Island of Vilm, 1995 in Swinoujscie, 1997 in Ueckermünde, 2000 in Starbienino, 2003 in Ratzeburg, 2007 in Danzig.

As a sign of recognition and for his scientific contributions, Jürgen Sündermann was elected as a foreign member of the Polish Academy of the Sciences in 1994. He has been one of the editors of the respected Polish journal "Oceanologia" for several years.

In the meantime, Jürgen Sündermann has retired. In 2007 he and Hans von Storch agreed to transfer the management of the German part of the German-Polish partnership to the GKSS Institute for Coastal Research. On the Polish side the management is in the hands of the Institute for Hydraulic Engineering in Danzig. The meeting in 2007, the first seminar under the new regime, attested to the success of the new arrangements. A continuation of the seminar and active cooperation in future research projects are planned -- with Jürgen Sündermann continuing to be an active participant whose experience, knowledge and diplomatic skills are indispensable.

Hans von Storch, 16. April 2008