

Press release

Paris, 13th May 2014



Euro-Argo ERIC, a new European research infrastructure for global ocean observations

Euro-Argo is the European contribution to the international Argo array of 3,000 profiling floats measuring temperature and salinity from the surface down to 2,000 m throughout the global oceans. This is the first time a European legal entity (European Research Infrastructure Consortium, ERIC) has been established for in-situ observation of the global oceans. This is a major milestone which will optimize, sustain and improve the European contributions to Argo. Euro-Argo was officially created by the European Commission on May 12, 2014. It is also the first ERIC to be set up for environmental sciences. The Euro-Argo inauguration event will be held in Brussels on July 17, 2014.

Argo: a revolution in global ocean observation and monitoring

The international Argo programme was initiated in 2000 by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO and by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to develop an array of 3,000 autonomous profiling floats measuring temperature and salinity down to 2,000 metres throughout the deep global oceans. By the end of 2007 Argo had reached its initial target of 3,000 floats in operation. Argo is an essential element of the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) set up to monitor, understand and forecast the role of the oceans in the earth's climate. Together with satellite observations, Argo is the main source of data for ocean and climate research, seasonal and climate forecasting and for ocean analysis and forecasting.

The ERIC Euro-Argo: objectives and organization

The objectives of the Euro-Argo ERIC are to optimize, sustain and improve the European contributions to Argo and to provide a world-class service to the research (ocean and climate) and operational oceanography (Copernicus Marine Service) communities. Euro-Argo also aims at preparing the next phase of Argo with an extension to deeper depths, biogeochemical parameters and observations of the polar regions.

The Euro-Argo research infrastructure comprises a central facility and distributed national facilities. On 12th May 2014, the European Commission awarded European legal status (European Research Infrastructure Consortium) to the central facility. This European legal framework has been designed to facilitate the establishment and operation of research infrastructures of European interest. The Euro-Argo ERIC will play a coordinating role and will be in charge of the procurement, deployment and monitoring of European floats. Its seat is situated in the main Ifremer center in Brest for the first 5 years of its operation.

9 countries (France, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Greece, Poland and Finland) are all founding members of the Euro-Argo ERIC. Several new countries could also join the ERIC in the coming years (e.g. Spain, Bulgaria and Ireland).

WWW sites: www.argo.net , www.euro-argo.eu

