BELARE 2009-2010: THE NEW SEASON HAS JUST BEGUN



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At a briefing on Friday October 16th at the headquarters of the IPF, the new season for the Princess Elisabeth Station officially started! Fourty-four people will take part in BELARE this season, staying between one and five months at Utsteinen. The objective for this year is to finalize the tests of all the technical systems of the station. Moreover, a new satellite antenna will be installed next to the station.

The first team will be leaving on November 1st, 2009. In total, six teams will be relayed throughout the season: electromechanicians, cable installers, carpenters, and engineers from Laborelec, Consolar and Menerga, as well as technical assistants, doctors and cooks will all take part in this new adventure.

Seven scientists from Belgian universities will also be working on the site this year, one of which will be working alongside a team of Japanese researchers from this year's Japanese Antarctic Research Expedition (JARE 51). Steven Goderis, a researcher from the VUB and the University of Ghent (UGent) will work with them on the “Meteoritics and Planetary Science” project for which they will be collecting meteorites. Besides conducting a geological survey to clarify the East-West Gondwana collision and dispersion, they will try to recover the Cenozoic glacial history and global environmental changes through a geomorphological survey. The Japanese team will also conduct geological and geomorphological studies.

The ice-breaker “Mary Arctica” will set off from Bremerhaven in Germany on November 12th and should arrive in Antarctica by December 22nd. It will contain 15 containers transporting between 90 to 100 tons of material. The remaining material will be flown to Antarctica.

In order for all the participants to be well-prepared for the dangers of Antarctica, the Belgian Ministry of Defense, a partner in this project, will organize a special training for all members of the team from October 27th to 29th.

As usual, you can follow this season on the Princess Elisabeth Station website.