UNTIL NEXT NOVEMBER!



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Yet another successful research season has come to an end at the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica.

This past week the final 12 members of the BELARE 2023-24 team wrapped up the last in-situ science projects of the season and performed the final maintenance and logistics tasks before closing up the station and heading to Cape Town on Wednesday, February 21st.

At the beginning of the week, the team enjoyed their last big Sunday dinner of the season, which included delicious homemade fries and raclette. The cosy yet hearty meal gave the team the energy they needed to finish out the season.

During the last few days before leaving, the remaining team removed a number of the scientific instruments on the roof of the station and in the scientific shelters that only collect data during the four months that the station is inhabited. The station's annexes were also adjusted before leaving to compensate for the movement of the ice underneath them during the season. A full inventory was done of equipment and spare parts in the garage as well as the food stocks in the pantry. And on Tuesday the new water treatment system was shut down and the final vehicles were parked either in the winter park or the station’s garages.

One always knows the end of the season coming. During the majority of the season, the team experiences 24 hour daylight. But starting in February each year, the sun starts to dip below the horizon for longer and longer periods of time each day. By the last week of the season, night had already grown to 7 hours a day.

On to CapeTown

Then on Wednesday morning around 9:00 am UTC +1, the final 12 members of the BELARE 2023-24 team closed up the station forteh austral winter. They hopped onto a skidoo train and headed to the air strip 2 km from the station to take the DC-3 to Ultima Air Base, where they transferred onto a cargo plane bound for Cape Town with scientists from other Antarctic programmes in the region.

The BELARE team landed in Cape Town at 10:35 pm SAST (UTC +2) and are now taking a few days to rest an relax after a job well done!

This Friday, the Consualte General of Belgium in Cape Town will host the BELARE team to congratulate them on the hard work they've done during the season.