

OCEAN DRILLING PROGRAM

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MARIO SOÁRES AND EUGEN SEIBOLD RECOGNIZED FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO OCEAN SCIENCES

A special tribute will be paid to His Excellency, former President of Portugal, Mario Soares and Professor Doctor Eugen Seibold of Germany for their long term commitment and support to the ocean sciences, on the occasion of the *JOIDES Resolution*, the research vessel for the Ocean Drilling Program (ODP), docking in the Port of Lisbon, Portugal. Speaking at the ceremony will be U.S. Ambassador Elizabeth Frawley Bagley, Professor Doctor Mariano Gao, Minister of Science and Technology for Portugal, Dr. Tony Mayer, Head of Strategy, European Science Foundation, Dr. Robert Corell, US National Science Foundation and Dr. David Falvey, Director, Ocean Drilling Program.

The tribute will begin at 11:00 a.m., Friday, 18 April at the *JOIDES Resolution*, Doca de Santa Apolonia, Lisbon.

Following the 30 minute ceremony, the guests will tour the research vessel and then continue to a luncheon reception in the Gare Maritima de Sta. Apolonia.

During the most recent voyage, scientists recovered core samples containing the most detailed and complete record of Earth's magnetic field variability for the last 1.2 million years.

"We have discovered that during the present mode of normal magnetism there may have been as many as 12 excursions in the magnetic field, each of a few thousand years duration, where the magnetic field either approached near reversed conditions, or was fully reversed," explains Dr. Lloyd D. Keigwin of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and co-chief scientist for the expedition.

Although Earth's magnetic field is known to reverse occasionally, such that a compass would point to the south rather than the north, it has been thought that the field was rather stable for the past 800,000 years, and that it has been in the "normal" mode.

ODP scientists on board the *JOIDES Resolution* have the most up-to-date laboratory equipment which made this discovery possible before reaching shore. Further shore-based research may show that these excursions are an important systematic and distinct component of Earth's magnetic field.

The *JOIDES Resolution* will depart Lisbon for the next two-month voyage to drill four sites off the coast of Portugal. Scientists representing 10 countries will examine the aftermath of the supercontinent breakup 127 million years ago which created Europe and the Americas. Massive continental rifting, such as the opening of the Atlantic, reshapes Earth's landscape but little is known about how the crust breaks and moves at great depth. Continental rifting has occurred throughout geologic history, and is currently active in places such as the northern Red Sea and in East Africa.

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"The continental crust in this area was effectively stretched by being broken up mechanically into huge blocks by fractures or faults that penetrate to depths of up to 10 or 20 km," explains co-chief scientist, Dr. Robert Whitmarsh from Southampton Oceanography Centre, United Kingdom. "Stretching processes also brought rocks from deep levels to the surface thereby helping us to understand the dynamics of plate tectonics at depth." The other co-chief is Dr. Marie-Odile Beslier, Observatoire Oceanologique de Villefranche, France.

The Ocean Drilling Program (ODP) is an international partnership of 20 nations enabling scientists and research institutions to explore the history and structure of the Earth beneath the ocean basins. During these scientific cruises, each approximately eight weeks long, scientists drill holes deep into the seafloor.

From these holes, scientists retrieve sediment, rock samples and geophysical data from the layers beneath the seafloor. These layers span millions of years of Earth's geologic history. ODP provides samples, shipboard and shore-based facilities for the study of these samples, and downhole measurements (e.g., wireline logging) and opportunities for special experiments to determine *in situ* conditions. ODP is primarily funded by the US National Science Foundation and research agencies in member countries.

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