Research vessel
MARIA S. MERIAN

MSM131: 18.08. – 28.09.2024
Reykjavik - Emden

1st weekly report: 18.08.2024

On Sunday, 18 August, 2024, RV MARIA S. MERIAN left the "Grandabryggja" pier in the Old Port of Reykjavik at 08:36 local time to set off for the Norwegian Sea. Investigations on the so-called Knipovich Ridge to determine the distribution of hydrothermal vents on the seabed are the main objective of the research mission MSM131. The departure on Sunday was preceded by 4 days of intensive unloading and loading work in the port of Reykjavik. After the ship arrived in Reykjavik around noon on Wednesday, the 3 packed containers from the previous cruise MSM130 were unloaded and the ship's crew began loading 3 Bremen containers of the "Remotely Operated Vehicles". The start of the assembly of MARUM ROV QUEST 4000 on the ship was a top priority, as an additional port day is required to integrate the ROV into the ship's operations. Thanks to the good port logistics in All 8 containers from Germany, 6 from MARUM in Bremen and 2 from AWI Bremerhaven, were delivered to Reykjavik on time and on Thursday the remaining 5 containers were placed on the MERIAN. Most of the scientists also came to board on Friday, while the ROV team was already busy installing the various ROV components from the first day in port (Fig. 1). Saturday was the day for setting up the ship's laboratories, for which the ship's crew had already emptied the two containers with the laboratory equipment packed in transport boxes and the consumables.

Figure 1: At the “Grandabryggja” pier in the Old Harbour of Reykjavik, a special crane hoists the 18-ton ROV winch onto the MARIA S. MERIAN (© Gerhard Bohrmann).

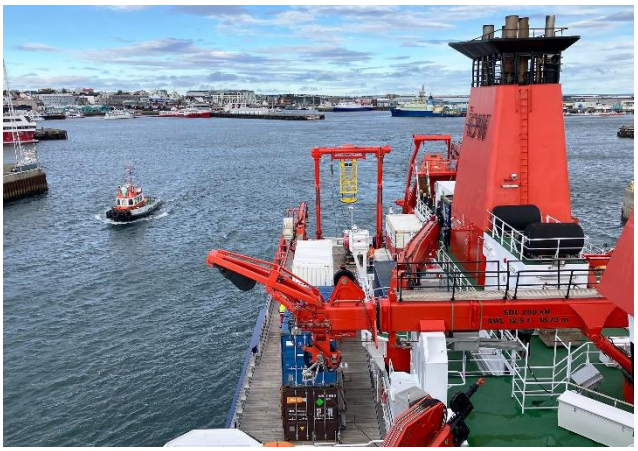

Figure 2: View from the MARIA S. MERIAN's navigation deck over the aft deck into the Old Harbour of Reykjavik shortly after passing through the harbour exit (© Gerhard Bohrmann).

The port work was completed on Saturday evening and the ship was ready to set sail on Sunday morning (Fig. 2). The ship is currently sailing north through the Denmark Strait on the west side of Iceland and then, after the passage, will head almost directly for the Jøtul hydrothermal field on the northern Knipovich Ridge west of Svalbard. We are expected to arrive there at around 10 knots on Thursday, 22 August and begin station work. Before that, when we leave the Icelandic EEZ (200-mile zone), we will begin recording multibeam and sediment echo sounder data in addition to oceanographic data, as we can use this data to close important survey gaps.

All participants on the ship are healthy.
Greetings on behalf of all participants
Gerhard Bohrmann

RV MARIA S. MERIAN, Sunday 18 August, 2024