

Research Vessel METEOR

M214: 25.10. – 13.12.2025

Las Palmas – Malaga - Iraklion - Iraklion

Sixth Weekly Report: 24 – 30 Nov 2025



The rapid termination of research activities, following our involvement in search and rescue (SAR) operations for two consecutive days, was followed by extensive discussions with the shipping company and the German Research Fleet Coordination center in Hamburg. Research activities repeatedly disrupted by such significant aid activities are not productive. The research vessel's heavy reliance on external resources led to the decision to discontinue operating in the area south of Crete. The region between the city of Tobruk in Libya and the island of Crete is currently used as a major refugee route, where the issue of external control would cause further complications for the METEOR and could potentially jeopardize future cruises. We subsequently searched for alternative research areas and, with the assistance of the control center, applied through diplomatic channels for a research area northwest of Crete with the Greek authorities. Simultaneously, we inquired about an area in Calabria, Italy, where we also have sufficient preliminary reconnaissance to ensure successful diving operations in the following leg of the cruise. The problem is that such diplomatic requests for research permits usually take several weeks. In our case, the German embassies in Rome and Athens submitted the two applications with great urgency, and we are hopeful that we will receive approval for one of the two new areas of research by the middle of next week.

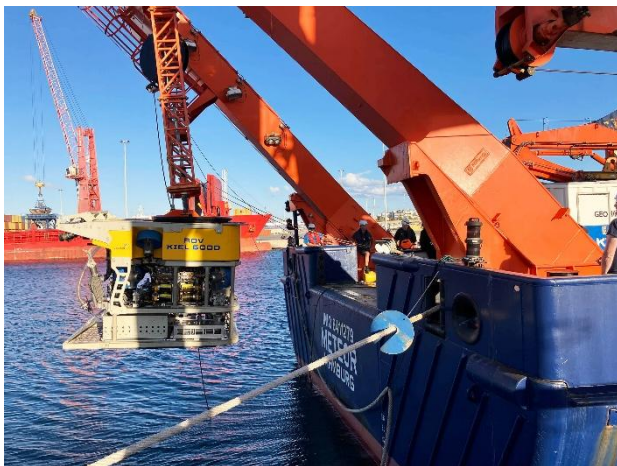


Figure 1: After the five ROV containers were loaded onto the RV METEOR and the ROV Kiel 6000 was installed on the working deck, a diving test was conducted in the harbor basin the day before departure (© Gerhard Bohrmann).

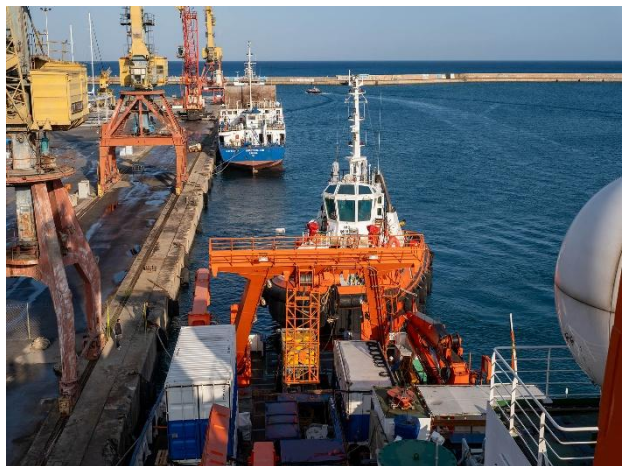


Figure 2: When the METEOR departs from the pier in the port of Heraklion, a harbor tug assists, which is moored to the ship at the stern (© Andreas Täuber).

The METEOR itself had its regular port call in Heraklion from Sunday to Friday, 28 November, during which crew and container changes took place. The Bremen AUV was disembarked and the Kiel ROV was installed on board (Fig. 1). On Friday, the METEOR (Fig. 2) set sail, and we are currently in a waiting position in Greek waters, from which we can quickly reach both of our targeted research areas. We hope for a prompt response from the authorities at the beginning of next week.

Greetings for the First Sunday of Advent on behalf of everyone

Gerhard Bohrmann

R/V METEOR, Sunday 30 November, 2025