



Presentation of the Order's insignia by the Chancellor of the Order

HERMANN PARZINGER to

ANTJE BOETIUS

at the public ceremony held at the Konzerthaus Berlin,
on May 31, 2026

SUSAN TRUMBORE delivered the laudatory address in honor of
ANTJE BOETIUS

I am delighted to introduce Prof. Dr. Antje Boetius as a new member of
the Order of Pour le Mérite.

Antje Boetius is a world-renowned German microbiologist, marine and
polar researcher. She is also an adventurer and one of the few people
who has witnessed life in the depths of the ocean with her own eyes. She
is also one of the few female researchers to have served as the model for
her own Barbie doll.

Antje Boetius has made a significant contribution to explaining how
organisms survive and thrive under extreme conditions—from deep-sea
sediments and hydrothermal vents to inside Arctic sea ice. As the leader
or participant in more than 50 marine expeditions, she powerfully
conveys the fascination and challenges of field research. As a firsthand
witness to the profound ongoing changes in our oceans, she reliably

informs the public and policymakers about key future issues in marine research, including ocean warming and acidification, the retreat of Arctic sea ice, deep-sea mining, and plastic pollution.

An early interest in marine biology and the opportunity to participate in a sea-going expedition while still a student shaped Boetius's scientific path. She studied biology at the University of Hamburg, spent an academic exchange at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in San Diego, and earned her Ph.D. at the University of Bremen. Throughout her career, she has held numerous leadership roles in science, including as a professor of geomicrobiology at the University of Bremen and as head of a research group at the Max Planck Institute for Marine Microbiology in Bremen. From 2017 to 2025, she served as director of the Alfred Wegener Institute, the Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research, in Bremerhaven.

Since 2025, Boetius has been back in California, with a new job as President of the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute. At the same time, she remains closely connected to German marine research and international scientific and policy advisory bodies. Her work uniquely combines scientific excellence, institutional leadership, and public engagement. Naturally, she has received many, many prizes and awards, including the Wilhelm Gottfried Leibniz Prize, the German Environmental Prize, and the Communicator Prize from the German Research Foundation (DFG).

Please give Antje Boetius a warm welcome.