



## **Ocean Cryosphere Exchanges in Antarctica:**

### **Impacts on Climate and the Earth System**

## **A story of penguins, floats and balloons in Antarctica**

### **Workshop to showcase Ukrainian Research**

Deliverable D12.4



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the European Union**



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<https://ocean-ice.eu/>

**About this document**

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**Cover sheet:** Credits to Chiara Bearzotti (DMI).

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## 1. Publishable summary

On 11 September 2026, the National Antarctic Scientific Center of Ukraine (NASC), in partnership with the Danish Meteorological Institute (DMI), held the public event “A story of penguins, floats and balloons in Antarctica” at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences in Brussels. Organised as part of the OCEAN ICE project, the event presented NASC’s work in the Southern Ocean to a general audience through video presentations and a live discussion linking the audience with polar researchers at the Vernadsky base. The narrative of the event is based on the policy briefing, “How Antarctic Ice and Southern Ocean Changes Are Interconnected with Climate, Sea Level, and Biodiversity”, on Zenodo (<https://zenodo.org/records/22768461>), whose main authors are Natalia Dikul, Evgen Dykyi, Anastasiia Chyhareva, Svitlana Krakovska and Olena Marushevskya. This event summarised NASC’s findings and translated them into accessible material for public engagement, building visibility for Ukrainian polar science and strengthening NASC staff’s dissemination and communication skills.

## 2. Work performed and main achievements

### About the event

NASC and DMI organised a public event on Friday 11 September 2026, 17:00–19:00, within the OCEAN ICE framework at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences in Brussels. Olena Marushevskya (NASC) and Chiara Bearzotti (DMI) organised the event. Guests were welcome in the Mineral room for refreshments. At 17:30, the guests moved to the auditorium for a 90-minute, in-person session.

### About the programme of the event

The programme combined:

- Videos and presentations illustrating the Antarctic environment and NASC’s field operations, focusing on the thematic content on the subantarctic penguin colony now neighbouring the Vernadsky base as the surrounding sea increasingly fails to freeze over; on the Argo floats deployed by NASC to monitor Southern Ocean currents; and on balloon-based atmospheric monitoring.
- An expert panel of Ukrainian researchers, Natalia Dikul, Olena Marushevskya, Anastasiia Chyhareva and Evgen Dykyi, and moderation by Ruth Mottram (DMI), coordinator of OCEAN ICE,
- A real-time discussion with polar explorers stationed at the Vernadsky base, giving the audience a live window into current conditions in Antarctica.
- A Q&A session to engage families and non-specialist attendees: The Q&A featured questions from children in the audience and focused on what people eat at the base, what the main fear is for the staff working there, and what the work looks like.

## A story of penguins, floats, and balloons in Antarctica



The National Antarctic Scientific Center,  
Ukraine, presents its work in the Southern Ocean

11 September 2026

Starts at 5 pm until 6.30 pm

Museum of Natural Sciences  
Rue Vautier 29, 1000 Brussels



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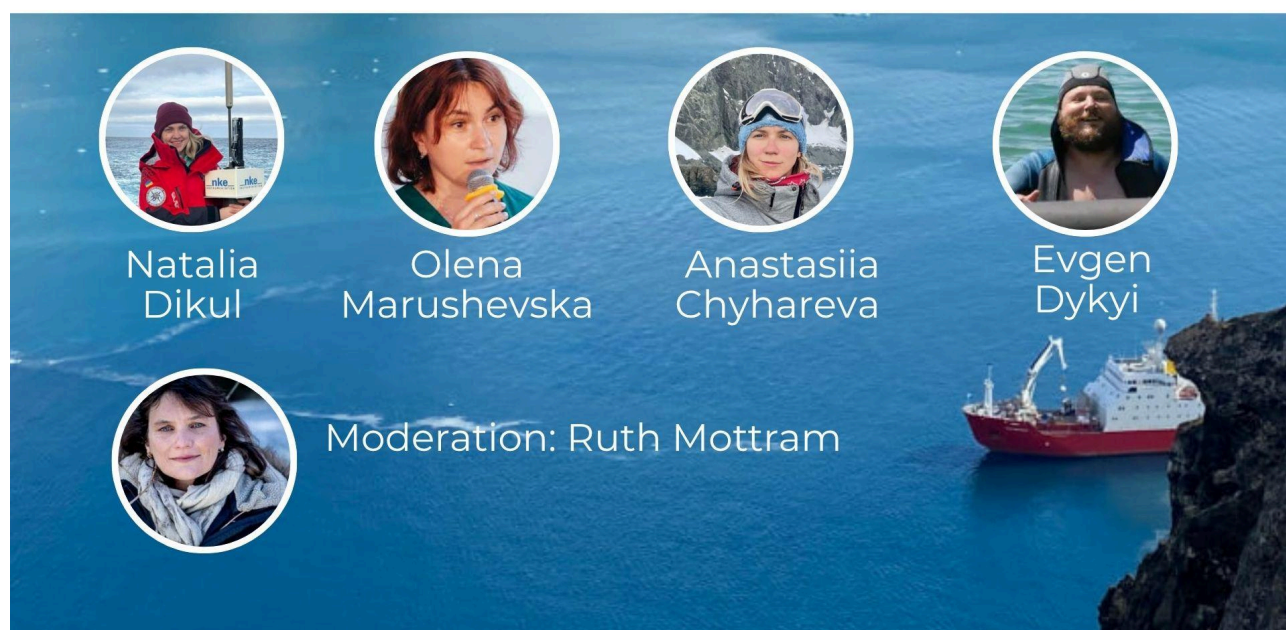


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SCIENTIFIC CENTER  
Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine



Danish Meteorological Institute

## Video presentation and open audience dialogue



Picture 1 and 2: Promotion banners of the event.

The event was set up to cover the following topics, alternating breathtaking videos (<sup>1</sup>) and testimonials from the NASC scientists:

1. Feeling the spirit of Antarctica, with Evgen Dykyi.

<sup>1</sup> From the documentary <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=III0sLrvBZE> Pictures

2. Why meteorological research in Antarctica is so important, with Anastasiia Chyhareva.
3. Penguins and climate change, with Evgen Dykyy and Olena Marushevskya.
4. From ice melt to ocean circulation, with Natalia Dikul.
5. Online from the Vernadsky base, with the base commander Anzhelika Hanchuk (connected via Zoom).
6. Questions and answers with the audience, moderated by Ruth Mottram.



Photo 1: Ruth Mottram introduction.



Photo 2: Audience.



Photo 3: Anastasiia Chyhareva.



Photo 4: Audience and panel.



Photo 5: Panel. Director Evgen Dykyy.



Photo 6: Natalia Dikul.



Photo 7: Anzhelika Hanchuk on Zoom.



Photo 9: Museum entrance.

Photo 8: Olena Marushevska.



Photo 10: Reception room.

The narrative for this event was based on the briefing “How Antarctic Ice and Southern Ocean Changes Are Interconnected with Climate, Sea Level, and Biodiversity,” on Zenodo: <https://zenodo.org/records/22768461>. NASC implemented a high-resolution regional atmospheric model to quantify how snowfall and rainfall affect the mass balance of Antarctic ice shelves. NASC also deployed

additional autonomous Argo profiling floats in the Southern Ocean to close observational gaps: these unmanned platforms record current direction and speed, temperature and salinity at depth without requiring continuous ship or personnel support. The resulting dataset was analysed to characterise the seasonal exchange between the cold waters of the Weddell Sea and the warmer waters around the central and western Antarctic Peninsula.



Picture 3: Photo collage of NASC, distributed as a postcard at the event.

### 3. Results

The main results of this event have been the following:

- Event delivery: A public event delivered by a team of Ukrainian experts; the sessions ran as scheduled at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences; demand exceeded capacity, with tickets sold out.
- Live field linkage: Attendees interacted directly with researchers at the Vernadsky base, providing an unusually direct public connection to ongoing Antarctic fieldwork.
- Scientific content communicated: The events communicated concrete findings to a broad audience of non-experts.

The Royal Belgian Museum of Natural Sciences, EuroGOOS, APECS Belgium, the European Polar Board, WiPS, the Belgian Meteorological Institute, the International Polar Foundation, and the broader Belgian

research community also supported promotion of the event. The event and the publication were also shared through NASC communication channels: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#).

The audience included 117 people, including many children and teens. The oldest person in the audience was 89, and the youngest was 5. The audience was deeply moved by the videos, the presentations and the connection to the base. We would like to highlight some feedback from the audience during and after the event: “a very emotional event”, “a very compelling story and very moving”, “fantastic videos, very moving, and very touching words and presentations on how fragile our world is”, and “exceptional organisation and wonderful venue and great speakers”.

## 4. Impact

This deliverable contributes to achieving the following project objectives, as described in the description of the action.

**O8: Develop and enhance the technical skills of Ukrainian research and technical staff, strengthening competencies in deployment, analysis, dissemination, exploitation and research management.**

NASC researchers moved from technical analysis to a very different public-facing format and a live, moderated public event, developing science-communication skills distinct from research publications. The coordination between NASC and DMI contact points (Olena Marushevska and Chiara Bearzotti) on the event reflects growing project- and stakeholder-management capacity within the Ukrainian team. More broadly, this event has mobilised excellence from a Widening country by putting Ukrainian researchers in the lead-presenter roles, giving NASC staff direct experience of moderated public engagement. This strengthens NASC's outreach competencies and gives it access to new audiences, dissemination channels, and talent pools.