

# EDITORIAL

---

Dear Reader,

Extreme cold is rarely an issue, at least in Europe, and that's exactly the problem. As a result of climate change, we are more likely to be concerned about unusually high temperatures. Heat costs thousands of lives and exacerbates drought in many regions. In addition, unusually mild temperatures cause the ice sheets of Greenland and Antarctica to melt. In the "Focus" section of our magazine, which deals with cold, we describe how the climate and the ice sheets influence one another.

One thing we know for certain is that thawing ice caps result in rising sea levels. This threatens island states and coastal cities. The agreement at the World Climate Conference in Dubai on "transitioning away from fossil fuels" gives them renewed hope that they might avoid sinking underwater. The UN Climate Secretariat heralded the agreement as the beginning of the end of fossil fuels. However, the agreement is not binding under international law and leaves states a lot of room to shape the transition. Nevertheless, Max Planck researchers who followed the climate conference are cautiously optimistic about the results ([www.mpg.de/21275331](http://www.mpg.de/21275331)).

3

The worst excesses of global warming may still be averted and temperatures may also be kept reasonably stable in the Anthropocene. This is important for humanity, because it was only in the climate of the Holocene, free from extreme fluctuations, that the development of human civilization was possible. Despite the fact that today heat, drought, and floods are increasingly forcing populations in many regions of the world to flee, a look at the last glacial period shows how climatically inhospitable conditions affect people. At that time, ice and cold made large parts of Europe uninhabitable, as we also show in "Focus."

For our part, we have good news to report: the infographics we create together with the graphic agency GCO have won the Creative Communication Award 2023 ([www.c2award.com/winners/c2a/2023/5483/](http://www.c2award.com/winners/c2a/2023/5483/)).

We hope that the infographic in this issue on the seasonality of viral diseases will also provide helpful information – and we hope too that you will find a cozy place to read our magazine.

Your Editorial Team