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Cover photo. This photo was taken in August 2008 on RV "Jan Mayen" (University of Tromsø, Norway) during a scientific cruise to the Fram Strait, the main oceanic gateway between the Arctic and the North Atlantic. In 2012, the Arctic sea ice extent reached the lowest level in recent history. The vanishing Arctic sea ice decreases the reflection of sunlight back into the atmosphere thereby increasing the absorption of heat by the ocean. Consequently, thinning and reduction of the Arctic sea ice cover change the polar environment significantly, if not irreversibly. For further details, see article by K. Zamelczyk et al., p. 405–416 in this issue. Photo by Katarzyna Zamelczyk.