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Unique in Europe, a German-French cooperation project conducts joint research in the area of innovation policy

Innovation researchers explore innovations and their potentials, not only in a national context, but also beyond Germany's borders. As a cross-border think tank with scientists from the Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI and the Office of Applied Economic Theory (Bureau d'Économie Théorique et Appliquée (BETA)) of the University of Strasbourg, the initiative "evoREG" aims to support and promote innovation potentials, culture and policy in the Upper Rhine region. This initiative is supported by the Department Research, Higher Education and Technology Transfer DREST (Direction Recherche, Enseignement Supérieur et Transfert de Technologie) of the Alsace region as well as the INTERREG Programme of the European Commission.

The three-country triangle formed by Germany, France, and Switzerland is at the heart of "evoREG", whose name is a fusion of the two words 'evolution' and 'region'. The objective of the Franco-German initiative is to intensify collaboration in the areas innovation policy and management in this cross-border framework, above and beyond the contacts and cooperations which already exist between Fraunhofer ISI and BETA. This provides selected information about the Upper Rhine region, as well as paving the way for and accompanying new contacts, cooperations and exchange opportunities. Despite the close spatial proximity, the Rhine still represents a border between different cultures, languages, political systems and governance forms. "With evoREG we want to overcome these borders, in order to utilize the immense potentials of this economically strong region for a united positive further development", Professor Emmanuel Muller, evoREG project coordinator, describes the goal.

evoREG thus brings together scientists, entrepreneurs and politicians from the tri-national Upper Rhine region in conferences or in informal discussions. "evoREG should serve as an idea pool or think tank and offer the possibility to think through the ideas generated and further develop them", explains Professor Emmanuel Muller. "Ideas should not fizzle out, but should be jointly further developed. This supplies us with important information and forms a basis for policy decision-making."

The homepage www.evoreg.eu is a platform for all participants for the cross-border exchange of ideas, information and materials like studies and analyses. In addition, a number of events, exchanges of scientists and experts and study visits take place in the evoREG context. One example is the workshop entitled "Managing Decisions in the Era of Creativity: Implications for Business and Policy-making", which took place on 11 and 12 November in Karlsruhe and gathered together scientists, politicians and practitioners from Germany, France, Canada, the Netherlands and Spain to discuss the issue "Creativity and Innovation".

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evoREG will also guide and advise German and French scientists in developing the concept for an "idea lab" on behalf of the Regional Innovation Agency Alsace ARI (Agence Régionale de l'Innovation). In this framework not only will the political actors be accompanied in their discussion processes, but a comparative analysis for example of existing approaches from home and abroad can be carried out.

It is planned to extend the evoREG initiative, due to the project's success. "We are very glad about this and it proves that in evoREG we have launched a project that illustrates the great scientific function of Fraunhofer ISI and BETA in the metropolitan region Upper Rhine", states Professor Emmanuel Muller.

The evoREG contact data as well as current studies, the latest research and discussion results can be found under www.evoreg.eu/. Anyone who is interested in the topic can contact the evoREG team in order to publish information, publications or short reports. Students or PhD students have the possibility via evoREG to organize a study visit, participate in events and collaborate in research projects.

The Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI analyzes the framework conditions of innovations. We explore the short- and long-term developments of innovation processes and the societal impacts of new technologies and services. On this basis, we provide our clients from industry, politics and science with policy recommendations and perspectives for key decisions. Our expertise lies in a broad scientific competence as well as an interdisciplinary and systemic research approach.