

European / German efforts and policy evaluation in facilitating industry-academia cooperation and regional innovation

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Generally in Europe, as well as in Germany, we are witnessing an increase of public efforts aiming at establishing and strengthening regional research and innovation capacities, supposed to be a basis for sustainable economic growth. Also, policies are designed to mitigate regional disparities in innovation and economic performance, within countries and across Europe. Related policies are initiated and run by national governments and the European Commission; at the same time there are considerable and increasing endogenous efforts by regional authorities.

The presentation discusses a few of policy examples and related evaluation efforts (if in place): (1) The Regional Innovation and Technology Transfer Strategies and Infrastructure (RITTS), a programme of the European Commission; (2) the German "Innoregio" programme; (3) measures fostering public research-industry collaboration in the German federal state ("Land") of Baden-Württemberg; (4) a regional foresight initiative in the Italian autonomous region of Trento.

The presentation concludes:

- There are ample public policies facilitating industry-academia cooperation and regional innovation in Europe.
- The provision of public initiatives – offered by national governments, regional authorities, and European Commission – is sometimes complex and not transparent for regional actors, and even contradicting in targets.
- In spite of such efforts there are still serious and partly growing regional disparities in innovation performance and growth, across nations and Europe.
- Increasingly regions are challenged by global competition: there is a need for the development of internationally attractive and unique research and innovation profiles, as a basis for sustainable economic growth.
- So far there we find no systematic, but complex and partly intransparent, though improving policy evaluation practice in the "old EU", which has partly been stimulated by European Commission's requirements. The new EU member states move up on the learning curve.
- Strategic regional policymaking aiming at internationally attractive and unique research and innovation profiles would combine policy evaluation with foresight exercises.
- There is still no satisfying and update input, performance and impact data on regional research and innovation potentials and results available – irrespective of considerable and relevant efforts (EU Commission; nation states, regions).