

1st Fit Europe Seminar

Big Data and its ethical/societal implications – “Should data rule tomorrow’s world?”

Hosted by Passau University 22nd – 26th February 2021



Opening Speech

from University of Passau Vice-President for International Relations Prof. Christina Hansen
22nd February 2021

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, dear participants of the Fit Europe project.

I would like to welcome you very warmly to the University of Passau. Unfortunately, I cannot welcome you personally and I cannot show you our university in person due the Corona crisis. Of course, I know that such events live - and are enlivened- by personal meetings and encounters. I would have loved to introduce you to our scientists in person!

Therefore, I very much hope that I will be able to invite you again next year and then show you personally the special location of Passau during a walk through our beautiful old town.

Today, you still had to do with an image film. But even though it was only a film this time, you might already have gotten a small impression of what the University of Passau stands for: With 12,000 students and 4 faculties, it is not a mass university. But it is an innovative research university with excellent scientists who are not only internationally active, but also internationally visible.

Our students are also international: they come from about 100 countries and can study about 50 courses; we also offer not less than 16 double degrees. Some of our courses achieve top positions in THE-rankings every year, among them some from the Faculty of Computer Science and Mathematics.

A special feature besides this internationality is our European profile. You have already heard it at the end of the film: **A university for Europe. Now and in the future.** In fact, this is not only a slogan but also a statement of the university. As a university in the geographical heart of Europe, we also see ourselves with a European soul. The University of Passau is a strong partner with numerous European universities considered as key places where European research and joint are important motors for the social and societal development of a united Europe.

Our goal to answer global challenges in a European way finally brings me to your event.

FiT Europe is the best proof of how important it is to tackle societal challenges together - and how important it is to tackle jointly through excellence in science on the one hand, and cooperation with industry on the other hand. FIT Europe has undoubtedly succeeded in this.

Fit Europe is an output of the strong partnership Uni Passau has had for many years with INSA Lyon and Uni Milan - the three have built together the IRIXYS research center - as well as with Politehnica Bucharest, and the partnership from these 4 Unis with industry partners. Among these industry partners, let me here in particular mention ATOS International Germany, with whom Passau Uni has built for many years a strong cooperation made of trust and mutual benefits.

I am therefore extremely pleased to welcome you all here. By name I would like to address my pleasure to:

- Prof. Lionel Brunie, Dorothee Brac de la Perrière, Nabila Sayad and their colleagues from INSA Lyon
- Dr. Andrei Olaru and his colleagues from Politehnica Bucharest
- Dr. Stelvio Cimato and his colleagues from Uni Milano
- As well as to the representatives from industry and economy:
- Roland Wossidlo from ATOS
- Dr. Amélie Cordier from La French Tech One
- and all the professors and experts who kindly accepted to share their expertise this week.

Last but not least, I would also like to address my thanks to those scientists from Passau, without whom not only this event would not be possible, but who also stand for the scientific excellence of the University in Passau.

- I thank you dear Harald Kosch and dear Michael Granitzer very much for your scientific commitment that you bring to Passau as well as - and very personally - that you do it in a wonderfully friendly way. Dear Axelle Cheney, I would also like to thank you.
- Finally, I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Ms. Elif Kavun. She is not only a jury member for the students' projects in FIT Europe, but will support our university from the next semester. Welcome and thank you very much for your commitment - by the way: we don't only need researchers like you, we especially need **women** like you at the university!

We are very proud that thanks to these great energies and synergies, we have been granted a specific European Commission funding: this European recognition has reflected how outstanding such international cooperation gathering industries and higher education is in Europe! Such interaction between science and business is incredibly important to ensure societal developments.

This is why FIT Europe is SO important! But let me highlight that it is also unique: No other universities in Europe have managed to build up such an innovative curriculum involving professionals from industry and training students from 4 countries on the challenges they will have to face in the world of tomorrow!

Today, nearly one and a half years after launching this innovative project, I am very pleased to open this first one-week seminar, hosted by the University of Passau, on the theme of "should big data rule tomorrow's world".

Allow me to add: Don't big data already rule today's world? How can we deal with it from a humanistic point of view? How can we deal with it from a European perspective, whereas data are exchanged on the global scale?

Well, I am in the middle of the topic already without being an expert, so it is high time that I give the floor to those who really know something about it!

I wish you all the best for your important work. And please keep me informed about the progress of this outstanding project.