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Research on Collective Action: First Josef Ressel Centre Opens at FHWien der WKW

A research center on Collective Action and Responsible Partnerships is starting at FHWien der WKW, the University of Applied Sciences for Management and Communication in Vienna. It examines what motivates companies to cooperate.

Vienna, October 21, 2020 – How can companies successfully master large and complex challenges? The Covid-19 crisis illustrates that collective action by different actors is essential to succeed in such challenges. Which factors support companies in collective projects? How can collective action be coordinated to achieve the desired results? How can the success of collective action be measured?

The answers to these questions are relevant not only in relation to the Covid-19 crisis, but also to other challenges, such as digital transformation and sustainability. The Josef Ressel Centre for Collective Action and Responsible Partnerships (CARE) will address these issues from autumn 2020, thanks to the Christian Doppler Research Association, supported by the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs, and three prominent corporate partners.

Dr. Margarete Schramböck, Federal Minister for Digital and Economic Affairs, explains: “Corporate partnerships are essential to meet complex challenges such as digitalization, changes in the health system and the climate crisis. Especially for Austria as a business location, cooperation between research and science is important in order to remain internationally competitive through the concrete implementation of research by companies. The Josef Ressel Centre for Collective Action and Responsible Partnerships (CARE) addresses these topics. I welcome the cooperation between partners from research and industry on this economically and socially highly relevant topic.”

The megatrends digital transformation and sustainability cannot be addressed in solo action

Digital transformation, climate crisis and, more recently, the Covid-19 pandemic, all pose major challenges for companies. The existing, individual solutions are inadequate due to the size and complexity of these tasks. In order to address these issues successfully, innovative management concepts based on collective action are needed.

The best design for such initiatives is being researched at FHWien der WKW at the Josef Ressel Centre for Collective Action and Responsible Partnerships (CARE). “The CARE research center complements the established research activities at FHWien der WKW in the field of corporate sustainability and responsibility and further expands the national pioneering role of our institution in these areas,” says Ing. Mag. (FH) Michael Heritsch, MSc, CEO of FHWien der WKW. As early as 2012, an endowed professorship for corporate governance and business ethics was established and subsequently built into the Institute for Business Ethics and Sustainable Strategy (IBES).

The new center’s research objectives

“The Josef Ressel Centre CARE creates – in cooperation with our corporate partners – application-oriented knowledge and practicable management tools for the successful coordination and evaluation of collective action initiatives,” explains Prof. Dr. Markus Scholz, Head of the Josef Ressel

Centre CARE at FHWien der WKW. “We understand collective action initiatives as collective and sustainable cooperation processes between companies and other stakeholders to solve social and ecological problems,” Scholz continues.

Distinction between regulatory and implementation initiatives

Collective action initiatives can be divided into regulatory initiatives and implementation initiatives. “Regulatory initiatives aim to close socially and ecologically relevant regulatory gaps – for example by creating industry codes, certifiable standards or legally binding agreements,” explains Markus Scholz, Head of the Josef Ressel Centre. “In implementation initiatives, which are often also referred to as responsibility partnerships, companies and other actors join forces to jointly solve a mostly locally limited problem of economic, social or ecological relevance, such as the shortage of skilled workers or the creation of a digital infrastructure.”

Management knowledge on collective action: high relevance for corporate partners

The Josef Ressel Centre’s partner companies Josef Manner & Comp AG, Kapsch TrafficCom AG and Simacek Facility Management Group GmbH emphasize the great importance of collective action in addressing current and future challenges.

Mag. Albin Hahn, Chief Financial Officer, Josef Manner & Comp AG:

“The responsibility towards the employees of Josef Manner & Comp AG forms the foundation of our value pyramid which was developed in cooperation with the Center for Corporate Governance & Business Ethics. In addition, we aim to closely link the goal of ecological sustainability with our core business activities. We have been supporting the valuable work of the Institute for Business Ethics and Sustainable Strategy (IBES) since 2012. Our goal as a corporate partner of the Josef Ressel Centre for Collective Action and Responsible Partnerships is to better understand how collective action initiatives can be effectively designed and coordinated in order to jointly solve socially relevant problems.”

Mag. Georg Kapsch, CEO, Kapsch TrafficCom AG:

“As part of the Kapsch Group, Kapsch TrafficCom AG understands the challenge of long-term and responsible corporate activity and is therefore committed to the goal of economic, ecological and social sustainability. Since 2012, Kapsch has been an important partner of the Institute for Business Ethics and Sustainable Strategy (IBES) and through this cooperation has developed an understanding that many current problems cannot be solved on their own but only in cooperation with others. As a corporate partner of the Josef Ressel Centre for Collective Action and Responsible Partnerships, we are interested in developing a comprehensive understanding of profound responsibility in a multi-dimensional way.”

Mag. Ursula Simacek, CEO, Simacek Facility Management Group GmbH:

“Corporate Social Responsibility is a major concern of SIMACEK Facility Management Group, a company conscious of tradition in the field of facility management. From 2013 to 2019, I served as President of the Austrian CSR platform respACT and thus have many years of experience in the areas of collective action and corporate responsibility. I am convinced that living social responsibility leads to entrepreneurial success, and I look forward to participating in the Josef Ressel Centre for Collective Action and Responsible Partnerships.

PRESS RELEASE



Josef Ressel Centres: research at the interface between science and business

The Josef Ressel Centres funded by the Christian Doppler Research Association conduct excellent and application-oriented research. “The research results directly benefit the company partners. This transfer of knowledge is central to FHWien der WKW's research strategy. The achievements of Professor Dr. Markus Scholz and his team deserve special mention. The colleagues are strongly connected to corporate practice and publish their research results regularly in top-ranking journals. This successful model will continue in the first Josef Ressel Centre at FHWien der WKW. The funding provided by the Christian Doppler Research Association enables us to further expand internationally visible top-level research in the field of corporate responsibility and sustainability in order to strengthen domestic companies and the region as a business location,” says Michael Heritsch, CEO of FHWien der WKW.

Link to the opening on October 21, 2020, from 10.00 am:

<https://ibes.fh-wien.ac.at/josef-ressel-zentrum-care/jrz-care-eroeffnung/>

FHWien der WKW University of Applied Sciences for Management & Communication

FHWien der WKW has been Austria's leading university of applied sciences for management & communication for over 25 years. Working in close contact with Austrian corporations, FHWien der WKW offers comprehensive and practice-oriented academic programs to over 2,800 Bachelor's and Master's students. Two thirds of our teaching staff have a background in business. Our programs are tailored to the needs of companies, optimally preparing our graduates – more than 11,800 to date – for their future careers.

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