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QUATRE MOTORS PER A EUROPA  
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QUATRE MOTEURS POUR L'EUROPE

# New Economic Perspectives: Transformation as an opportunity for the viability of our regions

Work Programme of the Baden-Württemberg presidency  
of the Four Motors for Europe

## **1. THE FOUR MOTORS FOR EUROPE: SHAPING THE FUTURE IN TIMES OF TRANSITION.**

The Four Motors for Europe, namely Lombardy (Italy), Catalonia (Spain), Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (France) and Baden-Württemberg, were founded on 9 September 1988. These four regions share a strong foundation in the areas of the economy and research.

Their role as pioneers and innovative actors in Europe is of particular importance right now. The regions in Europe are currently confronted with not only a number of crises occurring simultaneously, but also with profound shifts which have to be managed and shaped. On the one hand, we see climate change becoming increasingly more visible and the necessity to become climate neutral. On the other hand, we see the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine putting new demands on both economic and energy policy. This situation poses major challenges for the economically powerful Four Motors for Europe. These challenges comprise the disruption in global supply chains, the energy crisis, and sharp price increases, especially for fossil and mineral raw materials and agricultural products. In addition, there is a challenge for the regions to keep pace with rapid technological changes and developments in the fields of digitalization and artificial intelligence in order to maintain their position in the face of global competition. The Covid19 pandemic has also left deep scars on both the economy and society as a whole. As strong economic and research regions, The Four Motors for Europe are particularly affected by these developments, yet they are also particularly well prepared to actively promote the necessary transformation processes. Their aim is to give an impetus to other regions and to act as an example for further regional cooperation.

## **2. THEMATIC AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OF THE BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG PRESIDENCY**

### **LEITMOTIF: TRANSFORMATION**

Baden-Württemberg's presidency will focus on the areas of economic transformation, technological transition, and the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions with the guiding theme "New economic perspectives: Transformation as an opportunity for the viability of our regions."

These transformation processes harbour opportunities for innovation and growth that will secure the future viability and sustainability of the regions and in the long term also the viability of Europe in the face of global competition. We are exploiting this potential with strong, like-minded partners in the Four Motors for Europe network. An important focus will be better consideration of economically strong regions in EU funding and cohesion policy. It is the State Ministry with the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Tourism that will implement the presidency, together with the other ministries in Baden-Württemberg. The state parliament [Landtag] is also involved in the presidency of the Four Motors and will seek an exchange of ideas with parliamentarians of the other three partner regions. The State Ministry will support and initiate contacts amongst parliamentarians.

## **THE FOUR MOTORS FOR EUROPE - A STRONG VOICE IN BRUSSELS**

The Four Motors for Europe aim to help shape policy at EU level and to have their ideas and concerns heard by the EU institutions. By consolidating their strengths and expertise and presenting their ideas with one voice they will be even more successful. To that effect Baden-Württemberg's presidency will intensify the presence of the Four Motors in Brussels. Current points of reference include, for example, the mid-term review of the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework, the debate on the European response to the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act or the transformation of the automotive industry.

## **STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OF THIS COOPERATION**

With two working group days, one at the beginning and one at the end of the presidency, we will reflect on and optimize the methods of the Four Motor regions. In a strategy retreat meeting the working groups will plan interdisciplinary activities and focus on the strategic development within the network, with the aim to improve efficiency and transparency. This follows on from the "Strategy for an enhanced Governance" (adopted jointly in 2019), with interdisciplinary collaboration, for example.

## **3. THE TOPICS AND DIMENSIONS OF THE PRESIDENCY IN DETAIL**

### **TRANSFORMATION OF THE ECONOMY**

#### **Green and digital transformation of the automotive industry**

Particularly in the automotive industry, both electrification and digitalization are bringing about a far-reaching transformation process. All Four Motor regions have a high proportion of employees and companies in the areas of vehicle manufacturing and the connected supplier industry. They pursue a high-profile climate protection strategy which means the green and digital transformation of the automotive industry is an important topic for all regions.

The decisive framework conditions for this transformation are set at the EU level. Together with its partners of the Four Motors for Europe, Baden-Württemberg is campaigning for the EU to involve the automotive regions most strongly affected in the political processes at the EU level. **Jointly developed positions** are to be incorporated in political discussions with representatives of the EU institutions and made visible in events, such as a **Side Event at the European Week of Regions and Cities** in October 2023. Furthermore, the **Automotive Industry Supplier Day** on November 16, 2023, will bring together players from the supplier industry of the partner regions. Small and medium-sized supplier companies cannot master the manifold challenges in connection with the transformation of the industry on their own. Cooperation and networking are therefore becoming a decisive factor in achieving a successful transformation and for maintaining economic success.

#### **Start-ups as a motor of change**

Innovations are required in order to achieve the transformational challenges and in so doing maintain prosperity and the competitiveness of the economy. Start-ups are usually innovation drivers with new

ideas. They modernize the economic structure of the regions with their products, ideas and business models. They also stimulate competition with established companies and create new jobs. In this way they can contribute to economic recovery and to securing Europe's competitiveness in the long term. All four regions are characterised by a distinctive and diverse start-up scene, meaning the Four Motors for Europe network can also benefit from this potential. For this reason, the Baden-Württemberg presidency will focus particularly on start-ups as a target group and support these young companies in their internationalization within the partner regions.

To this end, it is planned that the Four Motors for Europe participate in the **Start-up-BW Night** in Mannheim on July 13, 2023. The aim of this event is to provide start-ups with the necessary advice and networking opportunities with established companies and investors etc. This **Start-up BW Night** should provide them with exciting insights into the start-up scene. Furthermore, the "Genussgipfel 2023" [Food Enjoyment Summit 2023] aims to bring together start-ups from the fields of agriculture and food production from the partner regions.

#### **Incoming Mission – a new format for a joint political and economic mission to Baden-Württemberg**

The Baden-Württemberg presidency will organize the traditional joint political and economic mission of the Four Motors for Europe as an **Incoming Mission** to Baden-Württemberg. The various partners will meet in Stuttgart and Heilbronn from October 25 to 27, 2023 not only to network, but also to discuss policies and flagship projects concerning artificial intelligence, plus its development and diverse application in various industries in Baden-Württemberg. One of the target groups will also be start-ups from the four regions, which will be given support with cooperation and initiating business.

#### **Preparing the creative and cultural industries for a post pandemic future**

The Four Motor regions are characterized by a vibrant cultural landscape and their creative and cultural industries represent an important branch of the economy. Yet the field of popular culture is facing clear economic and social challenges due to the Corona pandemic. The commercial aspect in particular poses a real challenge for cultural funding. The live music scene, being part of the creative and cultural industries, often stands between the Ministries (of Economic Affairs; of the Arts). The players in that area not only receive public funding and sponsorships but must also aim at being economically viable.

In early 2024, the participatory format: "**Dialogue Popular Culture**" will focus on the importance of popular music and on developing new guidelines for its promotion. With this event the Baden-Württemberg presidency of the Four Motors for Europe envisions building on the previous exchange among the Four Motors partners on Corona aid for the cultural sector. They will then work together on the question of how popular culture can be positioned for the future.

## **AGRICULTURE AND FOOD - IMPLEMENTING EUROPEAN GOALS REGIONALLY**

Agriculture faces enormous challenges in the light of climate change, loss of biodiversity and economic constraints. At the same time, it can make an important contribution to climate neutrality. As important agricultural regions, all Four Motor regions are equally affected by these challenges.

Organic farming contributes to the transformation of the agricultural and food economy. It reinforces the organic regional supply chains and, in this respect, creates economic perspectives. Thus, the Baden-Württemberg presidency will organise a special event on how the four regions can achieve the goal of expanding organic farming to 25 percent as specified in the EU's **Farm to Fork Strategy**. The event will also focus on what activities the regions can implement to increase the share of organic farming in Europe.

In order to address the subject of how to foster innovation to meet future challenges in agriculture, a networking event and a specialist excursion will take place on **European Innovation Partnership "Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI)"** as part of the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU.

A further focus for the Four Motor regions is food and food production policy and how to accommodate for the conflicting priorities between quality, economic efficiency and sustainability. This is of particular relevance due to the diversity and large number of regional products. With this in mind, the **Wine Summer** on July 4, 2023 at the State Representation in Brussels and the **Genussgipfel 2023** ("Enjoyment Summit") on November 17, 2023 in Heilbronn will focus on regional foods and innovation in this area. The tourism sector, which is relevant for all four regions, will also be given sufficient consideration here.

## **CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION THROUGH RESOURCE EFFICIENCY AND A CIRCULAR ECONOMY**

In the transformation towards sustainable and climate-neutral activities and management, the topics of resource efficiency and circular economy are of fundamental importance.

Using resources sparingly and reusing them according to a circular economy is essential for achieving the goal of climate neutrality and guarantees the supply of raw materials in times of supply bottlenecks.

Greater resource efficiency and the expansion of the circular economy are of crucial importance to the Four Motors for Europe. As industrially strong but resource-poor regions these will be vital for striving towards a climate-neutral and competitive economy. Together the Four Motors can also play a pioneering role in this area. So, the aim at the 12th annual **Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy Congress** on November 15 and 16, 2023 is for the Four Motors regions to have the opportunity to exchange views on this key future topic and to learn from each other.

Anchoring the topics of environment, sustainability and climate protection in people's minds at an early stage is essential to preserve our livelihoods. However, a variety of approaches and activities are required in order to put this into practice. All regions are affected by this. Learning from each other can provide valuable new impulses within the framework of the Four Motors partnership. Therefore, on October 9, 2023 The Environment Academy (Umweltakademie Baden-Württemberg) will offer the regions an independent programme for an exchange on topics of environmental and sustainability education. This is within the organizational framework of the **2nd ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) Network Forum Baden-Württemberg**. The aim is both to provide a concrete impetus for future-oriented environmental and sustainability education and also to promote networking.

#### **EXCHANGE AND JOINT POSITIONING ON EU FUNDING POLICIES**

EU funding policies play an important role in all specialist topics. The Baden-Württemberg presidency plans to use the network of the Four Motors for Europe for participants to share their experience and to represent their joint interests at the EU level.

In the context of the upcoming mid-term review of the EU's annual Financial Framework, Baden-Württemberg's presidency will join forces with the Four Motor partners to advocate the appropriate **involvement of the regions and to focus on regions with strong innovation and economies in future EU funding policies**. Debate will take place on what contribution the EU cohesion policy can make in supporting economically strong regions which are particularly affected by the green and digital transformation of the economy. Discussion will also take place on what additional leeway is needed in EU State Aid Law for climate-neutral technologies. This is relevant for economically strong regions - to avoid competitive disadvantages in investment decisions - for both existing locations and new, future green-field sites. The aim is therefore to develop shared positions on this and to represent these to the EU institutions.

Regional competencies are of particular importance for the Four Motors for Europe in the context of shaping the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Therefore, it is planned to have an **exchange on the national CAP strategic plans**, all of which have now been approved. The focus will be on the implementation of the regional elements and programmes.

At a networking event on **ERDF funding**, the relevant actors from the partner regions are invited to exchange information on their funding approaches in the field of regional development. The presentation of **ERDF-funded projects** (excursion) in Baden-Württemberg can in addition highlight possible points of contact for interregional cooperation.

#### **YOUTH EXCHANGES**

Successful interregional relations are based not only on the political and institutional level, but also on the exchange between people on the ground. The Baden-Württemberg presidency therefore continues to focus on various exchanges and mutual visits, especially for young people.

To reactivate the work in international school partnerships suspended during the Corona pandemic, an eTwinning online contact seminar is planned for October 4, 2023. With the support of the Pedagogical Exchange Service (Pädagogischer Austauschdienst) and the eTwinning agencies of France, Spain and Italy, 40 teachers from the four regions will come together to exchange ideas for **joint school projects** within Erasmus+.

At a joint **youth work camp** the focus is also on interaction among young people from the four regions. Every year before the summer vacation, up to five young people aged between 18 and 28 from each region of the Four Motors come together for several weeks in Baden-Württemberg to work on a charitable project. The projects offer various opportunities for work in nature conservation and environmental protection, in refurbishment or repair work, or in social projects. This year, the youth work camp will be held from July 8 to 23 in cooperation with the Vocational Schools in Bretten. A symposium on international student and youth exchange in Baden-Württemberg is planned for June 13, 2023, where among other things the youth work camp will be represented.

For further information please visit: <https://www.4motors.eu/>.

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