

31 January 2023**“Heimspiel Wissenschaft”: Dialogue on Research in Rural Areas – Project Supports Universities in Further Developing their Science Communication**

Promoting university science communication in rural areas is the goal of the “Heimspiel Wissenschaft” (Home Game for Research) project. This joint initiative between the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), the science communication agency con gressa and the #WisskommLab at the University of Heidelberg networks, advises and supports universities that want to bring science and research to life and make it accessible also beyond metropolitan area boundaries and university towns. The idea is that scientists from rural areas go to their hometowns to talk about their research work. On Friday, 3 February 2023, Professor Dr Joachim Hornegger, a computer scientist, will be the first university president to have a “home game.” The President of the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg (FAU) will then talk to citizens of his Franconian native town of Effeltrich about AI-supported sensor technology and data analysis in medicine – and how this will make preventive care and diagnosis easier in the future.

HRK President Prof Dr Peter-André Alt stated: “The universities are committed to further developing the dialogue between science and society and to contributing their scientific expertise to societal debates in a way that is timely and appropriate for the respective target audience. In this context, building connections with community groups in rural regions outside conurbations and university or research centres poses a particular challenge. The aim of ‘Heimspiel Wissenschaft’ is therefore to work together to broaden and enhance formats of university science communication. I am very pleased that Joachim Hornegger, as university president, is setting a good example, pledging FAU to the project and now also starting a conversation about his research himself in his hometown.”

“An important task of science and research is maintaining a dialogue with the public – through researchers informing people about their findings and presenting their ideas for the future, and through citizens asking questions and expressing what they want research to address. ‘Heimspiel Wissenschaft’ is particularly well suited for this – through direct conversations in local communities,” Joachim Hornegger says.

The event is part of the nationwide series “Heimspiel Wissenschaft” (Home Game for Research), which brings scientists to their rural hometowns. There they tell what, how and why they research and what it has to do with all our lives. They answer questions and discuss topics with their guests. Events are open to all who are interested in a topic, expressly including people who normally have little or nothing to do with scientific research in everyday life. Questions and wishes of the public for research in general are also discussed.

In November 2022, FAU's first "Home Game" took place in Gunzenhausen in Central Franconia with the regional historian Professor Dr Georg Seiderer. At the beginning of January 2023, communication scientist Professor Dr Markus Lehmkuhl from the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology met with interested citizens in his native town of Abbenhausen in Lower Saxony. And on 31 January, sociologist Dr Christine Preiser from the University Hospital Tübingen in Ühlingen, Baden-Württemberg, is initiating a dialogue on her research in occupational medicine.

"Heimspiel Wissenschaft" brings science and research to the pub around the corner, the community centre, the clubhouse, or the village square. It is a joint project of the German Rectors' Conference, the science communication agency con gressa and the #WisskommLab at Heidelberg University that is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research until the end of 2024 as part of the "Science Years" initiative.

[Further information on the "Heimspiel Wissenschaft" project \(in German only\)](#)

Science Year

The aim of the Science Years initiative is to promote dialogue between researchers and the public. Each Science Year focuses on a different, interdisciplinary topic. Numerous partners from science, industry and society support the respective year with their own activities. The motto of the Science Year 2023 is "Our Universe."

For more information on the activities, please visit <https://www.wissenschaftsjahr.de/2023/>.

The Science Years are an initiative of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) together with Wissenschaft im Dialog (WiD).