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Surface Acoustic Wafes: EU funding for cutting-edge training of PhD-students

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The Institute of Physics at the University of Augsburg successfully acquired roughly half a million Euros for two PhD-projects as part of an 'Innovative Training Network (ITN)' under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie program, funded by the European Union.

Prof. Hubert Krenner, Dr. Christoph Westerhausen and Prof. Achim Wixforth (all Experimental Physics I) were able to raise these funds together with nine other European partners. As part of the Research and Innovation program Horizon 2020, Brussels supports the training and career advancement of early stage researchers. The physicists in Augsburg together with renowned European colleagues at the University of Cambridge in England, the Chalmers Tekniska Hoegskola in Sweden, the Universiteit Twente in the Netherlands, and research institutes like the Paul-Drude-Institut in Berlin or the French institute Neel of CNRS in Grenoble will receive almost four million Euros to conduct their ITN "SAWtrain" for a period of four years.

„In this program, it is not only important that the PhD students do research at exciting and leading edge topics. The EU emphasizes individual career advancement and education to prepare the students for their next career move.“, remarks Prof. Hubert Krenner, who is coordinator of one of the scientific work packages of SAWtrain. The partners hence developed an ambitious educational program: „We could win 15 associated partners with their expert knowledge from all over the world. In particular the involvement of industrial partners and the Deutsches Museum in Munich was able to convince the EU-referees who are known to be very critical.“ Krenner adds. This allows the so-called „Early Stage Researchers“ to get in contact with prospective employers. Furthermore, they learn at the largest technical museum in the world how to get the results of their leading research across to the broad public.

One of the basic principles of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie program is the idea of young researcher's mobility. „We are especially glad to see that the European idea is put into practice! This allows us to welcome two young talents from abroad in our research groups, soon.“ states Christoph Westerhausen who will be co-supervising one of the two PhD students. „We just released a website (<http://www.SAWTrain.eu>) with the job

advertisements to attract the most talented and smartest students to the ITN and especially the University of Augsburg.“

The topical link between the SAWtrain projects are Surface Acoustic Waves (SAW). Prof. Achim Wixforth is one of the world's pioneers in the application of these nanoquakes on a chip in nano- and biotechnology and has made SAW the main research activity of his group over the last 25 years. „Our excellent research in Augsburg was so far mainly funded in a national context like for example the German initiative of excellence, NIM. This reputable Innovative Training Network now positions us on the European stage“, states Achim Wixforth, head of the chair for Experimental Physics I, where the PhD-projects will be realized.

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