

FRM

The magazine on the FrankfurtRhineMain metropolitan region

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE Why Darmstadt leads the way ____ **FASHION** How Frankfurt looks forward to the Fashion Week ____ **LIFESTYLE** How FRM is fast becoming an organic farming hub ____ **DESTINATIONS** Where FRM resembles key international places ____ **FUTURE** What an Offenbach forecaster predicts
LOCALS Who is the talk of the town in FRM ____ **CORONA** Why FRM plays a central role in combatting the pandemic

ISSUE 2020

>
English
Edition

Times of change

The latest trends in FrankfurtRhineMain



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RheinMain

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It's a feeling!

In the FrankfurtRheinMain region, opposites come together and create a unique way of life. It's a feeling you have to experience for yourself. From buzzing cities to the beautiful countryside: This is where global finances and fast-paced business is greeted with a friendly "Ei gude" welcome and one-of-a-kind "Gemütlichkeit", followed by the local "Äppler" cider. Here you can meet people from over 180 countries who have made the region their home. You will see it in the streets, hear it in conversations and taste it at the local restaurants. It's hard to describe, but easy to become a part of it: the FrankfurtRheinMain feeling.

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International Marketing of the Region
is the key contact for international
companies looking to establish a presence
in the FrankfurtRheinMain region.

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NOT EVERYTHING WILL BE THE WAY IT WAS

Covid-19 has not spared FrankfurtRhineMain either, so it is all the more gratifying that the region with its unique network has been actively helping combat the pandemic. From vaccine developers and the Paul Ehrlich Institute in Langen, which admits vaccines to trials and then approves them, through to major pharma corporations – almost all of them are based in FrankfurtRhineMain.

That said, even once we have a vaccine against Covid-19, not everything will be the way it was. We will therefore need to think carefully about how we wish to live and work together going forwards – and that includes against the backdrop of climate change. Some trends are already emerging. As regards travel and nutrition, we are already seeing a shift back to nature. People are once again discovering their immediate surroundings and are more conscious of what they spend money on. In this regard, too, our region offers an ideal setting, with its parks, recreational areas, and organic farms in the Rheingau, Taunus, Spessart and Odenwald.

I was delighted in these difficult times to be able to announce that the Fashion Week is relocating to Frankfurt. The event will add another aspect to the metropolis on the Main – and may in fact give it a new image entirely, since local creatives will be proudly presenting its abilities when next year we welcome over 2,000 designers and brands and more than 40,000 trade visitors to Frankfurt.

Discover for yourself all the things FrankfurtRhineMain has to offer. You'll find all the themes in this issue. Or even better: Visit the region and see for yourself!

Most cordially
Your

Peter Feldmann
Mayor of Frankfurt am Main



REGARD CORONA AS A GAMECHANGER

Futurologist Matthias Horx, who has lived and worked in FrankfurtRhineMain for many years now, predicted as early as March 2020 that we would be surprised at how swiftly digital change would occur and the enforced physical distancing would result in a new form of nearness. We at FrankfurtRheinMain GmbH – International Marketing of the Region, have also witnessed and experienced this, because for us international decision-makers were suddenly easier to reach thanks to remote working.

Based on this experience, we resolved to regard Covid-19 as a game-changer and to cast a glance at what is and what lies ahead of us. FrankfurtRhineMain possesses not only a unique network for combatting the corona pandemic, but also the perfect preconditions for the pending round of digitization.

In Darmstadt, a national champion in AI is swiftly evolving. At the Darmstadt Technical University, leading minds are working together in a unique ecosystem to ensure that even better use is made of the technological opportunities for human society. Professor Kristian Kersting, who last year was the first person to be awarded the German AI Prize, is pursuing the vision of computers that can learn as quickly and as flexibly as humans without us needing to fear them.

Nevertheless, for all the progress at the moment we wish for nothing more dearly than the “new normal”, meaning being able to meet and greet people in person again – and maybe even to be able to touch them. That is why we have dedicated this issue to those who are busy working toward that goal. Enjoy reading!

Best regards,

Eric Menges
President and CEO of FrankfurtRheinMain GmbH
International Marketing of the Region

PARTNERS OF THIS
ISSUE OF FRM

GOLD

FrankfurtRheinMain
Die Wirtschaftsinitiative

SILBER



BRONZE



UNTERSTÜTZER





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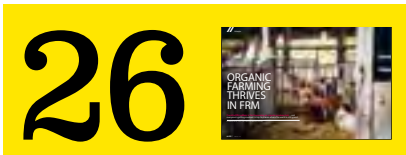
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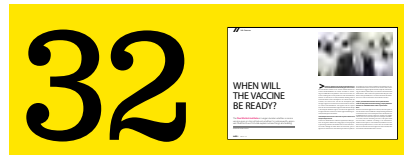
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Back to nature:

The cover photo shows a horse rider at Domäne Mechtildshausen – see also pp. 26-31.

IMPRINT

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As a full subsidiary of Frankfurt's city government, we are a facilitator between business and politics and ensure that your needs are heard by the political bodies. We strive to facilitate further (economic) growth and generate jobs opportunities by actively providing advice to companies and by following cluster-based economic development strategies. Also, we make recommendations on economic policies and location-related activities, so as to safeguard Frankfurt's future as a competitive business location.

frankfurt-business.net



WIRTSCHAFTS
FÖRDERUNG
FRANKFURT



in [f](#) [X](#) [v](#)

5,8 MILLION

Heart of the metropolitan region with a population of 5.8 million people living in Frankfurt Rhine-Main

340

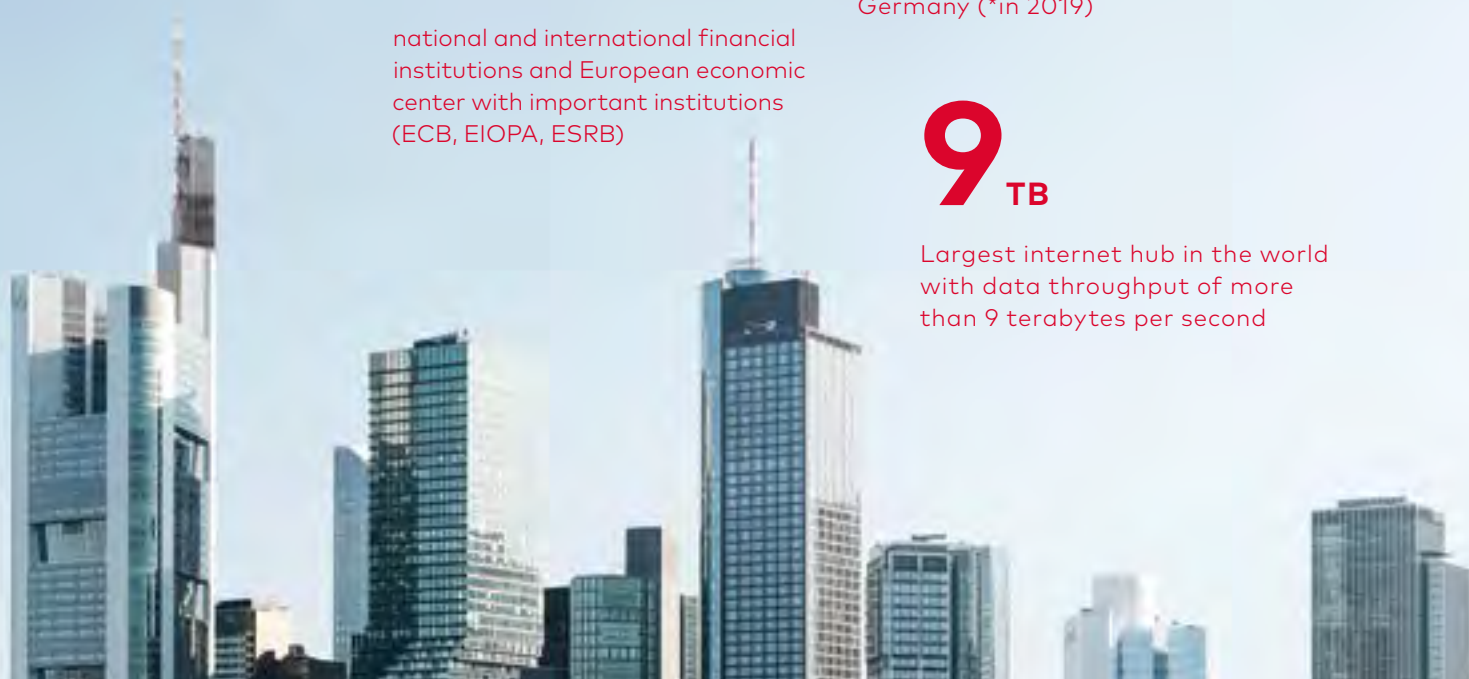
national and international financial institutions and European economic center with important institutions (ECB, EIOPA, ESRB)

70 MILLION AIRLINE PASSENGERS

Largest airport and traffic hub in Germany (*in 2019)

9 TB

Largest internet hub in the world with data throughput of more than 9 terabytes per second



THE CROSS-ATLANTIC ROWER

What the real-estate agent **Rainer Ballwanz** took away from his trip.





You only come up with ideas like that at five in the morning in an all-night bar. Frankfurt real-estate agent Rainer Ballwanz and York Hovest, an investigative photographer with a focus on the environment, decided to cross the Atlantic in a rowing boat. Two years later they were ready. After intense preparations, on December 1, 2019 they got into a 9.20-meter-long rowing boat on Gran Canaria along with physiotherapist Andreas Stollreiter and set off. Ahead of them lay 50 long days in the direction of Barbados, each divided into three hours of rowing and three hours of rest. They spent St. Nicholas Day, Christmas, New Year and even Rainer Ballwanz' 60th birthday on board. Those were not the highlights, however. "When in the night waves over 10 meters high crash with a deafening sound and threaten to capsize the boat you feel very humble," says Ballwanz. The three did the trip without any backup. Had the boat gone under that would probably have been it. "But there were incredibly beautiful moments," says Ballwanz, "such as the wonderful starry sky by night or when we were accompanied by six, seven or eight whales." When they arrived in Barbados Ballwanz could hardly sit, hardly walk and had lost 18 kilos. "We really looked a bit spooky." What do you take away from such a trip? "A new sensitivity, appreciation and gratefulness for life, a re-set of your value system." \ \



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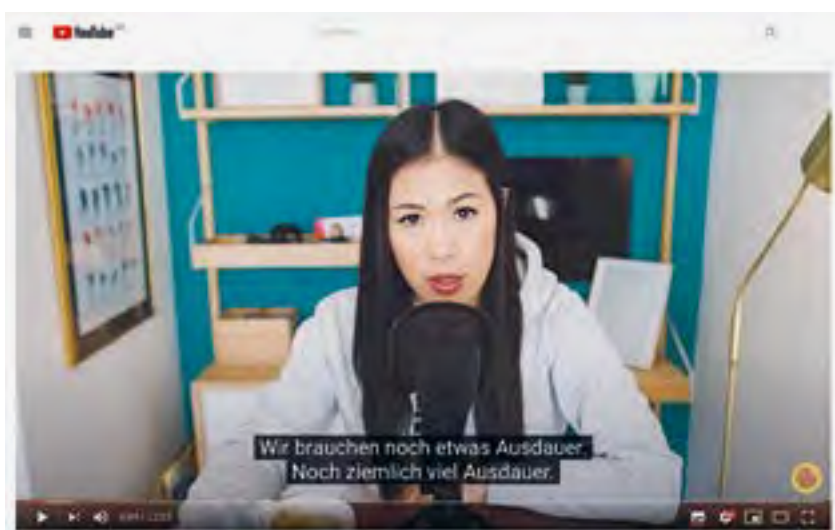


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Rowing around the clock:
Rainer Ballwanz at sea and
on arrival at the destination

THE CORONA COMMUNICATOR

What makes chemist and presenter **Mai Thi Nguyen-Kim** so unique.



Corona for beginners:
Mai Thi Nguyen-Kim
explains it on YouTube



Mai Thi Nguyen-Kim is a veritable phenomenon. Like few other people she manages to explain the most complex scientific facts in a playful, simple manner, and even makes it sound fun. What's more via YouTube she also reaches younger people who tended to see chemistry or physics as a reason for skipping lessons. The proof: Her Covid-19 video "Corona is just getting started" from early April clocked up 6.3 million views – and in many of the comments viewers asked for an update. The woman from Heppenheim with a doctorate in chemistry is very much in demand. She hosts TV programs ("Quarks"), writes books ("Komisch, alles chemisch!") and since June 2020 has been a member of the Senate of the renowned Max-Planck-Gesellschaft. She has received many prizes for her work, most recently in 2020 she was one of the recipients of the German Television Award, before that the Grimme Online Award, and was voted "Science Journalist of the Year". An example: She once explained the subject of her doctoral thesis "Physical Hydrogels Based on Polyurethanes" to the magazine *buecher-menschen.de* as follows: "Imagine for a moment that you need a new liver. And you don't want to have to wait for one to be donated, but if it were possible to take a small tissue sample with stem cells from your skin and grow a liver from these cells – your liver, if you will. That is the future vision of tissue engineering – manufacturing artificial organs. Well organs are made up mainly of cells, but a handful of cells does not make an organ. And this is where chemists come in! They can build three-dimensional frameworks for these cells on which they can grow really well. I developed such frameworks in my doctoral project." Get it?







Unique ensemble:
Art Nouveau at the
Mathildenhöhe in
Darmstadt



THE WORLD HERITAGE CANDIDATE

Why the hope of art historian **Philipp Gutbrod** has to become reality.



The party has been put back but not cancelled altogether. The original plan was that a decision would be made on the application of the Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List at the end of June/beginning of July in Fuzhou/China at the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee. However, the meeting had to be postponed indefinitely because of corona. However, Dr. Philipp Gutbrod, Director of the Institut Mathildenhöhe and one of the driving forces behind the application is confident that a positive decision will eventually be taken. The German-American art historian gives an enthusiastic description of the history and unique character of the Mathildenhöhe. “With his fine sense for promoting culture and business, Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig founded the Darmstadt Artists’ Colony in 1899 and encouraged young artists such as Viennese architect Joseph Maria Olbrich or Peter Behrens, who was later to become an architect, to relocate to Darmstadt. They built the colony with modern houses that straddled Art Nouveau and the “New Building” style – and opened the houses to the public in the framework of exhibitions that were very well-received. Darmstadt was world famous at the time.” Today, the Wedding Tower by Olbrich that overlooks its surroundings is the city’s major landmark. The first exhibition by the artists’ colony in 1901 is considered to be the first modern architecture exhibition with permanent buildings. And some of Peter Behrens’ students were later amongst the founders of the Bauhaus and some of the most famous representatives of Modernism: Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier. “As such, Darmstadt is a city that played a formative role in early Modernism.”



THE LOCATION FINDER

Why fashion photographer **Daniel Woeller** is now just the right man.





Daniel Woeller has an attractive problem. The fashion photographer who has made an international name for himself through location photography is now searching locations for fashion photos in Frankfurt, Offenbach or Hanau rather than in LA, Tel Aviv or Antibes. The reason: Corona is restricting his international travel plans. And: In 2021, the Fashion Week is coming to Frankfurt. “The entire scene is buzzing with anticipation,” says Woeller. “Everyone is delighted, but nobody knows exactly what to expect.” One thing is certain: The Fashion Week will reinvent itself, develop a new narrative, and go out into the city. “Unveiling the Unexpected” is the motto. In this respect Daniel Woeller is the right man. After all, he comes from the region, lives and works in Frankfurt, enjoys scouting locations and telling a story with his images. Like in one of his favourite photos, which presents cool, elegant men’s fashion on a jet ski in front of a rusty wreck off Lanzarote. And he can draw on a rich store of images. After all, before Woeller studied architecture he was fascinated by Punk and New Wave as well as Nouvelle Vague films and Italian Neo-Realism. He didn’t have the necessary patience to work as an architect. So, he organized photo productions and finally started shooting photos himself. Today, he is one of the 20 or so most sought-after fashion photographers in Germany and has worked with stars like British male model David Gandy. His advice for the Fashion Week: “We have to show our strengths, and not compare ourselves with other cities.”



Photos like from a film set:

Daniel Woeller always wants to tell a story







FASHION À LA FRM

The **Fashion Week** is moving from Berlin to Frankfurt and has major aspirations. What does the creative scene expect?

BY KATHRIN ROSENDORFF (TEXT)



The news that Frankfurt is now to become a fashion city, too, took more than a few by surprise. Fashion designer Wolfgang Joop was one of the first to comment when the announcement was made that the Fashion Week was relocating from Berlin to Frankfurt: “Perhaps Frankfurt really does have something pragmatic to go for it. It’s a business and banking city like Milan.”

It was Messe Frankfurt, the trade-fair operating company, that landed the coup; it’s the world’s largest trade-fair, conference and event organizer, and has its own trade-fair complex – along with Berlin’s Premium Group, which organizes Europe’s largest fashion fair. The kick-off is scheduled for summer 2021, when more than 2,000 designers, brands and fashion companies will flock to Frankfurt.



**“Berlin has seemed ja-
ded of late. Frankfurt
as a new venue is fresh
and charming.”**



Michael Werner,
editor-in-chief of fashion trade journal
“Textilwirtschaft”, Frankfurt

For her women’s boutique Hayashi opposite the Stock Exchange building, Kerstin Görling tends to buy fashion in Paris and Milan, hence she had to double-check a few times before believing what she had read on her smartphone: “The Fashion Week is coming to Frankfurt.” “I was of course overjoyed when the news was confirmed.” The 39-year-old is part of a working party that focuses on the supporting program for the Fashion Week.

The working party is made up not only of people from the fashion worlds and designers, but also representatives of the creative scene at large. They want to make sure the right setting is in place in Frankfurt. “It’s our chance to show that Frankfurt is also highly creative and international,” comments Görling, although she’s not yet allowed to reveal any details.

What’s for certain is that the scene intends to be very visible. Frankfurt designer Svenja Boller (who sells parkas and pants under her own moski.to label) emphasized that Fashion Week Frankfurt is a good opportunity for the diverse local fashion scene to present its achievements. Along with other designers in her studio, which is located in a former villa of Carl von Weinberg in Niederrad, she wants the studio to act as a fringe location for the fair.

The sought-after international creative label Leonid Matthias, the Tsatsas bag designers, and Franco-German fashion-maker Gabriel Stunz all hope to be in the thick of things. Stunz specializes in luxurious menswear and once worked with Comme des Garçons, Damir Doma and Tim Hamilton in New York before founding his own label in Frankfurt.



**“When the Fashion
Week launches,
things that have been
hidden away will sud-
denly catch the eye.
The focus will then be
on Frankfurt’s fashion
and the city will
morph into a hot-
spot.”**



**Leonid Sladkevich und
Matthias Gruner,**
designers and founders
of the Leonid Matthias
fashion label, Frankfurt



“Frankfurt doesn’t need to ape Paris to be able to host a successful fashion fair.”



Kerstin Göring,
owner of women’s
boutique Hayashi, Frankfurt



“I’m really looking forward to playing on our own turf next year in Frankfurt! See you there!!!”



“We’ll love it if Frankfurt manages to present its very own approach to fashion and creativity.”



Kim Hnizzo,
model, Bad Homburg



“What fashion hubs win out in the long-term nationally or internationally is something only the future will show.”



Esther Schulze-Tsatsas and Dimitrios Tsatsas,
designers and founders of
the Tsatsas bag label, Frankfurt



Scott Lipinski,
Managing Director of
Fashion Council Germany, Berlin

“As a newcomer, Frankfurt has a unique opportunity to emerge as the new venue in the world of fashion.”



Gabriel Stunz,
designer of the Stunz
fashion label, Frankfurt

“Paris – Milan – Berlin – Frankfurt ;)”



Svenja Boller,
designer and founder of the
moski.to fashion label, Frankfurt

The development is being driven by trade-fair and event organizer Anita Tillmann, who established the Fashion Week 15 years ago in Berlin. The time has now come, she says, to present a new narrative. As Premium Group MD, she considers Frankfurt a fresh new venue and believes the combination of Fashion Week and the local creative scene will give rise to a new spirit in the event.

What's certain is that the event will spread further than merely the trade-fair complex. “A runway on Eiserner Steg, streetwear for the skaters in Hafenpark,” are ideas that Markus Frank, as the Head of the City of Frankfurt’s Dept. of Business, wants to see realized. “Frankfurt has always defined the face of art, architecture and design, and is renowned for its club, bar and restaurant scene,” comments Mayor Peter Feldmann.

Michael Werner, editor-in-chief of the fashion trade journal “Textilwirtschaft”, which is based in Frankfurt, considers the bigger picture: Fashion trade fairs are very fragmented in Germany, and there’s a great yearning for something new. That spells an opportunity, he feels, “to create something big, something really unexpected. The chance is there to be taken. And the time is ripe.”



“It’s time for a new understanding of fashion. That includes the combination of tradition and new technologies as well as business and sustainability. A perfect fit for Frankfurt as an international metropolis!”

Olivia Dahlem,
designer and owner of the
Coco Lores fashion label, Frankfurt



DHL Paketzentrum, Bochum

Schwarz & Friends

BEHIND IT YOU'LL ALWAYS FIND A CLEVER MIND.

Frank Appel, CEO Deutsche Post AG
www.faz.net/appel



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CAN BE HELPFUL ANYWHERE

Professor Kristian Kersting of TU Darmstadt was the first ever winner of the German AI Award. He knows what artificial intelligence is good for.

BY MARTIN ORTH (INTERVIEW) AND JONAS RATERMANN (PHOTOS)

> Professor Kersting, last year you became the first ever winner of the German AI Award. Were you surprised?

Most definitely! At the time I was still commuting between Bonn and Darmstadt and was pretty blown away on the day I got the call from Chris Boos. He is considered a pioneer of AI and was the chairman of the jury; I'd actually met him briefly once. He asked me if I was aware of the award. I said I had heard of it and asked who had won it. He said: "Well, you!" I could hardly believe my ears.

What was the award for?

Here, we are pursuing a vision. We are working on making AI systems more similar to human beings. Humans are easily able to generalize with just a few examples, for example to distinguish between dogs and cats, so machine learning also has to be achieved with limited data. That's part of what we call the third wave of AI.

You head up the Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning Lab at the TU Darmstadt. What exactly do you do there?

Machine learning is all about developing computer programs that imitate learning is one way or another. To do so, we write algo-

ritms. You can imagine it like a recipe for a dish. We describe step by step what the computer needs to do to learn from its own experiences or those of others.

On your website it says that you want to reach the point where computers can learn as fast and flexibly as humans. How close are you to that goal?

Many people imagine an artificial human being, but we are miles or even centuries away from that. At the moment we're talking about specific isolated skills. Take the chess computer or Computer Go, for example. If I were to say to one of them: 'Bake me a pizza', then I wouldn't get anything out of it. Nevertheless, we are slowly starting to combine individual isolated skills with one another.

What defines the strength of Darmstadt?

Darmstadt invested in AI early on. In the meantime, there have been almost a dozen professors and a notable exchange with the cognitive sciences, the twin discipline of AI. The cognitive sciences use information-theory approaches to describe the behavior of human beings and thus to understand them.





Prof. Dr. Kristian Kersting

Born in 1973, Kristian Kersting studied and gained a PhD at the University of Freiburg in Artificial Intelligence. In 2006, he received the prize for the best doctoral thesis in the area of artificial intelligence in Europe. After appointments at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, the Fraunhofer Institute for Intelligent Analysis and Information Systems in Sankt Augustin, the University of Bonn and the TU Dortmund, in 2017 he received an offer from the TU Darmstadt that he “couldn’t refuse”. In Darmstadt, Kristian Kersting is Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. Since the end of August 2020 he has headed up the Hessen Center for Artificial Intelligence in Darmstadt together with Prof. Dr.-Ing. Mira Mezini.

They attempt, so to speak, to find algorithms in people. For us, the back and forth between human and machine behavior is very interesting.

How is Darmstadt positioned nationally and internationally?

In the respective rankings, we consistently occupy top positions within Germany and Europe.

Can Germany keep pace then with the US techies or the high level of AI acceptance in China?

The AI index was published recently, and here Germany is in fifth place, which is a good result. Many international firms, too, employ European and German AI researchers, or scientists who have studied in Germany. We therefore have a huge amount of influence in this field. We just need to try to keep these creative individuals in the country or to bring them back here.

What framework conditions do you see being necessary for this?

We need a better ecosystem. On a European level, it might be worth building a kind of CERN (European Nuclear Research Cen-

tre) for AI. AI centers would not only be important for scientists, but also for businesses who don’t want to purchase their own computing power right away for solving certain problems. At physical locations with enough computing power, companies could rent capacity and exchange information on site, including with researchers. That could give rise to a certain momentum.

Where do you see the greatest potential for AI?

There is no sector in which AI does not or will not play a role. AI is used in fields as different as precision medicine and agriculture alike. Here, for example, research is being carried out into how the global food supply can be ensured despite ever-dwindling areas for cultivation and the increasing population. AI is a cross-disciplinary technology that can help in any area.

Can artificial intelligence help us to manage the Corona pandemic too?

Any number of applications are conceivable and in the pipeline. From vaccine development to the chatbot on a hotline: It is always better to get a poor answer than no answer, after all.

Continental, Porsche, the ESA and many others have expressed their interest in working with the recently founded Hessian Center for Artificial Intelligence. //



Does your institute collaborate with industrial partners?

Yes, of course. The German Stock Exchange recently called us about trading. We also have a cooperation laboratory with the construction group Hochtief, which looks into “AI in Construction”. Continental, Porsche, the ESA and many others have expressed their interest in working with the recently founded Hessian Center for Artificial Intelligence, which bundles the AI research from 13 higher education institutions in the region. The main location is at the TU Darmstadt, and I’m delighted to be able to manage it together with Mira Mezini. But don’t forget about the public projects, either.

For example?

We have just launched an AI lighthouse project with the University of Freiburg, the DFKI and other partners, which is being sponsored by BMWI. The focus here is on resilient industrial production and supply chains that can continue to perform even in times of crisis and which are able to make their own suggestions for optimization independently based on the evaluation of external and internal data.

You have been expressly praised for carrying out research that is very relevant to practice. Can you give us an example?

The first generation of Siri, Apple’s voice recognition software, was based on our technologies, at least according to unofficial sources.

Having achieved such success, have you have thought about becoming independent?

I’ve thought about it, and I’ve had a few other nice ideas, but first I want to make progress with the projects and the Hessian Center for Artificial Intelligence.

Not everyone gets excited about artificial intelligence; some people are scared of it.

I can reassure them there’s no need to be. Some people have the idea that AI systems are already human-like or even better than humans, but we’re still an eternity away from that – if it even ever happens.

So there’s no need for ethical debate?

The discussion can and should be had, but it should emphasize the potential of AI. We should be delighted about what technology enables us to do and we should consider, for example, the way that the much-discussed facial recognition is able to help the Federal Criminal Police Office or Interpol in cases of child pornography. \

CALL TO ACTION

How **Darmstadt-based Software AG** has not only come through the Covid-19 crisis, but also helped others to overcome it.



Corporate HQ:
The great Software AG campus in the south of Darmstadt attracts many talented job seekers



Sanjay Brahmawar: The native Indian with Belgian nationality has headed up Software AG since 2018

➤ **Darmstadt-based Software AG** has posted very good results for first-half 2020 despite the corona pandemic. The company has improved all its key financial variables and has fared well in all regions, including North America. Consolidated sales held steady at 411 million Euros, with order receipts rising 30 percent, meaning that the sales target of one billion Euros a year the company has set its sights on is getting tangibly closer.

“**Our core business with software** for digitization is growing appreciably, we have a solid pipeline, and we have highly qualified staff. I’m convinced that we’re in a good position to support our clients in their digitization projects – and such undertakings have gained a new significance in recent months,” comments Sanjay Brahmawar, CEO of Software AG, at the press conference presenting the first-half figures.

Software AG is not infrequently stuck in the shadow of Walldorf-based sector leader SAP, although the Darmstadt-based company is actually a few years older than its DAX-listed counterpart. In 1969, six young members of the consultancy AIV (Institut für Angewandte Informationsverarbeitung) founded the company in Darmstadt, and its business with database management systems swiftly grew, contributing about one quarter of revenues today. The new focus, however, is on IoT, the Internet of Things.

In 2017, Software AG acquired Cumulocity from Bernd Gross, currently CTO at Software AG, having collaborated with the company for two years. The Cumulocity software made it possible to hook up all manner of equipment – from vehicles and wind turbines to entire factory plants – to the Internet. Software AG intends to use the software to emerge as the world’s key supplier of IoT technologies.

Another decisive stimulus for refocusing company operations was provided by native Indian Sanjay Brahmawar, who has been Software AG CEO since 2018. The IoT expert’s strategy boils down to three key concepts: focus, the power to implement, and the team. He aims to better tap into the company’s potential, to foreground clients even more strongly, and to forcefully and actively nurture internal talent and external partnerships. He feels that life during the Corona crisis bears him out. “The crisis is a call to action,” he said in an interview with the FrankfurtRheinMain GmbH’s Facebook channel.

Software AG made a direct contribution to overcoming the worldwide corona pandemic at the level of the IoT. In July 2020, it brought its Smart Social Distancing solution to market, which enables employees the world over to return safely to their workplaces. Fully compliant with the HSE regulations, companies can use the tool to support their staff in maintaining the recommended minimum distance, to record violations, and to prove to the authorities that they have put the requisite safety measures in place. **∞**



ORGANIC FARMING THRIVES IN FRM

FrankfurtRhineMain is fast becoming an organic produce hub – and everyone's getting involved. A trip to places where the world is still grand.

BY ROBERT MAUS (TEXT) AND JONAS RATERMANN (PHOTOS)





The young girls are truly enthusiastic. They repeatedly push hay into the hungry mouths of the cows, while their parents casually wander around the expansive and airy stables. Once a month the family visits Domäne Mechtildshausen in Wiesbaden's Erbenheim district in order to buy regionally produced organic food there. And the parents always seize the opportunity to show their children how animals can be kept under conditions that are optimal for their welfare.

Domäne Mechtildshausen is one of the very first organic farms. The estate is mentioned in deeds going back to the Middle Ages, and since opening in 1987 the enterprise has long since emerged as an exemplary farm for regional products in FrankfurtRhineMain, as Managing Director Werner Backes explains. "All our products are certified by Bioland," he says, adding: "We breed dairy cows and beef cattle, which are slaughtered in our own abattoir. The meat is sold in our butcher's store and with the milk we produce yoghurt, curd, cream and butter – or we sell it here as fresh milk."

In the farm building with its attractive inner courtyard there's also a bakery and a large market hall in which homegrown food is stacked up alongside organic products from other regions, too. Almost 80 different types of fruit and vegetables are grown on the estate, chickens lay free-range eggs, and pigs are reared. There are also geese, goats, horses and donkeys on the estate, because, according to Backes, they are "highly popular" with the kids. "Next year, we're going to set up a kind of animal experience-world," he announces.

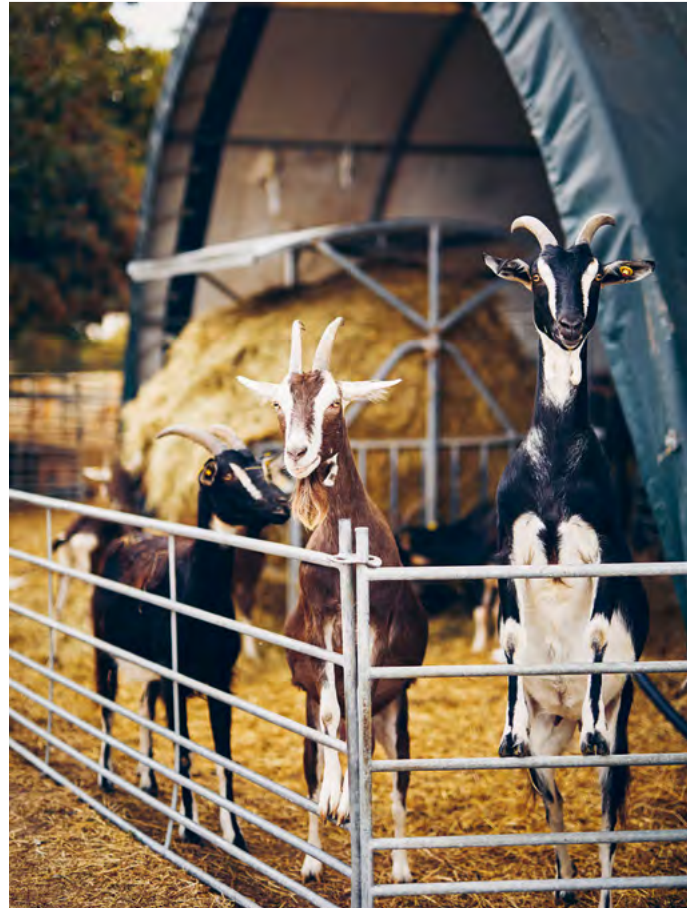
That's certainly not his only project. According to Backes, the estate could become a center for direct sellers from the entire region provided they offer certified organic food. "We're in talks with other farmers," Backes says and is very optimistic, because today there are so many producers of organic products in the region that it's hard to get a detailed handle on them all. And he doesn't think there'll be a problem with finding buyers. Customers flock from all around and are happy to pay higher prices for the products. Backes knows this to be the case as he regularly monitors the license plates on the cars parked in front of the building.





The long-standing Domäne Mechtildshausen near Erbenheim, Wiesbaden:

The estate covers 650 hectares of farmland and employs only organic, biological methods. It also features a market, a butcher's shop, a bakery, a café, a restaurant and a guesthouse





The new Alnatura headquarters southwest of Darmstadt:

The organic foods retailer supplies 136 of its own outlets in Germany – with 1,350 different organic products, many of them decentrally. The freely accessible ground-floor restaurant gives you an idea of the product quality






The State of Hessen's government is pressing the pedal on this trend by designating so-called model eco-regions. The idea is to create structures so that regionally produced foods can also be purchased by people from the region. "Marketing in the region" is the motto of the so-called Eco-Action Plan. "We're positioned regionally. Our fresh foods are harvested only 100 meters away in our fields. This is thoroughbred regional food," comments Backes and insists that "we're going to expand on this."



One partner could be Bornhof in the Wehen district of Taunusstein, which is nearby. Its products all comply with the strict Demeter quality seal. The milk and the meat from the cattle are so cherished that you have to register early if you hope to get any. However, the farm's own store is not big enough to work profitably, so Bornhof also supplies other farmers who sell its products at weekly markets or in organic food stores.

Alnatura is a big-time organic foods retailer. The Darmstadt-based sector giant has no less than 1,350 organic products on offer, supplied from its logistics center in Lorsch in South Hessen, and runs 136 outlets in 62 cities in Germany, many of them decentrally through regional organic farmers and bakers, and is committed at various levels to promoting ecology. For example, it has a program supporting regional planting projects, such as organic dessert grapes from the Odenwald, watermelons from the Rhineland Palatinate, and organic walnuts from Ried.

One visible symbol of its success is the new corporate HQ on a re-naturalized former US military base southwest of Darmstadt. The building was constructed using clay and its ecological features are compelling. Ventilation all year round uses fresh air brought into the building from the adjacent woods by a channel in the earth, while a PV plant on the roof provides the electricity, and the water for the sanitary facilities and to water the outside areas stems from a rainwater cistern. Incidentally: The ground floor of the new HQ is quite literally to everyone's taste. Swiss restaurant "tit-bits" offers a selection of 40 different homemade dishes, and they're 90-percent made from organic produce largely from Alnatura. The idea is to use vegetables and herbs from the garden outside on the Alnatura Campus for their preparation. 

WHEN WILL THE VACCINE BE READY?

The **Paul Ehrlich Institute** in Langen decides whether a corona vaccine goes on clinical trial and whether it is subsequently approved. Director Klaus Cichutek explains where things are heading.

INTERVIEW: MARTIN ORTH



© Paul Ehrlich-Institut

> Professor Cichutek, how would you describe the role of the Paul Ehrlich Institute during the corona crisis?

The Paul Ehrlich Institute is the German Federal Institute for Vaccines and Biomedicines. We actively contribute to combatting the worldwide corona pandemic. In the case of vaccines, we focus on making sure vaccine products are safe and sufficiently effective. To this end, we are busy intensively advising national and international vaccine developers on the clinical trials, the necessary non-clinical tests, and also the development path through to approval. We authorize the clinical trials in Germany for vaccines and biomedicines, and together with the experts from the other national medicine approval authorities in Europe at the European Medicines Agency we evaluate the applications for approval as soon as these are received. Approval itself is granted by the European Commission.

The development of a vaccine seems to be very time-intensive and complex. Why is that so?

Vaccines are administered to millions of primarily healthy persons, among them children and young people, for the purposes of preventing an illness. The benefits of the vaccines must therefore clearly outweigh the risks. This is the reason why, prior to approval of a clinical trial, there must be proof that the quality of

the production of the vaccine is assured, that extensive non-clinical studies have been carried out on the vaccine's safety and to demonstrate it triggers a specific immune response, and that during the clinical trials its safety as a medicine and effectiveness will be shown. Thus, at least 3,000 persons must take part in the Phase 3 trials, preferably more, in order to determine the side effects of 1 to 1,000 vaccinations or more with due certainty.

In April, you authorized the clinical trial of a potential Covid vaccine made by Mainz-based biotechnology company BioNTech. It involves so-called RNA vaccines. What is special about them?

BioNTech was the first applicant in Germany and at that point in time the third or fourth worldwide. The special thing about RNA vaccines is that they can be developed far more swiftly than the established inactive vaccines. There is no need for the complex culture of the virus, such as is required, for example, for influenza vaccines, which is something that has to take place under next-level safety conditions. According to the manufacturer, within the short space of a few weeks many millions of vaccine doses can be produced. Even if, to date, there are no RNA-based human vaccines that have been approved, there is already data from clinical trials with RNA tumor vaccines.



The Paul Ehrlich Institute

The decision-makers in Langen

The Paul Ehrlich Institute (PEI) in Langen is the German Federal Institute for Vaccines and Biomedicines. It is responsible for approving vaccines and biomedicines and issuing the official release for batches. Moreover, it approves clinical trials and field trials. Its tasks also include research and information for the public. Since 2013, the PEI has been a WHO Collaborating Center for the Standardization and Evaluation of Vaccines. The man from whom the institute derives its name, Paul Ehrlich (1854-1915), was a German doctor, serologist and immunologist. He is regarded as the founder of chemotherapy and also developed the first treatment for syphilis. The Nobel laureate explained the fundamental principle of immunity and researched anti-diphtheria sera. The institute he founded to conduct the work was the predecessor of today's Paul Ehrlich Institute.

Assuming the data submitted suffices, vaccine products could be approved worldwide by the end of this year or the beginning of next year. //

The region seems to be well supported in the corona crisis, what with the BioNTech corporation in Mainz, the pharmaceutical corporation Sanofi in Frankfurt and, not least, the Paul Ehrlich Institute in Langen. Do you share my view?

Yes, I have the same impression. Sanofi is a front-line international player, BioNTech wants to get there, too. We should also mention the outstanding virologists at the major universities in the region, namely in Frankfurt/Main, Giessen, Mainz and Marburg, not forgetting the City of Frankfurt Dept. of Health, which is also responsible for the airport and plays an important role in combating Covid-19. And we at the Paul Ehrlich Institute discharge duties far beyond the region, too.

How does the Paul Ehrlich Institute compare to its international peers? And how well is it networked, for example with the WHO?

Every country has a medicines agency. What is unique about the Paul Ehrlich Institute is that we specialize in vaccines and biomedicines as well as in antibodies and medicines for hematology and transfusion medicine and that, as a medicines agency, we also conduct research. With our research efforts, we help everyone to know more about medicines and how they function, and that improves the development of medicines and their evaluation. Moreover, we are among the most active members in the European network of official medicines control laboratories (OMCL), which are responsible throughout the EU for testing experimen-

tal medicine batches. In Germany, no vaccine may go to market until the batches have been officially released for use. To this end, samples of every vaccine batch are experimentally tested before they are marketed and used, be it by the Paul Ehrlich Institute or another OMCL. We are recognized by the WHO, the group of European and globally active medicines agencies, the European Medicines Agency, the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines & HealthCare, and other organizations and committees as an active and expert partner.

In your opinion, how are things likely to continue? When might a vaccine be approved and when would it then be available in larger quantities?

BioNTech has announced that it will be filing an application for approval this autumn, presumably with the European Medicines Agency. Assuming the data submitted suffices, vaccine products could be approved worldwide by the end of this year or the beginning of next year. At the moment, the Paul Ehrlich Institute, the Robert Koch Institute, the federal states and the Federal Mi-

nistry of Health are elaborating a concept for how vaccine supplies will be maintained and how the vaccination process will unfold.

Do you discern any opportunities to improve or accelerate the development of a vaccine? Corona is not likely to be the last virus that threatens us.

The regulatory process has already been accelerated and optimized. At a very early date we provided scientific advice for the vaccine developers. We put in place a procedure that allows initial data packages to be submitted to us for pre-evaluation as soon as they are ready – instead of after the application is filed. And thirdly, phases in the clinical trials that otherwise have to be completed sequentially can be combined. We need to learn for the future, to use the experience gained, to be able to adjust faster to new possibly epidemic or pandemic pathogens that are new to humans or recur in us. The Paul Ehrlich Institute can make an important contribution to future efforts to combat pandemics by means of vaccines and biomedicines, too. **∞**

The corona network in FrankfurtRhineMain (selection)



THE CORONA NETWORK

From **vaccine developers to pharma corporations**: The most important German companies in the battle against the corona pandemic are to be found in FrankfurtRhineMain.

BY JASMIN SIEBERT (TEXT)





BioNTech

Mainz-based vaccine developer

To date, BioNTech has focused on individual cancer immune therapies. Since the beginning of the corona pandemic, CEO and co-founder Uğur Sahin (photo) has pursued a single goal: to make a vaccine against Sars-CoV-2 available worldwide as soon as possible. Founded in 2008, the biotech company, which is headquartered in Mainz, required less than three months to get potential vaccines into the clinical phase. Like cancer therapies, the vaccine is based on a so-called messenger RNA (mRNA), and BioNTech aims to market a vaccine by the end of 2020. During development, the company has collaborated with big players in the sector: French pharma corporation Sanofi, US pharma corporation Pfizer and China's conglomerate Fosun. Moreover, BioNTech is working with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to develop vaccines against HIV and tuberculosis – and since October 2019 has been listed on Nasdaq, the US tech exchange.

CureVac

Vaccine-developer in Frankfurt

Tübingen's biopharma company CureVac hit the headlines when President Donald Trump tried to bag the corona vaccine rights exclusively for the USA. That failed because of the veto of majority shareholders and SAP co-founder Dietmar Hopp. Originally founded to provide individual medicines on an mRNA basis as therapies for cancer (like BioNTech), CureVac has been working full steam ahead on a corona vaccine since March 2020. In Frankfurt/Main, the clinical phase has already started, with a possible vaccine being trialed with patients. In August 2020 CureVac went public in New York in order to raise cash for the further development of the vaccine. Hopp remains the main investor, and the German Federal Government (through the state development bank KfW) and British pharma corporation GlaxoSmithKline are likewise shareholders. Since August 2020, Dr. Franz-Werner Haas (photo) has been the company's CEO.



Sanofi

Frankfurt-based pharma corporation

Sanofi is one of the world's largest pharma corporations – and Frankfurt is part of its DNA. The company emerged from Sanofi-Synthelabo and Aventis, which was itself the product of a merger of Frankfurt's Hoechst AG and Rhône-Poulenc, Lyon. It all began about 150 years ago in Frankfurt's Höchst district with an antipyretic, and today the area is home to the HQ of Sanofi Deutschland and the manufacturing base for one of the world's best-selling insulin pens. Sanofi Pasteur, the company's vaccine division, is researching two corona vaccines, with one relying on an adjuvant and the other on messenger RNA (mRNA).

Schott

Mainz-based specialist glass maker

There's no vaccine without suitable packaging. For this reason, Mainz-based Schott, a leading international maker of special glass and glass ceramic, this year committed 350 million Euros to expanding its production capacities. In 16 plants spread across the whole world, Schott can now manufacture vaccine phials made of borosilicate glass. This special glass is resistant to chemicals and changes in temperature and was invented in 1887 by chemist Otto Schott.





GSI

Darmstadt-based research center

At the GSI Centre for Heavy Ion Research in Darmstadt researchers are killing the Sars-CoV-2 virus with heavy ions instead of, as is customary, with gamma rays. Because the virus shells remain intact, such inactivated viruses are interesting for the development of vaccines. In order to treat the pneumonias triggered by Sars-CoV-2 more effectively, the GSI is testing treatments using low-dosage X-rays. Moreover, together with international partners, GSI is developing sensors to identify viruses in nanopores. One plan is to use nanopores in protective masks, which protect the wearer because the pores are far smaller than the coronavirus.



Koziol

Erbach-based mask manufacturer

Koziol is renowned for household goods made of plastic that are not just functional but also aesthetically pleasing. Since 1927 it has exclusively manufactured its products at its base in Erbach in the Odenwald – and it exports them to over 50 countries. During the corona crisis, the Koziol designers came up with a hip, washing-machine-proof everyday mask with a replaceable filter fleece, a face guard, and a hygienic finger protector.

University teaching hospitals



Giessen/Marburg university teaching hospital (UKGM)

As early as the beginning of the pandemic, the experts at the UKGM focused on a key aspect over and above medical research and patient care: citizens' worries. They developed the advice app Covid-Online that provides guidance on many aspects of corona. In another project, scientists explored the reasons why Sars-CoV-2 infections were more severe among older patients. The Marburg virologists were also decisively involved in the discovery of Sars-CoV-1 in 2003.

Frankfurt university teaching hospital

In Frankfurt, virologists are also trying to stop the virus. They are testing thousands of therapies to see whether they can also be effective against Sars-CoV-2. The first test batch of almost 5,000 substances already included some that killed the virus. Many further tests will be required to establish whether these also work outside the lab.

Mainz university teaching hospital

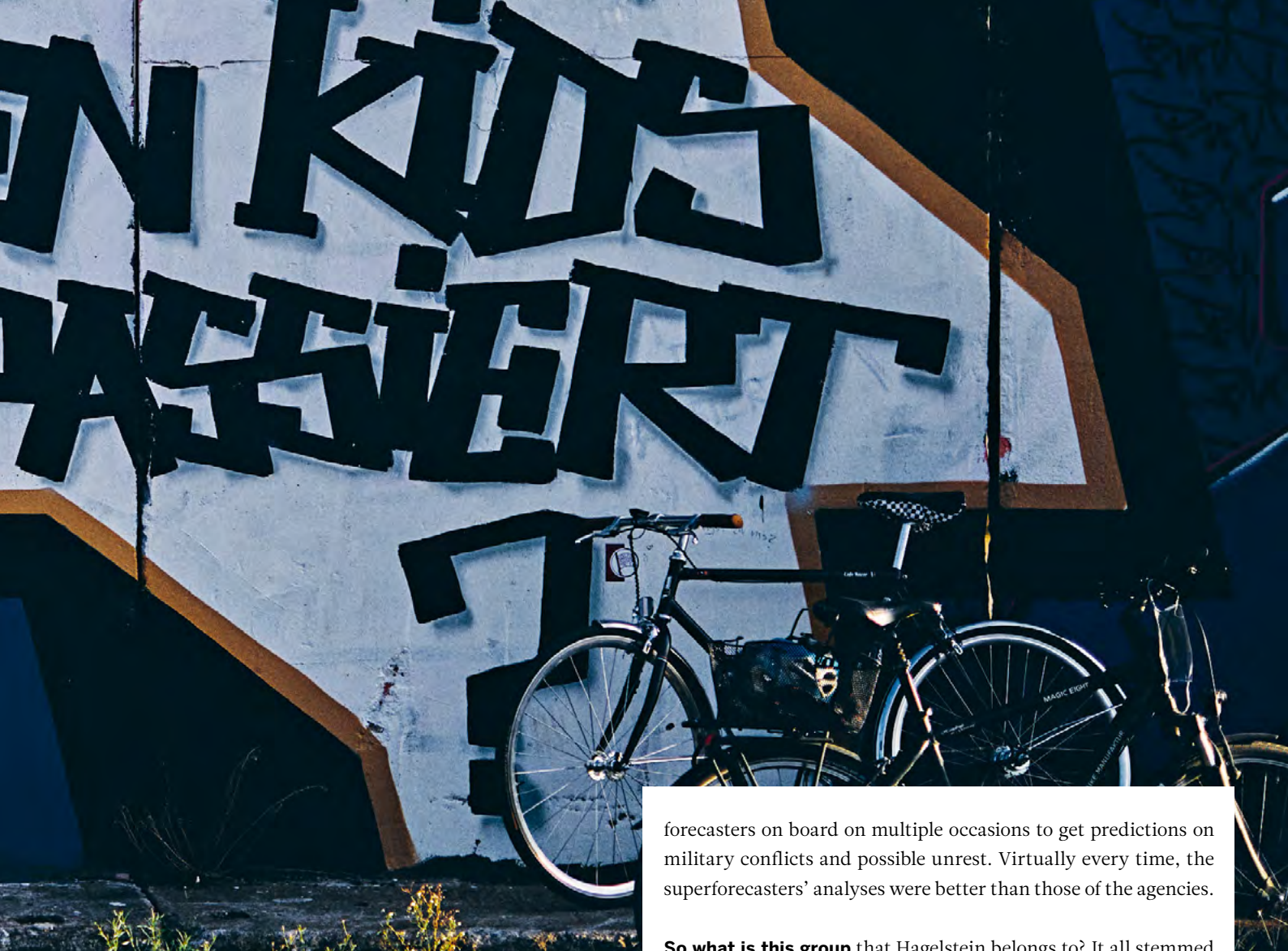
In May, together with Berlin's Charité, the Mainz university teaching hospital hosted a digital Hackathon on the topic of corona. The goal was to make use of locally developed digital solutions in other places, too. Mainz-based scientists showed that the mandatory wearing of masks can be justified as making sense by comparing infection figures in comparable cities.



SO SAYS THE SUPERFORECASTER

Roman Hagelstein from Offenbach knows how to predict the future better than the vast majority of other people. Even the CIA relies on his expertise. So how does he do it? And what does he think about the future of FrankfurtRhineMain?

BY ALEXANDER JÜRGS (TEXT) AND JONAS RATERMANN (PHOTOS)



It's a possibility that's worrying more than a few people right now:

Could it be that ultimately no vaccine will be found for coronavirus? After all, despite many years of research, as yet no substance has been found to be effective against HIV, the virus that can trigger AIDS. Roman Hagelstein believes this pessimism with regard to a corona vaccine is unfounded. "It's looking good," he says. He can even give a percentage to express how good the prospects are in his opinion. "The probability that there will be a vaccine for a large number of people before the autumn of 2021 is around 90 percent." He rates the chances of having a widely distributable vaccine earlier, between October 2020 and the end of March 2021, at around 60 percent.

How does he reach those figures? Roman Hagelstein is a so-called superforecaster. The Offenbach native is part of a small, globally networked group which, it is said, is able to predict the future far more accurately than others. In their analysis of crises, terrorism or elections, they even outdo secret services. The American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has already brought these

forecasters on board on multiple occasions to get predictions on military conflicts and possible unrest. Virtually every time, the superforecasters' analyses were better than those of the agencies.

So what is this group that Hagelstein belongs to? It all stemmed from a research project by US psychology professor Philip Tetlock. As part of a long-term study, the researcher examined expert prognoses, investigating around 28,000 predictions altogether. The sobering result was that the experts' estimates were in general hardly any more useful than those of the laypersons. Just a small group stood out, whom Tetlock dubbed the "foxes". Their thinking was characterized less by ideologies or fixed opinions, and they would more readily revise their estimates. The "foxes" generally have an outstanding knowledge of mathematics and are able to process vast amounts of information – and it is this combination that makes their forecasts so outstanding.

In 2011, Tetlock launched an online platform aimed at finding precisely such "foxes": the Good Judgement Project. This posed questions, for which the users could develop and submit their prognoses. Roman Hagelstein was also involved and was evaluated on the platform. It soon became clear: His prognoses are better than those of 98 percent of the other users. As a result, two years after registering with the Good Judgement Project he was invited to move to a closed platform, where only a small circle of around 150 people worldwide are active. Hagelstein had achieved his goal: He was a superforecaster.



Roman Hagelstein doesn't look like he's working for major corporations. He arrives at our meeting at Hafen Offenbach sporting a casual checked shirt

Most of the superforecasters says the 36-year-old, are men who studied business or political science and most of them come from the USA. There is an above-average number of retired people, since “they have enough time”. After all, time is of the essence for superforecasters, who need to absorb, process, and appraise as much information as possible. When Hagelstein joined the Good Judgement Project, he generally got his knowledge from blogs. Today, he consumes podcasts primarily. In order to listen to as many as possible, he plays them at double speed, “which works well.”

Alongside his controller job Hagelstein has also founded his own company: Smart Forecast. He gives presentations and advises companies on how they can improve their forecasts themselves. Estimates of economic developments are especially in demand. What does Hagelstein think about how the economy will fare with the corona crisis? “Germany is in a much better position than many other countries,” he says. And the FrankfurtRhine-Main region is also particularly well prepared, he believes. In certain areas that are exceptionally strong here, there is already a notable upswing, as is the case among consultancy firms in the finance industry, for example, or the innovative fintechs.

He is somewhat more skeptical however, about another branch of the economy that's also important to the region, namely aviation. “The number of flights and passenger figures will fall by around half for a prolonged period of time,” Hagelstein fears. Ho-

liday air travel, including journeys abroad, will decline in the coming summer season, Hagelstein believes, and in terms of business travel there will be very little recovery. “Managers flying halfway around the world for a business meeting is something we will no longer see very often,” he says. Something the corona crisis has revealed all too clearly, he adds, is that a large proportion of the business appointments could be replaced by online meetings and video conferences, and that this saves a great deal of money.

What is the most important thing when it comes to developing forecasts and looking to the future? “You have to remain free of any agenda,” says Roman Hagelstein. Regarding the facts soberly and without bias – that's what defines the work of the superforecasters, he says. Anyone who pays too much attention to their own opinions will often err, as this particular crisis has revealed. **W**



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LOOKS LIKE NYC

But it's FRM: An image search engine reveals astonishing similarities between international sights and views of FrankfurtRhineMain.

BY CONSTANZE KLEIS (TEXT)



Frankfurt // New York

Frankfurt is not New York, of that there's no doubt. That said, the skyline is probably the only one in Europe that can compare with the Big Apple's. Thirty skyscrapers over 100 meters high, including 19 of the 20 highest towers in Germany, combine to form "Mainhattan".

Aschaffenburg // Copenhagen

Johannisburg Castle high up above the Main River defines the face of the city of Aschaffenburg. Its first floor is home to the State Gallery, with Europe's most important collection of works by Lucas Cranach the Elder. The Danish counterpart, Frederiksborg Castle, houses the Museum of National History.



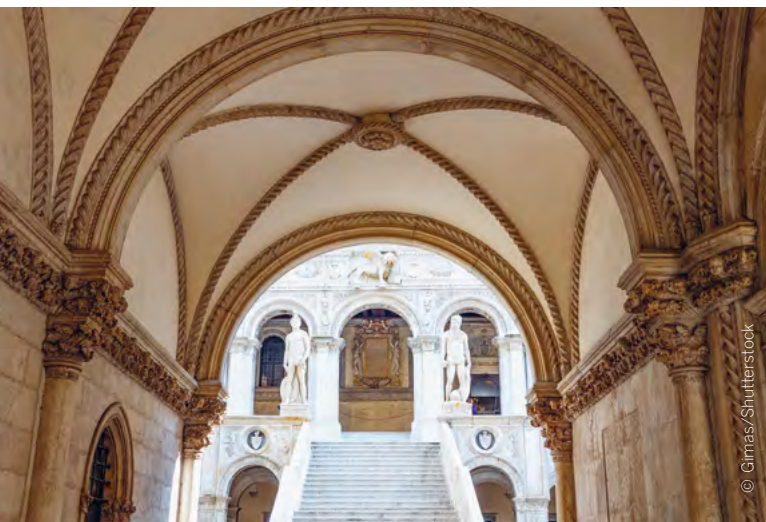
Neu-Anspach // Copenhagen

The idyllic half-timbered buildings in Freilichtmuseum Hessenpark – and there are over one hundred historical edifices – give a great impression of 400 years of history and everyday culture in Hessen. By contrast, Nyhavn is Copenhagen's old harbor and entertainment district.



Eltville // Venice

Kloster Eberbach formed the backdrop for the mega-movie "Name of the Rose". Whether the reason was its similarity to the Doge's Palace in Venice is not known. Today, the basilica is the main venue for concerts during the Rheingau Music Festival.



Limburg // London

Limburg Cathedral is the landmark of the city on the banks of the Lahn River. The old town located beneath it is one of the few in the region to survive World War II largely undamaged, although you probably need artificial intelligence to think it comparable to Kensington Gardens.



Wiesbaden // Marrakesh

The Kaiser Friedrich Thermal Baths in Wiesbaden is a spa temple for use nude that offers ultra-modern wellness luxury in an Art Nouveau setting stretching across a full 1,450 square meters. In the royal city of Marrakesh the same facilities are evidently part of the fit-out of an upper-class home.





Worms // Prague

The Nibelungen Tower on the bridge over the Rhine is one of the sights of Worms. The room in the tower can be rented as temporary accommodation. In Prague, the tower on the Charles Bridge that crosses the Vitava River acts as the gateway to the old city.

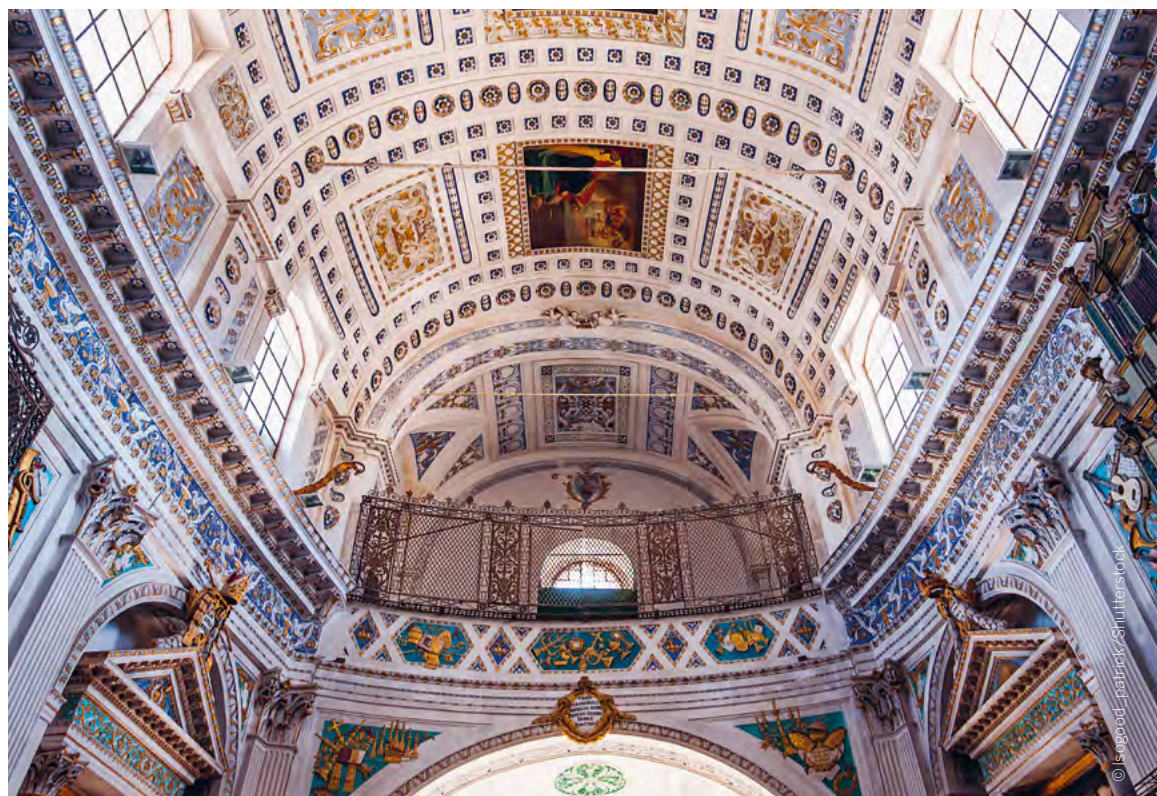
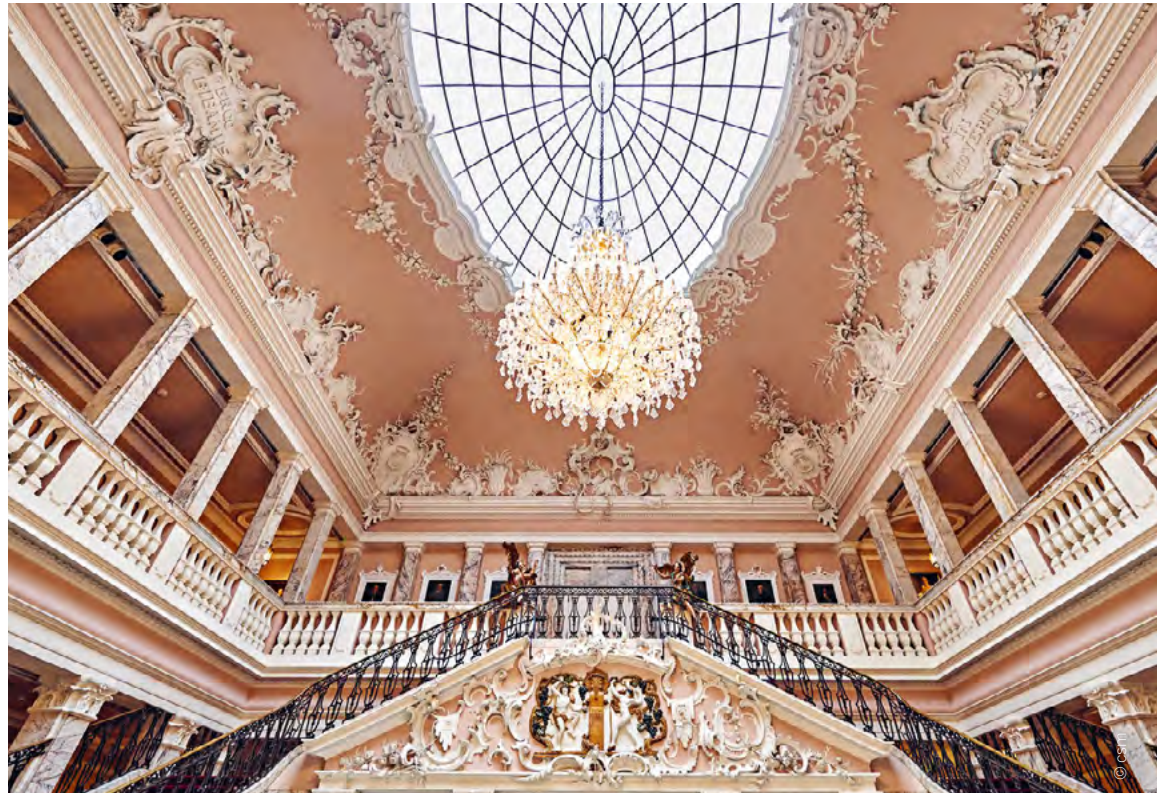
Geisenheim // Thailand

Castle Johannisberg in Geisenheim is home to a long-standing winery and vineyard. It is considered one of the best in the Rheingau region, where only Riesling grapes are planted. It bears a striking similarity to a tea plantation in Thailand.



Wiesbaden // Sicily

At the request of the then CEO, the marble hall in the Henkell champagne cellars was decorated in 1928 with elaborate ornamentation in the Rococo style. He felt that the previous interior was simply not prestigious enough. Only a Sicilian church could compare.



APPLE WINE AS CULTURAL HERITAGE?

Four traditions in Hessen are up for inclusion in the Intangible Cultural Heritage list. The decision is scheduled for 2021.



Four traditions in Hessen are up for inclusion in the ICH list, the record of Intangible Cultural Heritage: Hessen's culture of apple wine, the "Foaselt" Mardi Gras customs in Herbstein, the tobacco planting techniques and cigar making in the Upper Rhine valley, and the craft of watchmaking, the Hessen Ministry of Science and Art has announced.

Fans of apple wine culture say the beverage is a central element of typical life in Hessen. Alongside the many apple wine taverns there is even an Apple Wine and Fruit Route, the Apple Wine Festival in Frankfurt and the "Golden Apple", which is awarded for special services to maintenance of meadow orchards.

Above all, the Town of Lorsch is championing the inclusion of tobacco growing and cigar making. Between 1861 and 1983, Lorsch was home to more than 50 smaller and five larger cigar factories. In 1880, a total of more than 100 hectares of land were devoted to tobacco growing. With 3,700 inhabitants, this meant that almost every family grew tobacco or worked in the cigar industry.

"To date, only one Hessen tradition is included in the ICH List, namely Hessen's "Kratzputz" sgraffito. So it's high time that we show what great customs and cultural forms are otherwise to be found in our state," comments Hessen Minister of Art and Culture Angela Dorn. The ministry expects a decision to be announced next spring.



Apple wine was a major topic in FRM Magazine 2019. In 2021, "Ebbelwoi", as the locals lovingly call it, will hopefully be included on the UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list



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