

IN THE YEAR 2030

A Vision for Berlin and Brandenburg

Creating a science hub in and around Germany's capital

By Jürgen Kluge

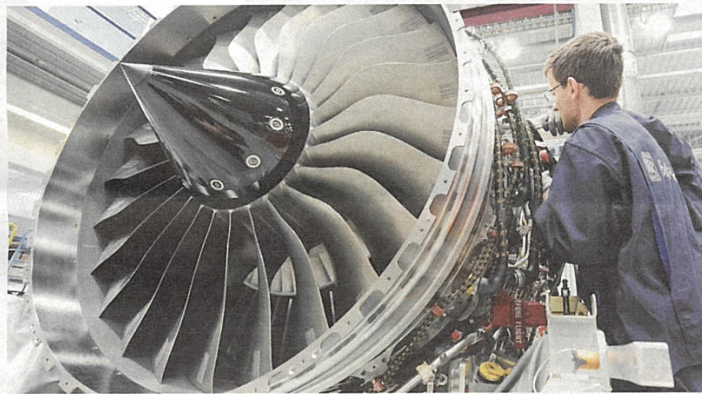
Little less than 100 years ago Berlin was widely acknowledged as the world's scientific center. From Einstein to Sauerbruch, from TV to splitting atoms, it was where one went to find the latest scientific discoveries and newest technical achievements.

But what is it like 100 years on and how will it look tomorrow? Is there a realistic chance that Berlin will connect with its past glory and become a leading scientific metropolis again? Can this success influence prosperity and employment in the region?

It was questions like these the Berlin Merchant and Industrialist Association (VBKI) was trying to answer in its pre-investment study. More than 35 leading sci-

thematized. Regional players complain that financing can be erratic and insufficient. Also mentioned was the comparatively low share of private financing and industrial research, a state of affairs for which there are both structural and business-culture reasons. Inadequate cooperation plans for ventures between universities and institutions as well as the lack of an underpinning strategy were also high on the list of concerns.

To secure its future, Berlin needs innovation and investors. To achieve this, scientific institutions are going to have to present themselves and their expertise to companies and private individuals in an in-



"Berlin-bonus" attracts especially junior scientists

entists and knowledge managers from the region and beyond were interviewed. An expert steering committee led by VBKI's Stefan Gerdsmeyer discussed the study's interim and final results.

How is Berlin-Brandenburg as a scientific region shaping up right now? In international comparison, the region already has a high volume and density of institutions and manpower involved in research and development (R&D). Alongside a multitude of universities and non-university research institutes with high numbers of students and employees in the public and university sector, there is also a relatively large skill-pool employed in the advanced technology and high-tech industries.

Many strengths and few weaknesses

Spending on R&D, especially from the public purse, is quite high when compared to other leading international regions. Another crucial advantage is that young people are attracted to Berlin with its multitude of cultural activities and comparably low living costs which make Berlin-Brandenburg an appealing place to live, especially for junior scientists. This 'Berlin-bonus' is most palpable in the booming IT start-up scene in the capital.

Something the interviewed scientists unanimously championed was the plurality of industries within the region, the vanguard of which is within snapping distance of their respective market leaders. The region is home to companies and institutes in the life sciences and medicine, in mathematics, computer sciences, liberal arts/humanities and social sciences as well as geosciences and climate research. Apart from these strengths, the region's weaker points were also

creasingly attractive manner if they are going to raise the funding needed to elevate them to the 'top of the world' in their fields.

2030 – back to the future

It is no coincidence that the concluding paper of the study was titled "Invested in the future." The paper recommended the founding of the "Berlin Potsdam Labs" (BPL) and urged other essential measures, the success of which will hopefully be enjoyed some time in 2030 when you are likely to read the following statement in the press:

"With unparalleled commitment from key supporters in the economic, political and scientific arenas, the Berlin and Brandenburg State governments launched their long term science hub development plan back in 2013. 17 years later the region is among the top 5 locations for scientific investment worldwide. This move helped adjust the regional economic structure toward modern technology-based branches. At the core of this strategy was the creation of the Berlin Potsdam Labs, known worldwide as BPL. BPL identified and supported promising projects using innovative financing models which were partly capitalized by the Federal Government, the private sector as well as individual investors."

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Kluge, former head of McKinsey Germany, is a Senior Advisor at Merrill Lynch

