

Investigating policy coherence challenges and options: learning from a one-day workshop in Kehl (Germany)

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Background

Organised in Kehl on November 15th 2019 by [ACTeon](#) and the [Association de Prospective Rhénane \(APR\)](#) within the frame of the H2020 [SIM4NEXUS project](#), hosted at the [Kehl Hochschule](#), the one-day workshop entitled ***Towards balanced public policies for the efficient use of resources in the Upper-Rhine region - issues and options*** mobilised representatives of the research community, government services, local authorities, civil society... from the Upper-Rhine region. Partners from the SIM4NEXUS project also attended the workshop to share results on the impacts of policies in the field of energy, agriculture, food, water, land-use and climate change.

Key messages

Message 1 – Wide agreement among participants that **current policies are not implemented in a coherent way**. Examples of “policy incoherence” are many!

Message 2 – **Finding solutions** that can address simultaneously the objectives of different policies remains **challenging**, because of the multiple interconnections between natural resources and economic activities targeted by the NEXUS policies, including in a global context. Note that what might appear as a solution for us (or for Europe) can have negative impacts elsewhere in the world.

Message 3 – In practical terms, initiatives and solutions building on **multifunctionality** (delivering multiple benefits of relevance to the different policies of the NEXUS) and **bioeconomy** do have potential to enhance coherence in implementation.

Message 4 - Key factors that can promote these solutions include (among others): (a) **breaking frontiers between disciplines** so research addresses simultaneously multiple functionalities, (ecosystem) services and benefits; (b) establishing “**multiple objectives**” **ex-ante assessment grids**, so projects and funding is systematically scrutinized with the right “policy coherence” glasses; (c) associating the services in charge of different policies in *ex-ante* evaluation studies – so **ex-ante policy evaluation becomes a truly “collective” exercise** supporting the selection of policy coherent solutions; (d) setting conditionalities in funding schemes to support projects that contribute positively to the objectives of several policies; (d) favouring/facilitating the **bundling of financial supports** from different sectors/organisations (in charge of water, energy, agriculture, land use...); (e) **building capacity** so policy coherence (breaking the silos) becomes a priority for people in charge of (sector) policy implementation... *(it is after all a question of culture and values)*...

Message 5 – While we all (many) agree that “**transition**” (in policies, models, behaviour...) is essential for supporting our (sustainable) development, we might not fully understand and agree on what is required for the many transitions advocated to be coherent and compatible. More work (analytical, modelling, stakeholder exchanges...) is required to define the mechanisms and conditions that ensure that e.g. **energy transition goes hand in hand with ecological transition**.

Message 6 – These messages are the upper side of the iceberg only... **more to come in the full version of the synthesis of the Upper-Rhine workshop!**