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## Editorial

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**Biographical notes:** Frank Lasch is a Professor in Entrepreneurship and Associate Dean of Research at the Montpellier Business School. He holds a joint PhD in Economic Geography (U. Regensburg and U. Montpellier) and a French habilitation of supervising doctoral research in Management Science. He is in charge of the Entrepreneurship & Innovation chair funded by a French Government grant (Labex) and is Academic Coordinator of the annual entrepreneurship conference Interdisciplinary European Conference on Entrepreneurship Research. His major topics of research are the regional entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship entry modes, new venture outcomes and performance, ICT entrepreneurship, international entrepreneurship, and entrepreneur typologies. His research has been published in a variety of journals including *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *Small Business Economics*, *International Small Business Journal*, *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, *Management Decision*, *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, *Journal of Asia Entrepreneurship and Sustainability*, etc.

Kerstin Wagner is a Professor of Entrepreneurship and the Head of the Competence Center Digital Strategies of the Swiss Institute for Entrepreneurship at the HTW Chur. She is an Academic Coordinator of the annual entrepreneurship conference Interdisciplinary European Conference on Entrepreneurship Research. Her research interests cover emerging technologies and new business models from an organisational and social perspective. Her current research focuses on data-driven decision making, web science, social media, communication science and crowdfunding.

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In March 2014, the Interdisciplinary European Conference on Entrepreneurship Research (IECER) was held for the 12th time. Historically hosted in Regensburg (Germany) and founded by Michael Dowling (Regensburg University) and Jürgen Schmude (LMU Munich), the IECER travelled several times across Europe including Amsterdam, Brescia, Lisbon, Montpellier, and Munich. After 12 years of existence, the conference is recognised as one of the leading conferences on interdisciplinary entrepreneurship research in Europe. Focusing on high quality entrepreneurship debate, the conference

features reviewed research papers with running parallel tracks of 40–50 papers each year, with an acceptance rate around 50% (<http://www.iecer-conference.org>). Now coordinated by Kerstin Wagner (HTW Chur, Switzerland) and Frank Lasch (Montpellier Business School, France), the conference went for the first time to Switzerland and was hosted by the HTW Chur University. More than 50 entrepreneurship scholars from Austria, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, the UK and the USA attended the IECER to explore the conference theme ‘Europe and the crisis: country perspectives on entrepreneurship’. The keynote speaker was Simon Parker (Ivey Business School, Canada) addressing the topic of ‘Crowdfunding: a new source of entrepreneurial finance and an emerging research topic’; the best paper award went to Vartuhi Tonoyan (Stevens Institute of Technology and University of Mannheim) and Gary Bruton (Texas Christian University) for their paper entitled ‘The impact of corruption on firm innovativeness. A multi-level analysis’.

Being a regular outlet for IECER research since 2007, the *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business (IJESB)* offered a special issue based on the papers presented at the IECER 2014 Conference in Chur. Addressing the question of how entrepreneurship can help Europe to find ways out of the crisis, this issue includes a selection of four papers which are summarised in the following.

The first paper (The impact of the financial crisis on financing technology ventures; Achleitner, Braun, Metzger and Schmidt) uses a German dataset to explore how the crisis affects the financing of technology ventures. The findings offer an insight into how technology firms (and their growth) suffer by the decrease of external and internal funding during times of financial crisis. The practical implications are important given the negative long-run effects of financing downturn on future firm perspectives and growth rates.

While the first paper illustrates well the dark side of firm prospective in a difficult economic context, the three other papers show how entrepreneurship can provide new perspectives and potential ways out of the crisis that affects employment and growth in Europe.

The second paper of this issue (Entering non-traditional and emerging markets: a matter of opportunity orientation and willingness to take risks?; Hauser, Hogenacker and Lehmann), uses Swiss data and shows how firm internationalisation behaviour can be an important driver of foreign market expansion. The authors find that opportunity orientation (and not risk-taking disposition) is an important key for successful development in non-traditional and emerging markets. In practice, this paper highlights the importance of international entrepreneurship activities of firms located in home markets affected by economic crisis.

The third paper (Young and flexible: labour contracts in young and incumbent firms; Späth) uses German panel data to analyse differences between incumbent and new firms in terms of non-standard employment. It provides evidence for a higher employment flexibility and use of non-standard employment in young firms and illustrates how employment flexibility of new firms can contribute to macro-level employment growth. From a practical viewpoint, the results show how employment in industrialised countries (in times of crisis) can be triggered by fostering flexibility.

The last paper (Freelancers and innovation in France; den Besten and Nakara) is based upon French data and also deals with non-standard employment. It explores the under-researched topic of freelancing in innovative sectors. The findings prove that freelancers are as likely as other business owners to be active in innovative sectors. As

practical implications, freelancers in particular (and non-standard employment in general) should not be overlooked when public policies design measures to support innovative firms. Freelancing has a potential to contribute to employment growth and to innovation.

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