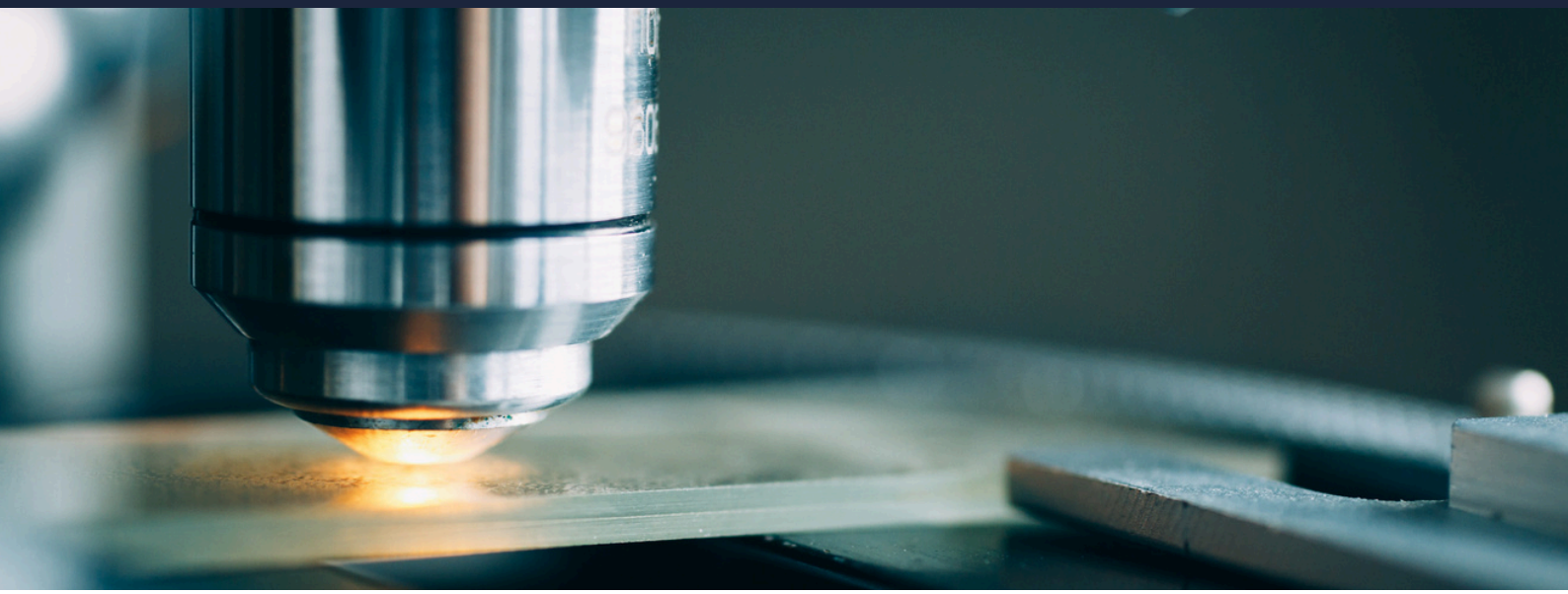
RLS-SCIENCES

AUTUMN SPECIAL EDITION



RLS-SCIENCES AUTUMN

28 NOVEMBER, 2025

Since April, when the RLS-Sciences Network met virtually in a renewed format for this year's edition of the Digital Week, partners from the seven regions have worked hard to advance their projects and bring the network to the next level.

One milestone that has been the focus of efforts in recent months was the 12th Regional Leaders Summit in Western Cape, which took place in Cape Town at the beginning of November. You can find a special feature on the summit in this edition, with many impressions and insights from the event.

With the results of the summit, the network is now preparing for the coming year and, in particular, the RLS-Sciences Overall Conference in Munich and Linz in June 2026.

As always, we are also pleased to share news and announcements from the network with you, as well as selected funding opportunities.

Enjoy reading!

- Lea Pfäffel and Michaela Eggert,
Bavarian RLS-Sciences Management Team

RLS-SCIENCES AUTUMN SPECIAL NEWSLETTER

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RLS-SCIENCES CONTRIBUTES:

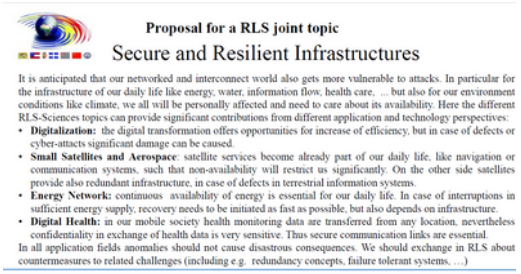
RLS-SCIENCES AT THE 12TH RLS IN WESTERN CAPE

The 12th Regional Leaders Summit took place from November 3-5 in Cape Town under the theme "Growth through Economic Resilience", bringing together political delegations from all seven partner regions. Already at the RLS-Sciences Digital Week 2025, Premier Winde had addressed the topic of resilience in a live speech, outlining its connection to several areas of high importance to the Western Cape. RLS-Sciences contributed to the summit on November 5 during three sessions.

Photo Credit: Western Cape Government

RLS-Sciences President, Prof. Louis Gosselin, started his 20-minute speech to the heads of delegation by highlighting the contributions of RLS-Sciences to the summit's theme. Specifically, he showcased the achievements and developments in the network since the previous RLS. These include new joint projects out of and supported by the five research groups and subsequent steps in RLS-Sciences Digital Health. In continuity of the Digital Week 2025, Prof. Gosselin referred to Prof. Klaus Schilling's proposition of a joint topic on secure and resilient infrastructures to which the research projects can contribute to from different application and technology perspectives. In addition, he introduced the Energy Network's Policy Report "Innovation Zones and the Energy Transition - A comparative cross-regional perspective". With his speech, Prof. Gosselin outlined how RLS-Sciences can support the political level by adapting to their priorities.

Photo Credit: Western Cape Government



Proposal for a RLS joint topic

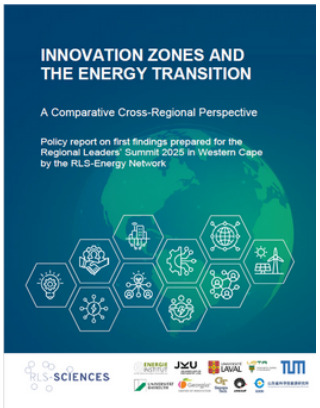
Secure and Resilient Infrastructures

It is anticipated that our networked and interconnect world also gets more vulnerable to attacks. In particular for the infrastructure of our daily life like energy, water, information flow, health care, ... but also for our environment conditions like climate, we all will be personally affected and need to care about its availability. Here the different RLS-Sciences topics can provide significant contributions from different application and technology perspectives:

- **Digitalization:** the digital transformation offers opportunities for increase of efficiency, but in case of defects or cyber-attacts significant damage can be caused.
- **Small Satellites and Aerospace**: satellite services become already part of our daily life, like navigation or communication systems, such that non-availability will restrict us significantly. On the other side satellites provide also redundant infrastructure, in case of defects in terrestrial information systems.
- **Energy Network:** continuous availability of energy is essential for our daily life. In case of interruptions in sufficient energy supply, recovery needs to be initiated as fast as possible, but also depends on infrastructure.
- **Digital Health:** in our mobile society health monitoring data are transferred from any location, nevertheless confidentiality in exchange of health data is very sensitive. Thus secure communication links are essential.

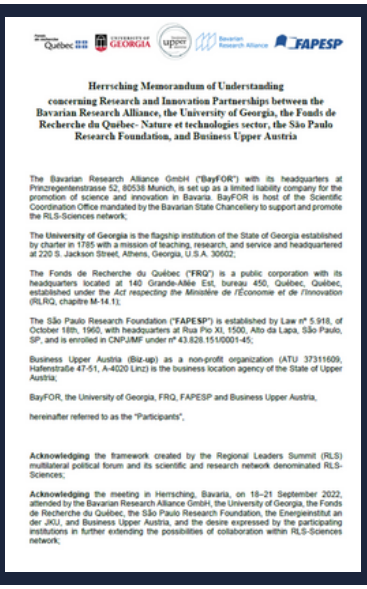
In all application fields anomalies should not cause disastrous consequences. We should exchange in RLS about countermeassures to related challenges (including e.g. redundancy concepts, failure tolerant systems, ...)

RLS Sciences: Secure and Resilient Infrastructures



The presentation was followed by remarks of the heads of delegation who reiterated the thematic focus areas as well as the cross-topic fields of resilience, high technologies, sustainability, and artificial intelligence. They acknowledged the multilateral aspect of RLS-Sciences as well as the aim of involving early-career researchers.

Lastly, the RLS-Sciences Herrsching Memorandum of Understanding was signed immediately after the signing of the final joint declaration thanks to the hospitable organisation by Roderick Thyssen and his team. During the closing session, Western Cape handed over the chairmanship to São Paulo, which will host the 13th RLS in 2027. Please find the Western Cape governmental statements here and here.



Herrsching Memorandum of Understanding
concerning Research and Innovation Partnerships between the Bavarian Research Alliance, the University of Georgia, the Fonds de Recherche du Québec- Nature et technologies sector, the São Paulo Research Foundation, and Business Upper Austria

The Bavarian Research Alliance GmbH ("BayFOR") with its headquarters at Prinzregentenstrasse 52, 80538 Munich, is set up as a limited liability company for the promotion of science and innovation in Bavaria. BayFOR is host of the Scientific Coordination Office mandated by the Bavarian State Chancellery to support and promote the RLS-Sciences network;

The University of Georgia is the flagship institution of the State of Georgia established by charter in 1785 with a mission of teaching, research, and service and headquartered at 220 S. Jackson Street, Athens, Georgia, U.S.A. 30602;

The Fonds de Recherche du Québec ("FRQ") is a public corporation with its headquarters located at 140 Grande-Allée Est, bureau 450, Québec, Québec, established under the *Act respecting the Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Innovation* (RLRQ, chapitre M-14.1);

The São Paulo Research Foundation ("FAPESP") is established by Law nº 5.918, of October 18th, 1960, with headquarters at Rua Pio XI, 1500, Alto da Lapa, São Paulo, SP, and is enrolled in CNPJ/MF under nº 43.828.151/0001-45;

Business Upper Austria (Biz-up) as a non-profit organization (ATU 37311609, Hafenstraße 47-51, A-4020 Linz) is the business location agency of the State of Upper Austria;

BayFOR, the University of Georgia, FRQ, FAPESP and Business Upper Austria,

hereinafter referred to as the "Participants",

Acknowledging the framework created by the Regional Leaders Summit (RLS) multilateral political forum and its scientific and research network denominated RLS-Sciences;

Acknowledging the meeting in Herrsching, Bavaria, on 18–21 September 2022, attended by the Bavarian Research Alliance GmbH, the University of Georgia, the Fonds de Recherche du Québec, the São Paulo Research Foundation, the Energieinstitut an der JKU, and Business Upper Austria, and the desire expressed by the participating institutions in further extending the possibilities of collaboration within RLS-Sciences network;

HERRSCHING MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Herrsching Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) originates from the scientific exchange during the RLS-Sciences Conference 2022 in Herrsching (Bavaria). It acts as a declaration of interest for cooperation under the RLS-Sciences framework. At the 12th RLS in Western Cape, the Herrsching MoU was signed by five signatories with the option to further extent. Following the signing, a work plan will be established as a next step. This will result in further activities in preparation of the RLS-Sciences 2026 Overall Conference.

The participation of RLS-Sciences at the RLS was supported by an informational series of retrospective posts on the RLS-Sciences LinkedIn channel. In the 9 weeks leading up to the Summit in Western Cape, past editions of the RLS were presented and ties to RLS-Sciences were featured.

Here are some impressions from the network regarding the RLS and RLS-Sciences:

"The RLS-Sciences is becoming an important platform and mechanism for promoting scientific and technology cooperation and exchanges among the partner regions. Shandong will continue to actively participate in activities organized by the RLS-Sciences, and persistently encourage and support joint research projects, co-construction of innovation platforms, and mutual visits and exchanges of scientific researchers with the partner regions."
Xiaohong Guo, LinkedIn, Shandong Administrative Coordinator RLS-Sciences

"Partnerships are instrumental to our shared success. We have enjoyed stable and strong relations with our regional partners for years, and through the 12th edition of the summit, we must take these relationships to new heights."
Alan Winde, press release from Western Cape Government, Premier of the Western Cape

"I am convinced that scientific collaboration among our partner regions is a powerful driver of innovation, resilience, and sustainable development."
Louis Gosselin, LinkedIn, RLS-Sciences President

"...the Government of the State of São Paulo received the "baton" from the Government of the Western Cape Province and will host the next Summit in 2027."
Samo Tosatti, LinkedIn (translated), São Paulo Political Coordinator RLS-Sciences

WHAT'S NEXT FOR RLS-SCIENCES:

2026 OVERALL RLS-SCIENCES CONFERENCE

The next RLS-Sciences Overall Conference will take place from 14-17 June, 2026 in Munich and Linz, at the invitation of both the Bavarian and Upper Austrian State Government. As 2026 marks the 10-year anniversary of RLS-Sciences, a special celebration will be held on the evening of 15 June. The host regions expect that each region will be represented by approximately ten participants, including eight scientists (two per RLS-Sciences topic) and two administrative or political coordinators. Invitations will be coordinated by the respective regional coordinators. You can find a brief overview of the overall program below, further information will follow soon.

Sunday Munich	Monday Munich	Tuesday Munich-Linz		Wednesday Linz	Thursday Linz
4pm: Opening & First joint session Dinner & Keynote	8:30am: Research group meetings Anniversary Celebration at the conference site	Site visits in Garching, Bavaria	1pm: Departure to Linz by bus Site visits in Upper Austria Dinner, "Heimatabend"	8:30am: Research group meetings Site visits in Linz area Dinner, Landhaus Linz	Breakfast & Closing

FUNDING

The next RLS-Sciences Funding Workshop will take place online on **30 January 2026** with a spotlight on student mobility. Further information will follow soon.
Until then, check out our Funding Fridays on LinkedIn!

BayIntAn and UGA Top-Up Grant
Deadline: December 02, 2025
The Bavarian funding programme for the initiation of international research collaborations (BayIntAn) supports Bavarian researchers to initiate international research collaborations. Funding is available for travel and accommodation costs, and the programme is open to all academic disciplines. Researchers at the University of Georgia in Athens (UGA) who are involved in a successful BayIntAn application can apply for additional funding from UGA. The UGA Top-Up Grant especially welcomes proposals that focus on food security and agricultural innovation, health-related research, and artificial intelligence. Please find the call text here.

LEAP-SE Joint Call 2026
Deadline: February 05, 2026 (pre-proposal)
The LEAP-SE (Sustainable Energy) call for proposals is a multilateral funding opportunity for projects. The programme aims at collaborative research and innovation projects on sustainable energy with at least two EU partners and two African partners from academia and industry. Topics include smart stand-alone systems for use cases in rural regions and energy storage among others. Within RLS-Sciences, eligible partners include those from Bavaria, Upper Austria and Western Cape Please find the call text here.

RLS-SCIENCES CONNECTS:

Several partners are pleased to share information about their exchange with network partners. Firstly, **Ass. Prof. Leyla Amiri** from Université de Sherbrooke (Québec) will be collaborating on the topic of sustainable heat storage solutions with research partners at Technical University of Munich (Bavaria) with the support of her recently awarded TUM Hans Fischer Fellowship. Moreover, **Mag. Michael Denk** from the Energy Institute at JKU Linz (Upper Austria) visited the Energy Research Institute of the Shandong Academy of Sciences on July 8 and gave a presentation on "The AI Power Paradox". Furthermore, **Tangela Dumas** and **Max Perry**, interns from the University of Georgia (UGA), spent two months at the RLS-Sciences management site in Munich. The internship was part of the international student exchange program between UGA and Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich (Bavaria).

OUR NETWORK PARTNERS INFORM / ANNOUNCE:

FORUM ECONOGY 2025

On November 4, the Energy Institute at JKU Linz organized the "Forum Econogy 2025". At the conference, participants convened to discuss research findings for the energy infrastructure of the future. Topics included resilient energy systems, underground hydrogen storage, and district heating among others. The project "Future Heat Highway" was presented, which investigates scenarios for sustainable and efficient regional heat supply in several locations including the Linz area in Upper Austria. Details of the projects are shared within the Energy Network to foster the exchange.

SMALL SATELLITES WORKSHOPS

In conjunction with the 20th anniversary of "Space Technology" at University of Würzburg (Bavaria), two workshops on small satellites took place from October 6 to 8.
At the 2025 CAMSAT Workshop on "Control Aspects of Multi-Satellite Systems", Professor Klaus Schilling gave an overview of the history of satellite projects at University of Würzburg and Zentrum für Telematik e.V. with attendance by Prof. Willem Jordaan, Stellenbosch University (Western Cape). The "Pico- and Nano-Satellites Workshop on Technologies for Small Satellite Research" focused on current trends and innovations in satellite research.
2025 marks the 20th anniversary of "Space Technology" at University of Würzburg. Their first degree program in space technology was launched in 2005.

MUNICH SPACE SUMMIT 2026

The Munich Space Summit - a merger of the Munich Satellite Navigation Summit and the Munich New Space Summit - will take place from March 23-27, 2026. The event will offer a forum to exchange with international experts on several themes around new space and satellite navigation.
More information can be found on the website.

RLS-SCIENCES CONGRATULATES:

KLAUS SCHILLING

In recognition of his outstanding achievements in the development of small satellites, Prof. Klaus Schilling, Zentrum für Telematik, received the Engineering Sciences Award of the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA).

Photo Credit: Rei Kawashima / University Space Engineering Consortium UNISEC

LOUIS GOSSELIN / GIOVANNI BELTRAME

The Canadian Foundation for Innovation and the Government of Québec awarded funding to scientists, providing them with state-of-the-art equipment and facilities. Among the recipients are Prof. Louis Gosselin, Université Laval, for his Canada Research Chair in Energy Efficiency, and Prof. Giovanni Beltrame, Polytechnique Montréal, for the project Advanced Lunar and Extreme Robotics Laboratory (ALERT).

SIMON BARNABÉ

Building on the successes of the past three years, the city of Victoriaville and the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières will renew the Municipal Research Chair for Sustainable Cities of Prof. Simon Barnabé, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, until 2028.

JESSICA KISSINGER

Prof. Jessica Kissinger, University of Georgia, was appointed as Associate Chief Information Officer for Research at the UGA. This leadership role focuses on advancing research computing infrastructure, services and opportunities at the university.

AGMA TRAINA

Prof. Agma Traina, University of São Paulo, received a FAPESP grant for her project IHealth-MD (Intelligent Management of Multimodal Health Data for Decision-Making in Big Data Scenarios). PD Dr. Sebastian Bickelhaupt, University Hospital Erlangen, will contribute as associate researcher. The project is addressing challenges of managing multimodal health data for knowledge discovery with the aim of extracting meaningful information from large health-related datasets through AI.

RALF LUDWIG

Prof. Ralf Ludwig, Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich, was appointed as first Chief Sustainability Officer at LMU. As CSO, Prof. Ludwig will continue to expand the university's contributions to sustainability across all areas of activity – in research, teaching and learning, as well as in talent development, knowledge transfer, and innovation.

Happy Holidays!