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## Press Release

### **University of Mannheim Is Part of the National Research Hub Neuroethics**

**The aim of the new Research Hub Neuroethics (RHUNE) is to create and promote a strong and sustainable network for neuroethics research in Germany and to increase the visibility of German neuroethics research internationally. Mannheim researcher Philipp Kellmeyer contributes to the establishment of the innovative, collaborative project.**

Neuroethics deals with ethical questions of neurological research. The new network is intended to promote interdisciplinary exchange in this field, to support young scientists, and to create a contact point for non-academic stakeholders who are interested in neuroethical topics. During the next four years, the project partners – Forschungszentrum Jülich, Charité Berlin, the University of Mannheim as well as Fernuniversität Hagen – will organize conferences, workshops, and retreats for this purpose. Professor Dr. Kellmeyer from the Data and Web Science Group at the University of Mannheim is responsible for involving interest groups and the public in the project.

“Currently, neurotechnological devices that are aimed directly at consumers and are not subject to medical device regulation are insufficiently tested, so that consumers can be misled about the actual capabilities of such devices,” Kellmeyer explains. For example, if they transmit brain data from the devices to the companies, this could result in privacy violations and have other negative consequences. Another question that needs to be clarified is whether new methods of brain data analysis using AI methods can provide far-reaching insights into mental states and whether special protection rights for mental privacy are therefore necessary.

Neuroethical research in Germany had so far been poorly organized and was mainly driven forward by individuals and their research groups, Kellmeyer says. The networking of the neuroethics community and the exchange with social actors and political decision-makers was required to introduce the ethical conflicts into public debates and stimulate social discourse.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) funds the project with approx. one million euros in total. The head of RHUNE is Professor Bert Heinrichs, who works at Forschungszentrum Jülich as well as at the Institute for Science and Ethics (IWE) of the

University of Bonn. Other collaboration partners are Professor Kerstin Ritter of Charité Berlin as well as Orsolya Friedrich of FernUniversität Hagen.

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