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Innovationen brauchen Freiheit

Andreas Pinkwart, Düsseldorf

Abstract

North Rhine-Westphalia is to become Germany's prime state of innovation. That's not an extravagant wish, that's vital: Today, innovation decides how a country stands its ground in the international competition between locations. Now, which policy does NRW need in order to become the best address for innovation in Germany? The North Rhine-Westphalian government acts on the conviction: The state has the duty to create a framework. The state should leave the innovation process itself, though, in the hands of the people in the universities, re-search institutions and companies. Because innovations need liberty.

JEL-Classification: O 31, O 38

Tarifliche Steuerbelastung von Einzelunternehmen in Dänemark, Deutschland, Österreich und Tschechien

Michael Broer, Berlin

Abstract

Sole proprietorships are of great significance for investment and employment in the national economies of many EU states. Although sole proprietorships are also exposed to international competition, their local fiscal conditions have not yet been adequately investigated. The article seeks to close this gap. The focus is on a comparative examination of the tax burden in three states which border on Germany: Denmark, Austria and the Czech Republic. First the tax burden according to the average nominal tax rate alone is examined. In the second scenario the influence of tax benefits for retained profits are taken into account. Scenario number three analyses the effect of the various rules for setting off losses between different fiscal periods. The study shows that, all things considered, Germany is the fiscally most favourable location for about 80 % of German sole proprietorships.

JEL-Classification: H 25

Wirtschaftspolitisches Forum

Zur Reform der Erbschaftssteuer: Handlungsbedarf nach dem Urteil des Bundesverfassungsgerichts

Thomas Straubhaar: Abschaffen ist besser als revidieren

Of course there are some good reasons to tax inheritances. However, there are many more much better reasons to free bequests from taxes. Taxing legacies reduces incentives to accumulate wealth. Consequently, it lowers the accumulation of capital and the long term perspectives for growth and welfare. Most importantly, it is an attack towards private property and therefore it attacks the fundamentals of a capitalist economy and liberal society.

JEL-Classification: H24, K11, P26

Stefan Bach, Henriette Houben, Ralf Maiterth, Jürgen Schupp:

Erbschaftsteuerreform: Gleichmäßige Vermögenserfassung und niedrigere Steuersätze statt selektiver Besteuerung

The inheritance and gift tax must be reformed fundamentally. Real estate and business property should be appraised according to the income approach. This better captures the real market values. However, assessment procedures might become more complex and controversial. A modest allowance for business property and a deferment of tax payments could mitigate sufficiently potential liquidity shortfalls in taking over a company. A higher appraisal of real estate and business property would imply an extra tax revenue of about one third. This should be used to reduce the tax rates if a revenue-neutral reform is to be achieved. By now, there is no empirical evidence of important economic drawbacks caused by the inheritance and gift taxation. Thus, a considerable reduction or even abolition of the tax is not at the agenda of German tax policy.

JEL-Classifikation: H21, D31, D91.

Anette Reil-Held: Sparanreize und Verteilungswirkungen

Inheritances in Germany happen only rarely, mostly consist of relatively small amounts and taxes are currently levied only to less than 10 percent of all cases. To evaluate an inheritance tax reform the economic implications have to be considered. I focus on the impact of inheritances on wealth accumulation and the distribution of wealth. The bequest motive for saving is much less important in Germany than saving for old-age provision or precautionary savings. Surprisingly, bequests seem more to even out the distribution of wealth than to lead to more concentration.

However, a main argument in favour of inheritances is to create more equal opportunities. In view of the late age in which bequests are made it seems to be more appropriate to focus on education. For that purpose, one could let grandchildren inherit more free of inheritance taxes than children or to connect the age of the heir to the tax exemption.

JEL-Classification: H23, D91

Fünfzig Jahre nach Rom: Ist die EU ein Binnenmarkt?

Rolf J. Langhammer, Kiel

Abstract

Fifty years after the Rome Treaties, is there empirical evidence for arguing that the EU today is a fully integrated goods and services market in which the “law of one price” prevails at large? Based on a number of consumer price surveys for goods and services in major cities all over the world since the seventies and, comparing the EU to a benchmark, the US market, the paper is affirmative. Price dispersion between EU cities has declined with the Eurozone as the core EU region in the lead surrounded by two concentric circles. EU goods price dispersion has generally approximated the level in the US market. Yet, price dispersion has declined throughout the world underlining the relevance of global integration rather than only regional integration. Furthermore, there is ample evidence that gravity factors against the “law of one price”, such as distance costs and borders, are still effective.

JEL-Classification: F15

Bundesstaatsreform und Zukunft der Finanzverfassung

Wolfgang Kitterer, Köln

Abstract

The reform of fiscal federalism in Germany enacted in 2006 has focussed on separating the joint legislation process between the federal government and the States (Laender). The German commission on the reform of federalism is now disputing about further reforms in order to establish a more competitive fiscal system. In this paper we discuss some institutional arrangements minimizing tax sharing between different layers of government and strengthening tax autonomy of the subcentral governments. Furthermore, a reform of the interstate tax equalization system is proposed which provides more transparency and more incentives to the States to raise their own economic performance and tax base. Finally, as the constitutional borrowing constraints provide no credible enforcement mechanism and as decentralized fiscal policy cannot be effective the States should be bound to

balanced budgets and rainy day funds. Only central government should be responsible for stabilization policy.

JEL-Classification: H 7, H 6