In this paper, written by CAR’s Rainer Niemann and Silke Rünger (Institute of Accounting and Taxation), and published in Schmalenbachs Zeitschrift für betriebswirtschaftliche Forschung (ZfbF), the authors use the fact that directors of German public firms must notify the company and the public of their dealings that involve shares of the company to analyze holding periods for directors’ investments. Prior to 2009, capital gains resulting from private share investments were tax-exempt after a holding period of one year. Starting in 2009, a final withholding tax on all individual capital gains, regardless of the holding period, was introduced. The authors show that this reform significantly decreases holding periods if the investment resulted in a capital gain. Also the holding period of capital loss investments has significantly increased, showing no indication for a tax-induced loss selling.

**New DART Members Introduce Themselves**

**Negin Attar:** I have received my BA in Accounting from American University of Sharjah and have graduated from Manchester Business School in MSc of Accounting and Finance. The idea of pursuing a PhD became more genuine after my master thesis titled “Audit Fees and Diversification,” in which I have combined two of the most recent topics in accounting and finance, received a great attention from Manchester Business School faculties. Before starting the DART program, I was mainly focused on the area of empirical research rather than analytical; however, this program has led me to find the latter even more challenging. Great faculty of DART program, the exchange opportunities in many of the internationally well know universities in Europe and USA, in addition to unlimited prospects offered by DART, all have made me feel honored to be a part of this program to pursue my dream of having a future academic career.

**Kristoffer Uhlenkamp:** The first time I had extensive contact with analytical research was in the course of my master’s thesis at the University of Mannheim. In particular, I wrote about “Incentives from Debt Contracting for Conservatism” which immediately caught my interest. It was during this time that I decided to continue doing research and to apply for the DART program. My research interest is closely related to the topic of my thesis, and includes financial contracting, financial distress and IFRS accounting. While most of my work is analytical, I always have a sympathetic ear towards empirical research. The reasons why I chose Graz and the DART program for my PhD are manifold: beginning with the great independence in research, to the strong academic and financial support, up to the beauty of the city and the pleasant climate.

**University of Graz Amongst World’s Top Universities in Analytical Accounting Research**

A recent citation-based ranking published by Myers, Snow, Summers, and Wood (2016) in the AAA Journal of Information Systems ranks the University of Graz seventh amongst the world’s top accounting research institutions in analytical accounting. The authors report separate rankings by topic and research methodology for three different year windows (previous six years, 12 years, and since 1990) and give institutions only credit for authors who currently work for the institution. The University of Graz holds rank #7 in the 12 years category (2003–2014), placing it in the top 10 analytical accounting research institutions in the world, after the University of Berkeley (#6) and before the University of Minnesota and Northwestern University (both #8). In the six years category (2009–2014) and in the all years category (1990–2014), the University of Graz is
#26 and #15, respectively. Furthermore, Graz also ranked #7 in the sub category of analytical tax research in the six years ranking.

In addition to the top ranking, a recently published survey by Chen and Schipper (2016) in Foundations and Trends in Accounting lists the paper “Economic effects of tightening accounting standards to restrict earnings management,” written by CAR’s Ralf Ewert and Alfred Wagenhofer and published in The Accounting Review in 2005 as the fourth most-cited paper in financial accounting theory.

New Cooperation Between University of Graz and Goethe University Frankfurt in Accounting Research

In January, CAR’s Ralf Ewert, SOWI Dean Thomas Foscht, Hans-Joachim Böcking, Regional Minister Christopher Drexler, and Hessian State Secretary of Finance Bernadette Weyland joined Manfred Schubert-Zsilavecz, Vice-President of the Goethe-University and Vice-Rector Peter Riedler for the ceremonial signing of a research and teaching cooperation agreement between the University of Graz and the Goethe University in Frankfurt. The now formalized collaboration focuses mainly on the support of young academics in the area of accounting research. Specifically, the collaboration aims to foster the exchange of young researchers from the DART program and researchers at Goethe University in the form of joint conferences, projects, and workshops.

The Effect of the German Accounting Law Modernization Act on the Comparability of Private Local GAAP and IFRS Firms (SBR)

The paper written by Christian Groß (former member of the Institute of Accounting and Control) has been published in the Schmalenbach Business Review (SBR). The paper examines the German Accounting Law Modernization Act’s (BiMoG) comparability effects, since increases in comparability between German GAAP (HGB) and IFRS can be expected from the reform’s goals. However, related research indicates that reporting incentives play an important role in shaping reporting practices, which could mean that the comparability of accounting practices (i.e., de facto comparability) does not change with an increase in the comparability of accounting rules (i.e., de jure comparability). Using consolidated accounts of private firms and an empirical research design, Groß shows that the de facto comparability between private HGB and IFRS firms increased from the pre- to the post-BiMoG period.

AFRAC Roundtable on Valuation Reports in Accounting

On March 1, AFRAC held a public roundtable in Vienna, where renowned experts discussed using valuation reports for accounting purposes under both IFRS and UGB. The event attracted keen interest from practitioners and academics alike. CAR’s Alfred Wagenhofer, the AG-IFR chair, organized and moderated the event. The presentations and discussions that followed dealt with the differences in valuation purposes, real estate valuation according to IFRS 13, fair value and value in use, comparability of IFRS and corresponding UGB value concepts, responsibility of specialists and management, the exercise of discretion, and the possibility of practical simplifications.