MIR
Chair Management of Network Industries
The Chair MIR studies the demand re-regulation, as well as the governance and the management of the network industries, i.e., postal services, telecommunications, electricity, water distribution and sanitation, air transport and railways, with a special focus on the role the ICTs play in both transforming and governing these industries.

The Chair’s main focus areas are:

- Privatization, de/re-regulation, and the changing governance of the network industries;
- effects of de and regulation on network industries’ structure and firm behavior;
- Governance of urban infrastructure systems.

**Research**

MIR focuses its research activities on three core areas:

1. The co-evolution between institutions and technology in infrastructures. In particular, we research the alignment between technological and institutional evolution in the transportation, the energy and the telecommunications sectors. We think that there is a relationship between the degree of alignment (coherence) and the overall performance of these infrastructures. Using a framework developed by Finger et al. (2005) we look at how system relevant functions (interoperability, interconnection, capacity management and system management) are assumed both technologically and institutionally, how both are coordinated and how such coordination relates to infrastructure performance in economic, operational, environmental and social terms. We use qualitative research methodologies grounded in regulation theory and new institutional economics.

2. Network industry regulation and governance: in this area we study the emergence of regulatory functions and institutions, as well as new forms of governance of the network industries. A particular emphasis is put on business-government relations, where we study the interface and evolving strategic relationships between business and government at the local, national, and global levels. Research questions cover, among others, nonmarket strategies and the emergence of transnational corporations (incumbents and new entrants) in the network industries. Based on interviews conducted with companies, regulators and supranational organizations, we aim at better understanding the relationships between regulators and regulated companies.

3. Governance of urban infrastructure systems: in addition to its traditional focus on the network industries at national and international levels MIR is currently developing a new focus on urban infrastructure systems, namely transportation, energy, water and sewage, and tele-communications. In this context, we aim to address the unprecedented challenges of and opportunities for the governance of urban infrastructures, combining the omnipresence of the ICTs with the active involvement of urban users and citizens in collective problem solving.

**Florence School of Regulation**

Professor Finger also directs the Transport area of the Florence School of Regulation at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy. In this context, we organize monthly Forums with key stakeholders in Rail, Air, Urban Public Transport and the Postal sector, namely operators, national regulators, the European Commission (in particular DG Move), and representatives of industry.

**Postal activities**

MIR has developed, over time, a solid expertise in the postal sector. In particular, MIR has supported the postal industry worldwide in matters of:

- Restructuring as a result of deregulation, privatization and more recently volume decreases because of electronic substitution;
- Redefining the Universal Postal Service in light of emerging electronic means of communication;
- Developing new postal strategies in light of globalization and changing (electronic) communications patterns.
MIR works closely with the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in its “Postal Innovation Platform”.

Education
Prof. Finger teaches the following courses:

Corporate Governance (Masters level, Spring semester, 4 credits): a 14 week course which introduces EPFL students to the main issues of how corporations and organizations are governed. It offers an overview of corporate governance, including definition of terms and discussion of typical problems of corporate governance. Participants learn about the principles, policies and theories of good corporate governance, including the analysis of cases of best and worst practices of corporate governance. Finally, the course focuses on future issues and challenges of corporate governance, such as the role of culture, innovation, and regulation.

Industry Dynamics, Models, and Trends (Masters level, Spring semester, 4 credits): a 14 week course which introduces EPFL students to the way industries are and can be analyzed. It offers an overview of the different types of industries. Participants learn more about the main approaches, methodologies, and tools for performing an industry analysis, such as Porter’s five forces, macroeconomic environment (PEST framework), analysis of competition, value chain analysis, strategic group analysis, and business models. The course also addresses the impact of regulation on industry structure and dynamics, and offers tools to analyze and evaluate industry trends.

Regulation and de-regulation in network industries (PhD level, Fall semester, 2 credits): this week-long course is offered jointly with the Florence School of Regulation (European University Institute) and is taught every year at a different location. The course aims at: (1) providing an introduction to the emerging managerial, technical and political issues that accompany the liberalization and deregulation of network industries; and at (2) exploring, with the participants, key research topics in these areas, pertaining, in particular, to the management of network industries, network economics, organizational change, institutional development, and regulation.

Qualitative Research Methods (PhD level, Spring semester, 4 credits): this course is taught in three blocks over three months and offers an introduction to qualitative re-search methods for engineers. Participants will learn about the usefulness of qualitative research methods, the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of this type of research, the various approaches and schools of thought, as well as about particular research methods.

Finally, the course will also place qualitative approaches and methods within the broader research design, i.e., in the case of engineers, often as a complement to quantitative research. But most of all, the course will help the participants to make progress in the formulation of their problem statement, their research design, qualitative data collection, and analysis of qualitative data.

Executive Education
The Chair MIR offers two Executive Education programs:

Innovative Governance of Large Urban Systems (IGLUS) leads to an Executive Master and takes place in 6 locations around the globe for two weeks each (Mexico, Dubai, Istanbul, Detroit/New York, Seoul, Dortmund/Barcelona). There is also a short version leading to a Certificate of Advanced Studies (4 2,5/day modules).

Governing Energy Transition (GET) is composed of 4 2,5 day modules and leads to a Certificate of Advanced Studies.

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