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**Mechanical engineering in ER: core aspects of market research for
internationalization in Germany.**

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Modelli di marketing

Relatore Ing. Massimo Di Menna
Correlatore Prof.ssa Pina Lalli

Presentata da: Anna Angelkova

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Introduction

1. Purpose and methodology of the study.

This study's main purpose is to research on trade internationalization possibilities of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from the mechanical engineering field. The reason for conducting the research is to contribute to the growth of those SMEs which do not have experience in this regard. Source market is the region of Emilia Romagna, Italy, and target market is Germany. The research was conducted in Bologna, Italy, between October 2013 and March 2014 by the author under the supervision of two academic lecturers from *Alma mater studiorum Università di Bologna*. The research is divided into several specific objectives:

- understanding the peculiarities of the sector;
- verifying what kinds of internationalizations processes there are;
- understanding the choice of Germany as a target market;
- gathering information on what obstacles for internationalization there are;
- gathering information on what tools for facilitating internationalization there are;
- understanding what is the broader framework in which this issue is considered.

These aims are pursued by applying the following research methods:

- research in academic studies and articles;
- research on the Internet for practical and up to date information;
- interviews with professionals and entrepreneurs from the field;
- The above listed methods are complemented through the practical experience of two case studies.

2. Structure of the study.

This work is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1 focuses on outlining:

- the broader framework in which ME and MI are and will be put in the future on European level (Europe 2020 growth strategy);
- the growth facilitating tools provided by the European Union (Horizon 2020 funding programme);
- a detailed explanation of how this vision is perceived by Germany (Industrie 4.0-strategy).

Chapter 2 aims to understand the economic situations in the source and target countries of this research - Italy and Germany, and through this ground the choice of Germany as target market. 3

Chapter 3 takes into consideration some sociolinguistic factors which need to be taken into account when considering trade relations between the two countries.

Chapter 4 goes into deeper detail regarding Emilia Romagna - it focuses on understanding the situation of mechanical SMEs from the region from two points of view: objective statistical data and their own perception of their condition, especially after the economic crisis. Based on interviews with professionals and entrepreneurs, suggestions for overcoming the crises and growing are listed and further analyzed. Networking, Research and development and internationalization contribute to the success of one another and thus help the growth of ER SMEs.

Chapter 5 presents two case studies to support with real working experience part of the information presented rather theoretically in the previous chapters. This experience consists of market research activities and trade fair participation and visiting.

Conclusions and suggestions for further research take place in the **Final considerations**.

3. Limitations.

At the moment of conclusion of this study, two main limitations are considered. Time constraints did not allow the research to be as exhaustive and extensive as wanted. This might be perceived as fragmentariness or incompleteness. The second one is the limited professional experience of the author in the field. This might result in lacking breadth of view over the context in question.