

# MEETING MINUTES

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## **Cross Party Group on Germany**

**Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

**Meeting Room Q1.03**

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### **Next Meeting**

**Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

**5:30pm**

**Committee Room 1**

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### **Attendees**

Colin Beattie MSP  
Colin Keir MSP  
Maureen Watt MSP  
Stefan Buettner  
Louise Gardiner  
Petra Wend  
Manuela Calchini  
Verena Gräfin von Roedern, Consul General of Germany  
Lilo Borgmann, Goethe Institut  
Peter Muller-McDugall, Honorary Consul General of Switzerland  
Heinrich Schnettger, Consul of Germany  
Dressel Florian  
Dr Linda Pooley, Head of Energy Technology and Investment, Scottish Government  
Nicola De Paoli  
Annette Goetzkes  
James Trolland  
Julia Drechsel

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**Apologies** David McLetchie MSP, Jamie McGrigor MSP, Gordon MacDonald MSP, John Pentland MSP, Petra Biberbach

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### **Topics Discussed:**

#### **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes & Matters Arising**

Page 1-Corrected spelling from Gotzikes to Goetzkes, Added General to Honorary Consul of Switzerland

Page 5-Completed sentence in second paragraph, "should be able..."

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Page 6-In the third paragraph renewable was changed to reenergised

Page 7-In the second paragraph clarify that learning law was just an example, students are able to profit from learning German in day to day conversation as well as in their studies.

**Subject to the corrections made, the minutes were approved. Along with the meeting note, the minutes from last meeting were also approved.**

**Head of Energy Technology and Investment for the Scottish Government, Dr. Linda Pooley**

Dr Pooley thanked the group for the invitation to speak.

Dr Pooley discussed the Renewables Route Map of how Scotland is hoping to meet the 100% renewable energy goal by 2020. The interim target that Scotland set originally of 30% of total energy being generated by renewables has been exceeded and is currently at 35%. The Scottish Government has set a new target to be at 50% by 2015.

Dr Pooley recently went to the EU consultation on renewable energy. The consultation is still very open and is developing. There are no numbers currently.

Scotland has taken an interest in the German government's energy policy particularly after what happened at Fukushima. Scotland has a no new nuclear build policy.

The Scottish Government has hosted several delegations from Germany, most recently from Saxony. Germany has less interest in marine and tidal energy than Scotland simply because it's not as accessible. There is still interest in Scotland for German technology.

**Colin Beattie thanked Dr Pooley for speaking and opened up the discussion for the rest of the group to ask questions.**

Colin Beattie asked if the Scottish Government is involved with the Energy Park in Fife.

Dr Pooley said that they were not.

Colin Beattie asked if Scotland will be able to continue exporting energy and making a profit.

Dr Pooley said that with the current plans Scotland will continue to be a net exporter of energy.

Nicola De Paoli asked what about the scale of the wave energy farm near Isle of Lewis, owned by Aquamarine Power and what the investment plans for the future are.

Dr Pooley said that the current scale is 40 megawatts but it will not be reached until 2020 or 2022. The main issues will be for people plugging in to the grid. The first commercial roll out will be in 2015 or 2016. Germany seems interested in

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aquamarine technology is a big investment and German investors are keen to invest in wind technology. As far as she is aware the venture is currently completely private, but there have been some government subsidies in aquamarine technology.

Hon. Swiss Consul General Muller-McDougall suggested that water pump technology for generating power has worked quite well in Switzerland. It involves pumping fresh water or sea water to a higher elevation lake using surplus energy stored by the existing infrastructure. Then during times of high energy usage the water is pumped out to generate energy. The system has successfully stabilized the grid using this method. He then asked if there was anything like that in Scotland.

Dr Pooley said she did not currently know of anything happening in Scotland of that nature but there could be something in the future.

**Colin Beattie suggested asking the Scottish Government if they have done any research on concepts like that, or if there are any on-going projects that involve similar technology.**

Consul General Gräfin von Roedern asked if there was anything that her office could do to help.

Dr Pooley said nothing right now but they're always grateful for the support.

Maureen Watt asked if anyone had thoughts on the rumour that Germany was going to focus more on nuclear energy. She also heard that Germany was exporting energy to other countries cheaper than the current domestic prices.

Consul General Gräfin von Roedern said that the current research is being done on how to keep energy prices lower for the consumer.

Lilo Borgmann said that green energy tends to be more expensive but consumers are willing to pay for what they consider to be safer energy.

Stefan Buettner said that the oversupply of energy on particularly windy and sunny days can drive down the price on the market but there is still a guaranteed price for retailers. He noted small hydro schemes in the black forest that have reactivated mills on rivers. The villagers have done this themselves with permission from the government and have become virtually autonomous.

He also asked Dr Pooley if the new centre at Glasgow University is re-establishing links to KIT.

Dr Pooley said that the government is not involved but she cannot speak for academia.

Colin Beattie asked the group if they would be interested in visiting the Hydrogen Office in Fife. Stefan Buettner suggested that they stop at the Scottish Passive House Centre that is run by Germans and Austrians along the way.

**Colin Beattie will look at setting something up for after the recess.**

**Colin Beattie reviewed the email summary of Fiona Hyslop's visit to Berlin.**

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The email was sent prior to the meeting. If a copy of the email is needed please contact Alyson Adam.

### **Colin Beattie reviewed the report from Universities Scotland.**

If a copy of the report is needed please contact Alyson Adam.

Colin Beattie suggested that everyone review the report and it will be on the next meeting's agenda for discussion.

### **Economic Update**

Manuela Calchini discussed tourism. Germans are spending more money and staying longer in Scotland than in the past. There has been an increase in three week touring trips. Germans are coming for the more authentic experiences such as whiskey and knitting tours.

Colin Beattie asked if there is still a market for German tourists in Scotland.

Manuela Calchini said that currently only about 15% of visitors to Scotland come from outside of the U.K. Germans make up the second largest group of foreign tourists.

Maureen Watt asked if there were any results on the impact of the direct flight from Aberdeen to Frankfurt.

Manuela Calchini said that she does not have any yet but that she can ask a colleague for the information.

Nicola De Paoli discussed the Scotland magazine that was given to the group. She said that the magazine is selling better than anyone could foresee and it is selling out. She said there is an interest in Scotland and that there are dedicated Scotland fans in Germany. The magazine will be in German store on 21 June. She has already been asked by German suppliers for more.

They have had problems with a breach of copyright and are no longer sending out PDF files of the magazine.

Colin Beattie asked if there are particular areas that Germans enjoy visiting.

Manuela Calchini said that it used to just be typical tours, but now they are staying longer and seeing more of the countryside.

Colin Beattie asked if they come for festivals in particular. He also plugged Midfest.

Manuela Calchini said that many Germans do come for the festivals but that they have ended up extending their stay because of the good time they have.

Nicola De Paoli added that there are over 100 pipe bands in Germany and that there are highland games in places like Saxony. They even dress up in kilts and play Scottish music.

Colin Beattie asked about tourist traffic from Scotland to Germany.

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Manuela Calchini said that she didn't know what the statistics were but she could ask the airport for statistics. She said that she feels Scottish people go to the big cities but don't know how much they disperse into the countryside.

Hon. Swiss Consul General Muller-McDougall said that Visit Scotland has numbers regarding traffic back and forth to Germany from Scotland. He said the EasyJet flight from Glasgow is going well but they cannot tell him what the traffic is to France, Switzerland and Germany. He said there are also increasingly popular charter flights to Glasgow and Edinburgh from Zurich.

### **Political Update**

Heinrich Schnettger discussed the delegation visit from Baden Wurttemberg. For details please contact Stefan Buettner.

Hon. Swiss Consul General Muller-McDougall said the Swiss Embassy in London and Bayern are working with Angela Constance on a fact-finding mission. It will be a short visit and no date has been given yet.

Stefan Buettner said the Austrian Consul would like to come to a briefing for the group.

**An invite will be extended for the Austrian Consul to come to the next meeting.**

### **Culture Update**

Lilo Borgmann said German is in decline in Scottish language studies. The One Plus Two language requirement has had a positive effect and has increased interest in German as a second language. Interest is still very vague but it is encouraging.

Colin Beattie asked what the current number of German teaching assistants is.

Lilo Borgmann said that it is decreasing. It's currently fourteen.

Annette Goetzkes thanked everyone that helped with the interview project for her first year students. It was so positive that they'd like to extend the project next year. If anyone else would like to be involved they are more than welcome to participate.

### **Other Business**

Colin Beattie asked if there are any interesting or necessary agenda items to send them to Alyson Adam.

Stefan Buettner suggested discussing vocational training and youth unemployment.