

## Meeting Minutes

### Cross Party Group on Germany

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019, 5.30pm – 7pm

TG.20/21

**Next Meeting – CR6, 5.30pm, Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

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#### Attendees

Colin Beattie MSP - Scottish Parliament  
Maureen Watt MSP - Scottish Parliament  
Barbara Quick – German Consul General  
Ewen Cameron – Scottish Enterprise  
Eleoma Bodammer – Edinburgh University  
Annette Götzkes – Edinburgh University  
Sigrid Rieuwerts - JGU  
Barbara Strickland – German Citizen  
James Trolland - Business  
Hans-Georg Thönges – Goethe Institut  
Mia Del Rio – Scottish Parliament  
Louise Cameron – Scottish Parliament

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#### Apologies

Petra Wend, Cameron Buchanan.

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The meeting opened at 5.30pm with Colin Beattie (CB) welcoming the new Consul General, Barbara Quick (BQ).

#### **1. Approval of previous minutes**

The group went through the minutes from the meeting from the May Meeting. The group noted two amendments to be made in the minutes and these were actioned by Louise Cameron (LC). Pending the changes, the minutes were proposed by Maureen Watt (MW), seconded by Barbara Strickland (BS).

#### **2. Barbara Quick, German Consul General**

Colin Beattie (CB) introduced the New German Consul General, Barbara Quick (BQ).

CB proposed BQ as the new Deputy Convenor. MW seconded the proposal.

BQ gave an outline of her previous professional roles, noting that she has 20 years of experience in diplomacy and has also worked in German-Russian relations.

BQ came to Scotland in mid-July from Berlin and she hopes that the CPG can be used to foster relations and to attract projects across a variety of fields. BQ hopes it will provide a space to discuss interesting topics and see what both countries can do for each other, as with the current political situation there is much to be collaborated on.

### **3. Ewen Cameron, Head of Trade Services at Scottish Enterprise**

EC attended to speak on the topic 'Scottish and German Cooperation after Brexit', and also noted he would like to continue his participation in the group moving forward, as he believed that Scottish Enterprise would find it beneficial to work with group.

EC noted in his role as head of trade services, he is in charge of the services available to exporters and their progress, he helps with marketing, partnership with others in Scotland on export activity. He noted that Scotland is an outward facing European nation with strong relationship with Germany, with a want to further develop economic and cultural investments.

- There are 165 German Owned businesses in Scotland, with 18660 staff and a £4.6 billion turnover
- Despite Brexit, investors are continuing to come to Scotland, and Scotland is the top region in the UK for attracting investment outside of London.
- German investors are largely complimentary about investment in Scotland, with few highlighting Brexit as a specific risk, though flight connectivity is an area in need of improvement.
- Germany is Scotland's 4<sup>th</sup> largest export market, attracting £2.3 billion and it has grown by 7.4% in last 4 years
- The Scottish Government launched a plan for growing Scotland's export performance – 'A Trading Nation'. They have asked Scottish Enterprise to increase the number of Global Scots from 650 to 2000. With 15 currently in Germany, this should be doubled by May 2020.
- Brexit – It is difficult to predict the outcomes so Scottish Enterprise are focused on preparing businesses for Brexit, whatever the outcome. On their website they have more information on preparing for Brexit, which includes a self-assessment tool to help companies think about what they should be considering. They are also providing financial assistance through their Brexit support grant.

CB asked Scottish Enterprise why they focused on larger companies. MW queried what turnover a company needs to have to qualify for this support. EC noted that Scottish Enterprise take their direction from the Scottish Government and assured that any company which contacts Scottish Enterprise is provided with support. As part of Brexit there is a provision giving grants of £4000 to provide specialist support. 'A Trading Nation' talks about where they want the focus and that is on larger

companies and priority markets. EB asked why there is not a focus on start-up companies – particularly German ones that want to start up in Scotland. EC responded that Scottish Enterprise focus on export support but if German companies want to set up operations in Scotland there will be support for that.

JT noted that he though the focus should be on smaller companies, as surely they would be under more risk from Brexit, and voiced his concerns about the lack of resources and engagement with smaller business communities. EC responded that they encourage small medium size businesses to learn about their exporting opportunities and helping companies in identifying and selling their skills is a key aspect of the export growth plan.

SR asked who are the German partners and who are Scottish Enterprise talking to apart from businesses. EC noted he would come back to the group with more specifics on that, as his colleagues in Dusseldorf have the details on specific organisations.

SR asked if the group could have information on the 5 Scottish Enterprise events in Germany. EC noted he would circulate this information to the group through LC.

BQ asked what SDI does to prepare companies for Brexit and what businesses could do themselves. EC noted that SDI provides Scottish companies with information on tariff levels and the supply chain. That if companies are importing products from Germany what are the implications and regulations they need to be aware of. EC noted that Scottish Enterprise needed to have front line staff responding to any queries.

HT enquired into the needs of German language teaching initiatives play, and asked whether language plays a large role in business, or whether discussions automatically take place exclusively in English? SR noted that many feel in trading with Germany they don't need the language because Germans can speak English, but this is not how it should be. Language is identity, and there is much more than the mere translation of it. Moving to Germany and thinking they can do business in English doesn't work.

MW – At the beginning of September there was the Offshore Europe event in Aberdeen. Was there any presence there from SDI and was there anything related to Germany? EC replied that that they were at the event and that he would do a full evaluation on that and circulate that back. There are lots of oil and gas companies looking at low carbon opportunities and many are operating in Germany for that reason.

#### **4. Political, economic, cultural updates**

There was a discussion around Nicola Sturgeon's visit to Berlin that day and Scotland's desire to strengthen bonds with Europe.

AG asked how many in Scotland had applied for EU Citizen Settled Status. BQ noted that – according to the latest figures - this number was at 51600.

AG noted an increase in Postgraduate University applications because there is a worry that it is their last chance to study here.

BQ updated the CPG on the latest political developments in Germany. BQ noted the positive feedback from Berlin in regards to Nicola Sturgeon's visit, and noted it was a constructive meeting, where Nicola Sturgeon made clear that Scotland wants a place in Europe and to have business with Germany.

SR spoke on the topic of German Education Trainees. A number councils (31) will be involved and this number is still going up. They are welcome to sign up as long as they do so before the end of October. There has been more than 500000 Euros raised for this, and that figure is still going up. They will be supplying Scottish Councils with German Language Assistants. The assistants will undertake a 2 week induction through Edinburgh City Council. SR also noted that the number of Global Outreach Citizens is still going up campuses in Aberdeen, despite Brexit.

BQ noted that the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall would be a great opportunity for the CPG to host an event. She suggested a discussion on the book 'Popular Support for Democracy in Unified Germany'. This would happen following the next Germany CPG meeting.

EB also noted that there is an increase in the number of students studying German at Edinburgh University and that the numbers are looking healthy. There are 65 advanced students and 40 beginners starting this year.

LC noted next meeting on November 20<sup>th</sup>.

CB closed meeting on 19.03.