

MEETING MINUTES

Cross Party Group on Germany

Wednesday, 10th January, 5.30pm

TG.20/21

Next Meeting

Tuesday 6th March 2018, 5.30pm

CR3

Attendees

Colin Beattie MSP, Scottish Parliament
Graeme Henderson, Scottish Parliament
Annette Götzkes, Edinburgh University
Tim Müller, German citizen
Steffen Rützenhoff, German Consulate
Elaine Smith MSP, Scottish Parliament
Alexandra Stein, Scottish Government
Frank Strang, Scottish Government
Barbara Strickland, German citizen
Jens-Peter Voss, Consul General of Germany
Petra Wend, Queen Margaret University

Apologies Eleoma Bodammer, Cameron Buchanan, Manuela Calchini, Ben Macpherson MSP, Sigrid Rieuwerts, James Trolland.

Colin Beattie (CB) opened the meeting at 17.30.

Topics Discussed:

1. Approval of previous minutes

The group approved the minutes from the November meeting.

2. Dr Alexandra Stein, Scottish Government

CB welcomed Dr Alexandra Stein (AS) to the group's meeting.

TL gave the group a presentation on the Scottish Government's Germany Investment and Innovation Hub. The presentation covered aspects such as:

- The context in which the Hub will be launched
- The reasons for choosing Germany, including strength of Scotland's exports, inward investment, and visitor numbers

MEETING MINUTES

- The Hub's purpose of building and maintaining key public and private sector relationships between the two countries
- The Hub's objectives of promoting trade and investment opportunities, innovation, cultural capital and policy advice
- The work completed to date
- Early priorities, including consolidation of existing connections, maximising opportunities for trade missions, and advising embassy colleagues on devolved policy
- The proposed forward programme

Elaine Smith (ES) asked if AS was aware of the annual 'Scotland Week' held in the USA as an example of how Scotland is promoted abroad. AS confirmed that she had attended 'Scotland Week' in the past and also a follow-up that had taken place in Stockholm.

CB noted that only 7% of Scottish SMEs export compared to 70% in Bavaria, and asked AS how the Hub would contact all these organisations. AS replied that funding was in place for studies examining how SMEs can export and that conversations were taking place with Hugh Lightbody (chief officer at the Business Gateway National Unit) as to how SMEs could be influenced to export more. AS further noted that there were plans to take Scottish entrepreneurs to Berlin.

Annette Götzkes (AG) asked if there would be any focus on additional language skills. AS said she would like to look into that and will be speaking to the Goethe Institut and Founders4Schools.

Jens-Peter Voss (JPV) noted the importance of understanding of devolved policy and asked what the Hub's top priority would be. AS replied that the initial focus was likely to be on trade and investment delegations and aim of ensuring 'quick wins' in the fields of innovation and entrepreneurship. AS also noted there would be a focus on building relationships within embassies.

Frank Strang (FS) spoke to the group in his role as the Scottish Government's head of European Relations. FS noted that the Berlin Hub built on previous hubs such as those in London and Dublin and that no prior hub linked into the economy in the same way. FS further stated that a Director of International Trade had recently been appointed, while AS is expected to receive diplomatic status. FS then spoke of the challenges ahead, including the management of what will be a dispersed organisation and the need to match outcomes to expenditure.

Petra Wend (PW) asked if AS would be able to put together a directory of organisations already in a collaborative existence. AS replied that the first month has focused on finding out what organisations are doing such work in the first instance.

The group agreed to invite AS back to a future meeting and to pass on relevant contacts. CB thanked AS and FS for speaking with the group.

MEETING MINUTES

3. Meeting attendances

CB led a discussion on the low attendance levels at the past two CPG meetings. The outcomes/action points were:

- Write to the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science to request an update on the '1 + 2' language policy, and consider how to take this forward in the group's remit
- CB's new intern, Perla Ramos, will be tasked with researching relevant Scots-German groups who could be invited and/or provide input into future CPG meetings; potentially CB could meet with these groups beforehand
- The March and May meetings would be changed to take place on Tuesdays
- AS would become a CPG member to allow for continued discussion/feedback surrounding the Berlin Hub
- A future meeting topic would focus on culture, in particular German art curators/exhibitions.

CB closed the meeting at 7.11pm.