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We have to become stronger and more focussed

As global challenges are growing, individual states and their regulatory and political frameworks need to become stronger and more focussed. However, the shortage of resources demonstrates that joint approaches are becoming more important by the day. The refugee crisis, migration, the rise of Islamic State, the conflict in the Ukraine, the on-going Euro crisis, the pressing need for the corporate world to show more responsibility – these are all challenges asking for solutions which no one state can deliver on its own.

For certain challenges specific countries may have to take the lead and others may follow and support, but they all have to co-operate, and the different needs and capabilities of individual nations ought to be taken into account during this process; something that all countries in Europe must give more consideration to – otherwise the European Union will not improve its effectiveness and the problems for all of us can only increase. Britain’s renegotiations with the EU will not be productive if they purely focus on the narrow short-term political interest of the UK. Only when the wider challenges and willingness to address these are part of the overall effort to reform Europe can the Prime Minister succeed.

As we are all bound together by history, moral and societal values, economic beliefs and geography, we will need to continue working together, and it would be best to renew the existing framework with everyone from within. Alternatives are too expensive for all of us and should be avoided for the sake of those outside our own little world who need a strong, supportive Europe in their struggle for freedom, peace and prosperity. We owe it to them!

Dr Ulrich Hoppe
Director General, German-British Chamber of Industry & Commerce
Business travel in Germany – an established success story with an eye on the future

With Germany announcing record numbers of overnight stays recently, Klaus Lohmann, director of the German National Tourist Office UK and Ireland, gives initiative an insight as to why business travel plays a vital role in German tourism.

Last year, visitors from Britain accounted for over 5 million overnight stays in Germany, a rise of 5.2% compared to the previous year. Over a million of these – almost 30% – were for business, and general forecasts predict a 40% increase of foreign trips by British citizens by 2020.

Germany is the United Kingdom’s most important trading partner, ahead of the United States. It is also the world’s no.1 location for hosting international trade fairs and these, together with a huge variety of conferences and other events account for half of all business trips. With total revenues of around €665 billion, business travel makes a sizeable contribution to Germany’s economy. International business travellers spend approximately €15 billion every year, so clearly, this is a highly valuable sector.

**Location, location, location**

It’s all about location, location, location. Germany is conveniently located in the centre of Europe and straightforward travel connections enable British visitors to make regular trips to existing customers, establish new business links and keep in touch with colleagues at international branch offices. On arrival, they will find an extensive transport network supported by sleek, efficient infrastructure. Germany also offers exceptional value for money. Compared with many other European countries, German hotel rates are relatively low while standards are consistently high.

**Future trends**

What does the future hold? There is an increasing trend in ‘Bleisure’ trips – that combination of mixing business with leisure at the end of a trip, once the meetings are over, the appointments have all been concluded and it is time to relax. The canny business visitor will invite friends or family to join them for a weekend, making the experience a little more memorable and importantly, maintaining a good work/life balance.

**Green Germany**

Another important trend is towards greener travel. Environmental sustainability is a key topic in this sector, with venues very mindful of the impact they make. There is even a mark of quality known as “fairpflichtet” in Germany. This is the sustainability code of the German conventions industry, which was launched by the GCB German Convention Bureau in co-operation with the EVVC European Federation of Convention Centres. Cities in Germany have proven particularly successful in their quest for sustainability: an impressive ten out of the 12 major cities assessed for the German Green City Index scored above the European average – perhaps another reason to linger a little longer.

Modern Germany, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, is a diverse, vibrant and welcoming society with a huge variety of attractions to suit all tastes, needs and budgets. Whether you are visiting for business or personal reasons, or perhaps combining both, why not explore ‘destination Deutschland’ just that little bit more and experience why German tourism is booming. We look forward to seeing you there.

Klaus Lohmann
Director, German National Tourist Office UK and Ireland

To find out more visit the German National Tourist Office’s official website www.germany.travel
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WE MAKE YOUR BUSINESS SPEAK GERMAN.
Germany reduces bureaucracy for British temping agencies

The German government has relaxed rules for UK employment businesses, or temping agencies, which send staff to Germany.

Temping agencies are now no longer required to submit bi-annual statistics on the staff they have hired to German clients. In future, the relevant data to produce a survey on the effects of temping on the German employment market will be taken from the DEÜV-Meldung (Notification in accordance with the Datenerfassungs- und Übermittlungsverordnung).

If the employees of the UK temping agency are subject to German National Insurance, the employer (in practice: their German accountant or payroll bureau) will automatically be obliged to complete the DEÜV notification upon commencement and termination of the employment as well as annually at the end of each year. UK employment businesses must still hold a German labour leasing licence (Erlaubnis zur Arbeitnehmerüberlassung).

legal@ahk-london.co.uk

Blick Rothenberg LLP wins major UK tax award

Blick Rothenberg LLP has been named as the best International and Expatriate Tax Practice at the 2015 Taxation Awards. Recognised as a mark of excellence within the sector, the awards were judged by a panel of leading professionals and officers of major tax institutions. It was the first time that the firm had entered the competition. Blick Rothenberg LLP has many years of experience helping organisations and individuals manage their tax obligations and maximise tax planning opportunities across borders.

www.blickrothenberg.com

Simon Jonsson named The Prince’s Responsible Business Ambassador in the West Midlands

Simon Jonsson, a Partner at KPMG and a council member of the German-British Chamber of Industry & Commerce, has been named as The Prince’s Responsible Business Ambassador in the West Midlands.

The honour was presented to him as part of the 2015 Responsible Business Awards run by the charity Business in the Community (BITC), the Prince’s Responsible Business Network. Ambassadors are chosen annually for their personal impact and for demonstrating leadership within their own business.

In his new role, Simon is planning to focus his efforts on education and youth unemployment, both of which are very critical issues in the West Midlands region.

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Audi’s Motorsport Centre of Excellence installs EFAFLEX doors

EFAFLEX, the only company worldwide to focus exclusively on high-speed doors, has supplied the doors for Audi’s newly constructed Motorsport Centre of Excellence based at Neuburg an der Donau, where development, building and testing of Audi motorsports vehicles has been brought under one roof. A total of 57 high-speed doors were installed, featuring door blade opening speeds of 4 meters per second, extremely quiet operation and the latest sound insulation. Many of the doors are controlled via a card reader and are programmed to stay open for the shortest possible time because of the secrecy procedures. The door control system was created specifically for the building in a collaboration between Audi and EFAFLEX’s engineers.

www.efaflex.com

Staff at Audi are benefitting from EFAFLEX’s high-speed doors at its Motorsport Centre of Excellence based at Neuburg an der Donau
New Councillors

Johannes Haas

Johannes Haas has been General Manager of DZ BANK London Branch since July 2014. He joined DZ BANK in 1988 and has held senior positions for DZ BANK Group in Frankfurt, Dublin, New York and Singapore. He is an alumnus of Pforzheim University and holds an MBA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Dr Steffen Hoffmann

Dr Steffen Hoffmann has been President of Robert Bosch Ltd since April 2015. His two main areas of responsibility are overseeing the overall Bosch UK business as President and the regional co-ordination of finance and administration for all Bosch entities in the UK. Prior to taking up his current position, he was Managing Director of Robert Bosch Southern Africa, as well as Head of the Automotive (Original Equipment) Business in this country. He joined Robert Bosch GmbH in Germany as a management trainee and went on to hold several executive commercial roles in different countries.

Jan-Martin Lorenz

Jan-Martin Lorenz has been Managing Director of Jungheinrich UK Ltd since January 2014. He has over 12 years’ experience in the Jungheinrich Group where he started in 2003. From 2007 to 2013, he was the Group’s Vice President for Marketing and Regional Sales. Prior to this he was with Jungheinrich in the United States where he successfully developed a dealer network on the US East Coast and in eastern Canada and later became Director of Direct Sales. He holds a degree in Business Administration from the University of Applied Sciences in Hamburg and is a Board Member of the British Industrial Truck Association.

Fladgate advises Greybull Capital on acquisition

Fladgate LLP is advising investment firm Greybull Capital on the acquisition of 140 high street convenience stores from WM Morrison Supermarkets plc.

Greybull Capital, a turnaround specialist that led the takeover of travel business Monarch Group last year, together with a team of industry specialists led by retail expert Mike Greene, will take control of the 140 stores that trade under the M Local brand. Fladgate introduced the management team to Greybull.

www.fladgate.com

For regional committees, email: members@ahk-london.co.uk
The Annual Dinner of the German-British Chamber of Industry & Commerce took place on 9 July 2015 at The Landmark Hotel London. Over 200 members and distinguished guests from many renowned companies enjoyed the evening. The Guest of Honour and Speaker was Wolfgang Kirsch, Chief Executive Officer of DZ BANK AG.
The Chamber’s Autumn Reception took place on Thursday, 24 September. Bratwurst was served with German beer, wine and pretzels. Some 120 members and guests enjoyed this lively evening.
**EVENTS DIARY**

**Midlands Autumn Reception**

The Midlands Autumn Reception took place at Café Opus at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, on 10 September. Some 30 members and their guests met over drinks and canapés, and Nigel Wood, Chairman of the German-British Chamber’s Midlands committee, welcomed everyone in a short speech.

**Golf Tournament**

The German-British Chamber’s annual Golf Tournament took place on Friday, 2 October, with the support of the German banking community. Almost 50 members and their guests participated at the Seve Ballesteros-designed Masters golf course at The Shire London in Barnet, Hertfordshire. The event concluded with a lunch and prize-giving ceremony. Jochen Brenk of Landesbank Baden Württemberg took home the prize for best individual player, while the best team prize was awarded to the team including Bill Smyth of Bill Smyth & Associates. The event was sponsored by Porsche Design.

**Events Calendar**

- **Thursday, 3 December 2015**
  - Members’ Christmas Reception
  - Venue: German-British Chamber, 16 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB
  - Time: 6pm to 8.30pm
  - Cost: Complimentary

- **Tuesday, 5 January 2016**
  - Members’ New Year’s Reception
  - Venue: German-British Chamber, 16 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB
  - Time: 11am to 1pm
  - Cost: Complimentary

- **Thursday, 25 February 2016**
  - Seminar with Heuking Kühn Lüer Wotjek:
    - “Setting up a business in Germany: Starting from scratch or buying an existing business?”
  - Venue: German-British Chamber, 16 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6LB
  - Time: 5pm to 6.30pm, followed by refreshments
  - Cost: Complimentary

- **Thursday, 3 March 2016**
  - Breakfast Seminar with HSBC Bank plc:
    - “How can working capital improvement deliver opportunities for growth and shareholder value?”
  - Venue: Stafford Hotel, 16-18 St James’s Place, London SW1A 1NJ
  - Time: 8am to 10am
  - Cost: Complimentary

Please see our webpage for updates and to register for events: www.germanbritishchamber.co.uk

**Hickman & Rose Seminar**

Hickman & Rose solicitors hosted a seminar at the German-British Chamber of Industry & Commerce on Tuesday, 15 September. Some 30 delegates attended the highly informative seminar on comparing bankers’ and directors’ duties and liabilities in Germany and the UK. Networking took place after the seminar and the speakers were available for further questions.
Advertise in INITIATIVE

Initiative magazine is the perfect vehicle to reach decision makers connected to the German-British Chamber both here in the UK and in Germany.

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Leiter der Steuerabteilung
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PART 3: Society and laws

In part 3 of initiative’s look at the benefits the EU has brought to the UK, we will examine what positive changes EU directives have made to British laws and society.

As we have already seen, EU citizens are able to work anywhere in the Single Market, which is a huge advantage for employees and employers. The social security arrangements for home and host states have been simplified by EU directives accordingly: employees only have to pay contributions in one country – and are only covered by the social security legislation of that one country. This has also made life easier for the approximately two million British people living and/or working in another EU member state, a point often forgotten in the current debate about immigration in the UK.

Furthermore, EU directives have standardised employment rights across the member states, ensuring employees are treated equally and improving working conditions for many as a result. To name a few examples, the EU’s 1975 Equal Pay Directive stipulates that workers are entitled to the same pay for the same work, regardless of their gender, while the 2000 Equal Treatment Directive has further ensured the equality of men and women in employment law.

In a move to strengthen families and resolve demographic issues, the 1996 Parental Leave Directive allows employees to take time off after the birth of a child. This was extended in the UK by the right to flexible working, first for parents with children under 17 years, and from 2014 for all employees.

Employers, on the other hand, can rest assured that they will face relatively similar employment regulations no matter where in the EU they deploy their staff, greatly simplifying matters and saving time and money. In turn this has led to a boost in foreign investment.

As we have seen, EU membership has clear economic benefits for the UK: both businesses and consumers benefit from lower prices thanks to EU regulations on improving competition. What’s more, the EU drive for standardisation has made products safer and EU directives have helped to make British society fairer, but there is more to be done, as can be seen from the chart below about the gender pay gap.

When it comes to an EU referendum, we know how we would vote – do you?

Source: United Nations 2015
Source: Office for National Statistics 2015; Eurostat 2015
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