

Meeting Minutes

Cross Party Group on Germany

23 October 2012

Meeting Room Q1.03

4th Meeting of CPG on Germany

27th November 2012

5:30-7:00pm

Meeting Room Q1.03

Attendees Colin Beattie MSP, Gordon Macdonald MSP, Colin Keir MSP, Maureen Watt MSP, Jamie McGrigor MSP, Consul General Verena Grafin von Rodern, Honorary Consul Peter Muller-McDougall, Honorary Consul John Clifford, Petra Wend, Louise Gardiner, Max Scharbert, Barbara Kualbach, James Trolland

Apologies Petra Wetzel, David McLetchie MSP, David Torrance MSP, John Pentland MSP, Lewis MacDonald MSP, Alex Galloway, Consul Heinrich Schnettger

Forthcoming Visits: No diplomatic visits planned

Topics to Discuss:

Cultural

Response from the Scottish Government regarding Foreign Language

Assistants (FLAs)

- a. Number of FLAs down from previous years, but on an increase
- b. Clear issue with financing
- c. British Council looking to improve the situation and further increase the number of FLAs
- d. Only 4 Austrian FLAs in Scotland which help contribute to the teaching of German Language
 - a. It is not compulsory for Scottish students to continue with a foreign language past the age of sixteen. Which reduces the necessity of more FLAs.
- e. Erasmus Programme sending fewer Scots students abroad. British Council research indicates the number of Erasmus is increasing but students seem less interested

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- f. Increasing Language Teaching in schools would help
- g. Better language teachers needed in schools
- h. Universities need to have a greater focus on languages and getting language text in their library
- i. Responsibility for all representatives (MSPs) to plug the message of learning languages as they visit schools and youth organisations. Greater need for earlier more sustainable ambassadors for languages. More emphasis should be put on the value of learning languages young.

CPG recognises the importance of FLAs and will follow up with the government on improving the opportunities for FLAs.

CPG will also follow-up on the outcomes of the Foreign Languages Debate which took place on 24 May 2012.

NUS Presentation

The presentation and study will be sent out electronically – Please see for complete research method and statistics

Reasons given for students not studying abroad. Students were able to mark more than one answer.

- a. It costs too much – 47%
- b. I do not have adequate foreign language skills – 46%
- c. I do not/have not had the time – 42%
- d. I wouldn't know how to go about it – 26%
- e. I find the idea daunting – 24%
- f. Had not thought about it – 16%
- g. Will delay the start of my career – 15%
- h. Not interested – 14%
- i. Not enough opportunities to do so – 14%
- j. Family commitments prevent me from doing so – 12%
- k. Not relevant to me – 9%
- l. I don't see the benefits – 5%
- m. Other – 9%
- n. Don't know – 5%

Key recommendations of the study

- a. Deeper Analysis of the Scottish-Domiciled Erasmus Demographic
 - i. Need for a national scale survey in order to properly gauge Scottish specific figures.
- b. Centralised Data-Collection System
 - i. Need for a centralised data-collection system at institutional level to record all outward mobility opportunities and actual uptake
- c. Inter-Institutional Collaboration
 - i. Need for identification and utilisation of existing collaborative partnerships will facilitate the creation and sustainability of study abroad.
- d. Emphasis on Widening Participation of Study Abroad Opportunities

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- i. Underlying causes for non-participation must at the heart of increasing mobility rather than a focus on numbers
- e. Provisions of Short-Term Mobility Windows
 - i. Often short-term study abroad programmes provide an entry point for longer terms of study abroad. A full investigation should be given to incorporating a short-term mobility window with specific, measureable learning outcomes.
- f. Student Mobility Statement form Accreditation Bodies
 - i. Definitive statements on outward mobility from each regulator/accrediting body in every subject area is needed to debunk prevalent student and staff myths about the feasibility of study abroad programmes.
- g. Increase Employer Engagement
 - i. In collaboration with study abroad champions already identified within Scottish business, a much wider conversation should be had at a national level with Scottish employers, looking at exactly how industry could and would like to, be involved.
- h. Creation of a National Mobility Agency
 - i. A national mobility agency could serve as a central repository for all institutional data collection, and one stop shop, for students, parents and institutions who want to know more about study abroad opportunities, practical advice and tips.

A three week study abroad seems too short. However it does spark the interest to do a longer study abroad.

Language learning and study abroad programmes should be focused on practical uses for business.

Erasmus is the same here as in other countries and open to Scottish students just like German or French students. Need to encourage students to take up the opportunities.

Lack of interest – Petra's experience with 150 students offered a placement in Germany with a company. No volunteers until prompted and even then only a few volunteers.

Language teaching needs to be more focused in schools and should be compulsory. Teaching methods are lacking.

NUS will be sending out study abroad ambassadors. They will visit schools encouraging learning languages and studying abroad. – SCOTLAND GOING GLOBAL. Better policy processing for national mobility strategy and employer engagement.

Problems with Universities putting up barriers and putting students off.

A larger study is needed to determine where those going abroad are choosing to study. Far East?

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Needs to be a direct connection made between learning a foreign language, studying abroad and employability.

Economic

a. Response from Scottish Government regarding German Plan

Current plan not specific to Germany. Need to be reviewed and see if there is anything the CPG could add to the current plan.

A focus on promoting business interests? A focus on promoting tourism?

Agreement to produce a document for local authorities. Headings to be sent around in advance of the next meeting for further discussion.

CPG asked for a current list of German businesses operating in Scotland.

CPG will review suggested headings at the next meeting.

Political

Nothing at this point

Future Meetings

27th November 2012 – AGM

22nd January 2013

27th March 2013

11th June 2013