

MEETING MINUTES

Cross Party Group on Germany

27th November 2012

Meeting Room Q1.03

Next Meeting Date

5th Meeting of CPG on Germany

Tuesday, 29th January 2013

5:30-7:00pm

Meeting Room TG.20

Attendees Colin Beattie MSP, Gordon Macdonald MSP, John Pentland MSP , Jamie McGrigor MSP, German Consul General Verena Gräfin von Roedern, David Torrance MSP, Goethe Institut – Lilo Börgmann, Annette Gotzkes, Austrian Honorary Consul John Clifford, Consul Heinrich Schnettger, Stefan Buettner

Apologies Petra Wetzel, David McLetchie MSP, Maureen Watt MSP, Colin Keir MSP, Lewis MacDonald MSP, Alex Galloway, Petra Wend, Louise Gardiner, Max Scharbert, Nicola De Paoli, Manuela Calchini, Swiss Honorary Consul Peter Muller-McDougall

Forthcoming Visits: No diplomatic visits planned

Review of Previous Meeting

- Scottish government has only a 2 language policy, should expand to more for more competitive students among the European market
- Need to engage with local government to provide assistance and guidance to councillor regarding school curriculum
- Increase number of students going abroad to study/work/intern in Germany
- Push universities towards a more common policy on language requirements and encouragement of international experiences while in university

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- Influence Scottish government in terms of limiting/eliminating barriers for students going abroad created by universities (get penalized, if students go longer than a few weeks they have to start the year of school over again)

Annette Gotzkes of the German Department at University of Edinburgh discussed Languages for All programme. It is a new scheme for student to learn language if they want and receive certification. The same programme in Germany increased from 35-160 students in 3 years. Those who got involved in the programme were from a cross section of studies. Many students were studying sciences that would normally not be required to study a language.

- Increases confidence among students about speaking the language and connect it to career selection and development
- Involve student ambassadors in sharing experiences to younger students to get them thinking

Invite someone from international office of University of Edinburgh and Edinburgh Napier University to speak/answer question at next meeting: foreign culture courses to find out what are the barriers for Scottish students taking up study abroad opportunities

Stefan Buettner to invite representative from University of Edinburgh

Jamie McGrigor MSP to invite representative from Edinburgh Napier University

Preferably people from central international office as well as from the sciences ie business, law, engineer (University not encouraging enough or students not confident to go, financial reasons, increase ways to encourage--scholarships, money is not exhausted--stress advantages of being fluent)

- Advantages of learning German need to be clear. Where could it lead?

AGM – See AGM Meeting Minutes

Topics to Discuss:

Local Government Plan

Purpose of plan: E-document will be sent to local government with the mission to influence local government by making them familiar with Germany (culture, language) to encourage better engagement

A. Specific Lines

- German Chamber of Commerce: No representative to agree to lines at present
- German Consulate: Will provide a statement

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- Goethe-Institut: Work closely with the local council and let them know they are supported
- Twinning arrangement with German Cities might be helpful. Past twinings have led to exchanges and cultural programmes. Could help encourage students learning about Germany and to learn the German language.

Alyson Adam to check if there is a twinning association and report on which Scottish cities are twinned with German cities

B. Content

a. Background and Introduction:

- Intern Andrew will put together 4 pages max outlining the need for increase cultural awareness, including languages:
 - UK came in last place out of 28 European countries, ability of citizens to hold conversation in language beyond their own,
 - Not knowing another language hinders youth employment in EU labour market
- Not surprising the UK is in last place. Lack of language skill hurts our economy and makes individuals less culturally rounded.

b. Economic Lines:

- Increased number of immigrants from the EU who get better chance of job because of language ability
- More EU citizens coming to UK to work than UK citizens going to other European countries due to language skills, including jobs of the EU
- German companies with Scotland need to stress the importance of learning a foreign language
 - Not enough to get them to do that
- Engaging with businesses

c. Cultural Lines:

- Dr. Manuela from VisitScotland might be able to help with engaging German tourist
- London German Tourism Centre – any information
- Magazine from Nicola de Paoli – encouraging German tourists

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Alyson Adam to write London German Tourism Centre for any information they give on Scotland

Alyson Adam to ask Nicola De Paoli if a circulation of her magazine is acceptable

d. Educational Lines

- Expand language in schools, Scottish Government 1+ 2 Language Policy
 - Encourage local authorities to teach the German
 - Outline the benefits
 - Reaffirm the need for teaching language early not waiting until 19-20
- Connect with language skills with increased employability – Standard Life
 - Goethe Institut Career Fair
 - Statements from businesses who would rather employ individuals with language skills
- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages for uniform certification of foreign language skills (For example Cambridge Certificates, IELTS, UNI Certs)

Key opportunities

- Language for all in universities—UNI Certs: offering something that ends up with a local accepted certification
- Show local authorities what the next steps could be after learning the language, start another language in primary school (Scottish government 1 plus 2)
- How to retain language: help young people see where language could be used in their career, incentive for employability: Standard Life, employer in Scotland
- How do we make it appealing to students to learn that language in order to get a job in European nation? How do we make it interesting?
- Future cooperating opportunities

e. Key contacts in Scotland

- German partner school
- British councillor
- student union
- contact career advisor
- contact parent councils (parents and head teachers)
- bring in native German speakers,

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- figures for language assistance (16)-Erasmus students
- Career fair
- links to businesses
- employability skills: why is it important to have multiple skills

f. Production

Alyson Adam to collect list of council director of education and quality improvement officers

Jamie McGrigor to send copy of plan to the Barcelona project

Future Meetings

29th January 2013

27th March 2013

11th June 2013