



A Few Observations by a German Citizen Living and Working in Wales on the Minister's International Strategy for Wales

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Business

Wales voted to come out of the EU which did not go down too well in Germany, we wanted Wales to remain. Further investment of the 70 or so German companies in Wales is now on hold, waiting for the outcome of the Brexit negotiations. There have been some setbacks already. Rehau closing down its factory in Anglesey, Schaeffler closing down its factory in South Wales, CK International in Gwynedd threatening to withdraw some of their business and Airbus (only part German) threatening to withdraw their operation in North East Wales. If it comes to a `no-deal` investment from German companies in Wales will further decline. We hope for the best but prepare for the worst.

Tourism

Wales has a lot to offer for tourists, in particular North Wales with Snowdonia. The trouble is, as we all know, the weather isn't always favourable so the Welsh Government has quite rightly emphasised adventure, discovery and outdoors. Germans are quite well off these days and like to travel worldwide for their holidays and explore countries with something special to offer. Trouble is that they are used to very high class hotels, restaurants etc. which to some extent are missing in Wales. A good example of that is Snowdon, where they now have better facilities, but compared with the Alps, not of the same high standard.

Overall, the Welsh Government should spend more money on selling Wales in Germany for tourism. Scotland spends a lot more already and is therefore much better known in Germany than Wales.

Culture

Wales again has a lot to offer. Germans are cultural people and like to go to museums, concerts and operas. Unfortunately the concert halls and the opera houses, are not up to their standard. In Germany, each city has a high class opera house and concert hall, in Wales, there aren't any, operas are held in entertainment venues. Very little is known in Germany about the excellent music festivals, castles and museums in Wales. It should be much better advertised with an emphasis that Wales is a different country to England and has a completely different culture.

Sport

The main sport in Wales is rugby and they are the leading rugby nation in Europe. Unfortunately Germans don't play rugby and there is no national rugby team. Germans are into football but apart from Swansea and Cardiff Wales' football is not in the first division and therefore not particularly attractive to German football fans. Wales has a lot of good golf courses. Germans are not so much into golf but are becoming more interested in the sport and this should be marketed.

Summary

A lot more needs to be done to build up Wales in Germany. A good start is the opening up of Welsh Government offices in Berlin and Dusseldorf.

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