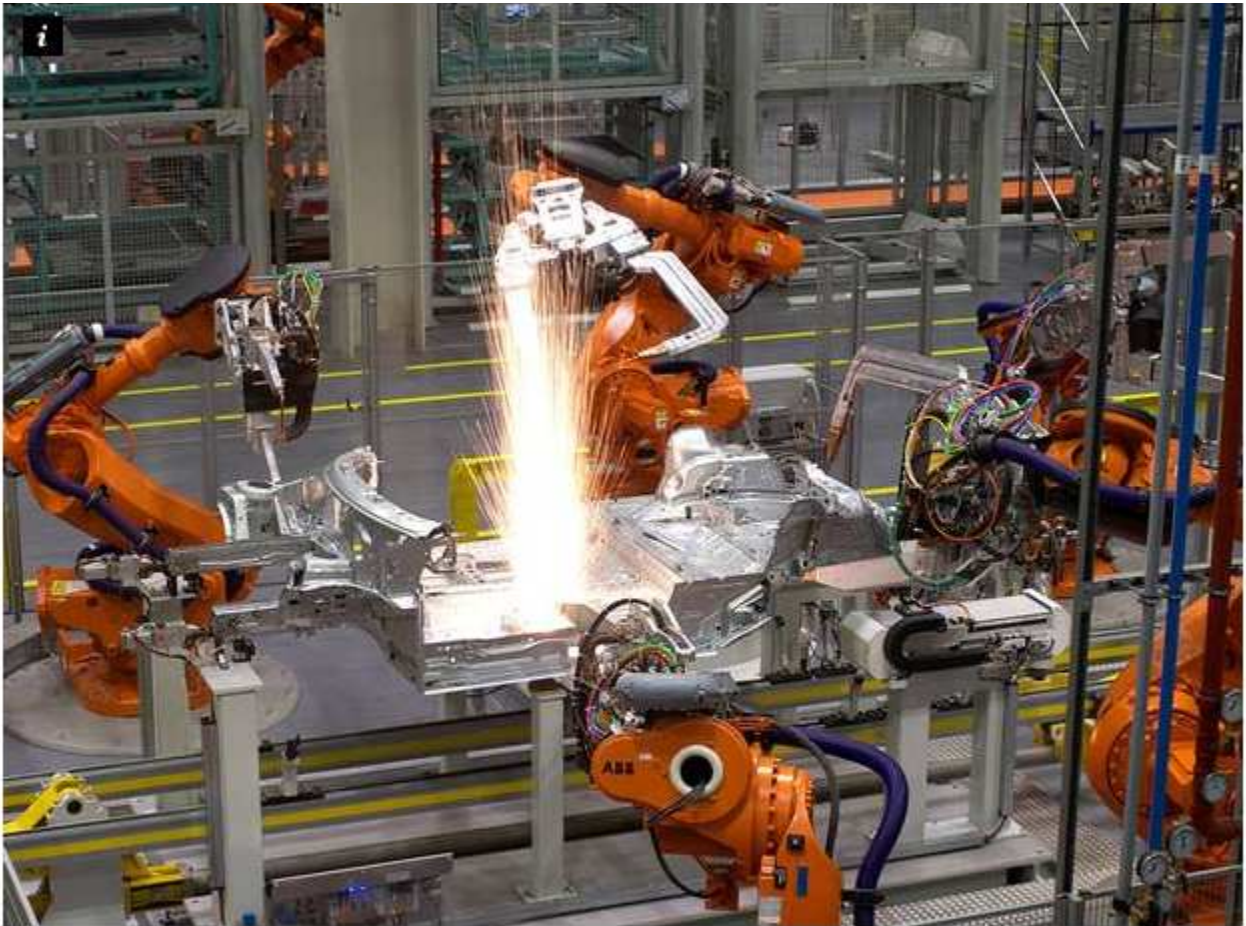




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EU referendum: German companies issue a 'please stay' appeal ahead of membership vote



Around 2,500 German companies employ 500,000 people in the UK



Chief executives of Germany's major companies operating in the United Kingdom have issued a "please stay" appeal ahead of the referendum on membership of the EU.

Around 2,500 German companies, mainly working in industries such as energy, manufacturing, transport and finance, employ 500,000 people in the UK. They include leading businesses in their fields with global brands such as Basf, BMW, BOC, DHL, Npower, ThyssenKrupp and VW.

The UK is regarded as one of Germany's most important markets and there is growing concern among its major international companies that Britain could exit the EU.

Following the Conservative victory in May's general election, with an in-out EU vote now guaranteed before 2017, the organisation representing German industry in Britain, German Industry UK (GIUK), asked its leading members how they viewed the outcome of the referendum.

While stating that they respected the decision by David Cameron to hold the in-out vote, most German companies expressed concern that the referendum process had already created "instability and uncertainty."

Although agreeing that the EU had to significantly reduce its costs, regulations and bureaucracy, German businesses said they remained worried about the how Britain would operate on the margins, rather than inside Europe.

Dr Bernd Atenstaedt, Chairman and Chief Executive of GIUK, said "We respect the decision made by the Prime Minister to hold a Referendum and the people's decision in the Referendum, but believe it is in the UK's best interest to stay in the EU for the benefit of our employees and ultimately, the general public".

Other German companies who took part in the GIUK survey, include Bentley Motors, Zeiss, E-On, Bosch, Siemens and Haribo.

If Britain left the EU, most of the leading international companies with strong commercial presence in the UK, believe a new set of bi-lateral trade agreements would need to be negotiated. The added cost of this legally expensive and time-consuming process, would affect both the number of multi-national companies currently operating the UK and those with plans to move to Britain.