

# Meeting Minutes

## Cross Party Group on Germany

30 May 2012

Meeting Room Q1.03

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3rd Meeting of CPG on Germany

19 September 2012

6:30-8:00pm

Meeting Room P1.02

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**Attendees** Colin Beattie MSP, Wolfgang Mössinger, Gordon Macdonald MSP, Colin Keir MSP, Maureen Watt MSP, James Trolland, Stefan Buettner

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**Apologies** Petra Wend, Louise Gardiner, Max Scharbert, David McLetchie MSP, Drew Smith MSP, John Pentland MSP

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**Forthcoming Visits:** Wolfgang Mössinger, Consul General of Federal Republic of Germany

6-7<sup>th</sup> June                      Prime Minister of Lower Saxony David McAllister– a delegation of 19 will be coming with him  
He wishes to meet the CPG on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> June from 10:45-11:30 (Please keep your diaries clear); I can confirm that this slot in McAllister's programme has been allocated to a meeting with the CPG.

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**Presentation to the Consul General from the CPG on Germany:** Note appreciation for Wolfgang Mössinger and his strong support for the CPG on Germany

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**Update on Prime Minister of Lower Saxony:** Wolfgang Mössinger, Consul General of Federal Republic of Germany

- Room: discuss options Q1.04 or CR2. CR2 found to be most appropriate
- Breakdown of the meeting was discussed.
  - Prime Minister of Lower Saxony speak 15 minutes
  - Press there for first 10 minutes

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- After welcoming by Colin, Prime Minister speaks, then round table style Q&A
- Wolfgang will send updated delegation list so questions can be prepared
- There will be members of the education, business and technology sectors present
- MSPs will ask questions and Prime Minister can ask questions of MSPs
- Thus far we are expecting 7 MSPs, 2 conservatives, 1 labour and 4 SNP in attendance
- Discussed how to open the meeting up for attendance
  - First come first serve?
  - MSPs only?
  - Expected number of guests and names to be sent to Wolfgang next week.
- The Prime Minister will be prepared to answer a wide range of questions relating to the Euro and energy, etc.

## Topics to Discuss:

**Political**      Agreed that the only political business was the previously discussed meeting with the Prime Minister of Lower Saxony

## Cultural

### a. Response from the Scottish Government

#### i. German language taught in schools

- a) We agreed to write to Cabinet Secretary, they responded rapidly.
- b) Debate was recently held regarding language teaching in schools. It should bring attention to the issue
- c) Mr McAllister is going to announce that Lower Saxony is promoting the German language in other countries by beginning a program that sends undergraduate students out of Germany to teach German for 3-6 months
  - 1. Already 10-20 students are committed for this program next year.
  - 2. It has been discussed giving them a small salary directly from local authorities.
- d) FLAs were at 50-60 in the last decade and we are down to 11 or 12 and 3 are in private schools. These are spread in 5 or 6 local authorities.
- e) Problem is, they are not stationary and for every 3 you cut out, it saves a teacher job. No one protests because FLAs move every year so it isn't noticed when they do not come back.

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## ii. Study Abroad Programmes

- a) Would like to discuss specifics RE loss of funding with Petra
- b) NUS has done an extensive study on involvement and exposure to international study in Scotland. Found that less than 1% of Scottish students study abroad, compared to 31% of German students.
  - 1. Scottish students that do study abroad are often the students that are not originally from here to begin with.
- c) Reasons for are not conclusive but include, no interest, too expensive, they never thought of it, and they would lose too much time in their studies.
- d) Discussed the possibility of the government setting up a liaison agency that helps students make study abroad happen. The University would outsource to this agency.
- e) Universities need to be more willing to work with students in regards to:
  - 1. Study abroad length
  - 2. Funding
  - 3. Credits
- f) Students need encouragement and possibly bursaries

Further discussions on this topic will continue. Would like to speak with Petra about her ideas on the issue.

NUS did a great job with their study and would like to invite a group of them and university administration for overview and recommendations.

Agreed to invite leader of NUS to next meeting

## iii. Funding issues during study abroad

- a) Was discussed along with above topic.

## iv. Modules Standard

- a) See above.

## b. Response from National Trust

- i. Wolfgang Mössinger indicated that as far as he knows the sample given of their literature wasn't a sample, it was the extent of their collection.
- ii. Response said they are expanding it.
- iii. Concerned with their statistics. Sample size was quite small and their numbers seem to be off with the rest of the market.
- iv. Lothian Buses City Tours is supposed to periodically study the language demographics of their customers. When is the last time they have done this?

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Continue working on this issue with National Trust. Write to them and raise our concerns RE their statistics. Bring up language study with Lothian Buses.

## **c. Response from Historic Scotland**

- i. Purpose is to include job opportunities of German learners and speakers as tour guides.
  - a) Many English speaking Germans will go to English tours because it is an English speaking country but if a German tour was offered they would take that opportunity.
- ii. Would it be possible to combine the study abroad programs with the issue of signage, brochures and tour guides in German?
- iii. Perhaps higher education institutions that teach hospitality and tourism should incorporate language courses?

Continue working on this issue with Historic Scotland. Bring up ideas RE tour guides.

## **Economic**

### **a. Response from Scottish Government regarding German Plan**

- a. Does the new plan supersede the older German Plan?
- b. Ask the Scottish Government which portions of German Plan are still active.
- c. SNP needs to work with the regional governments in Germany. Federal government cannot and does not deal with issue that SNP is discussing.
- d. Many similarities between Germany and Scotland.
  - i. Energy Security
  - ii. Oil imports
  - iii. Home grown energies
  - iv. Banning nuclear energy
- e. MacAllister can be the bridge between the two places without needing formalities. We can develop a steady stream of visitors that go back and forth and learn from each other.

Is there written information that will help SNP to learn more of Germany's regional government?

Write to Scottish Government to find out which portions of German Plan remain active.