

First Minister opens Welsh Government office in top export destination

The Welsh Government's new offices in Berlin and Dusseldorf will ensure Wales is able to develop strong trade links post-Brexit. It forms part of an expansion of the Welsh Government's overseas operations to protect existing markets, pursue new investment opportunities and promote Wales to the world.

Germany is Wales' top export destination, with the value of Welsh exports to Germany standing at £3.2 billion in 2017, a significant increase of 7.8% on the previous year.

Wales has achieved record levels of inward investment for the past 3 years, while Welsh exports also continue to soar. In 2017, Welsh exports stood at £16 billion, which is an increase of £2.39 billion on the previous year. Almost 60% of Welsh trade is sent to countries within the European Union.

There are 90 German-owned companies based in Wales, employing around 13,500 people. These include Arvato Bertelsmann in Swansea, Continental Teves in Ebbw Vale, Ensinger in Tonyrefail, RWE in Dolgarrog, Aberthaw, Pembroke, Port Talbot and Llandudno, and Siemens in Caernarfon, Caldicot and Bridgend.

The Welsh Government helps Welsh companies develop their export businesses in Germany. As a direct result of Welsh Government support, last year alone 21 Welsh companies secured German trade deals amounting to £5.23 million.

The First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones, said:

"Germany is of central importance to the Welsh economy; not only is it our top export destination for Welsh goods, it is an important inward investor, with Wales attracting almost 6% of all Germany's investments into the UK.

"Opening these 2 new offices in Germany sends a loud and clear signal to our European partners – Wales is open for business and we are determined to see our positive relationship with the EU continue post-Brexit.

"Increasing Wales' presence in Germany will allow us to pursue new trade and investment opportunities, build networks and boost Wales' profile. This has never been more important as we face a future outside of the European Union.

"We also want to welcome more German students to our fantastic universities. Our 2 new offices in Germany will enable us to better support interested students and help us to develop this reciprocal relationship – it's a win-win."

There are approximately 680 German students studying at Welsh universities and colleges. 2 of Wales' award-winning universities, Swansea and Aberystwyth, already have over 15 partnerships with universities across Germany.

Plans are progressing for the Welsh Government to open 2 further offices across the globe this year; in Doha and Paris.