



AHK Annual Report 2018

125 years of success. Your local partner.



Gefördert durch:



Bundesministerium
für Wirtschaft
und Energie

aufgrund eines Beschlusses
des Deutschen Bundestages

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AHK Annual Report 2018

Foreword

For 125 years, our AHK network has been on the spot worldwide for the German economy - a success story that began in Brussels in 1894 with the founding of the first bilateral German Chamber of Commerce Abroad (AHK). Over the decades, a strong network has been created that brings together people from the fields of business, politics and society - at 140 locations in 92 countries and with more than 50,000 memberships.

Such a network is especially important when the situation becomes more turbulent. On the international stage, economic development in 2018 lost considerable momentum. In the case of Brexit, a viable solution is still not visible from an economic point of view. Some trade conflicts have flared up - others continue to smoulder. Tariffs and counter-tariffs on steel and aluminium are already placing a very concrete burden on the economy. The conflict is involving not only the US and the EU, but also China. Finally, the threat of the erosion of the World Trade Organization (WTO) exists - not least due to a blockade by the USA.

On the other hand, the new European Free Trade Agreements, such as with Japan and Singapore, strengthen the hope for better market entries for our companies. Right now we have to continue the dialogue for global fair and business-friendly market conditions with great persuasiveness and intensity.

For me, it is clear: The challenges in the regions of the world will be greater in the near future for the German economy. Therefore, we have to recognise new trends in the markets as early as possible and react to them faster. The worldwide network of German AHKs provides an excellent basis for this. Even after 125 years, we are as modern and forward-looking as we were back then.



Dr. Eric Schweitzer
President of the Association of
German Chambers of Commerce
and Industry (DIHK e.V.)

The climate for the German economy has become rougher. Trade conflicts, distortion of competition, a shortage of skilled workers, but also the slowdown in the global economy are increasingly posing major challenges for small and medium-sized German companies in particular. Especially in these times, strong and reliable partners are particularly valuable.

For more than 125 years now, the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad, delegate offices and representative offices, which are affiliated to the AHK network, have been providing German companies with important local orientation and helping them to open the door to new markets. The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy has been promoting this network for many years in the firm conviction that this is well invested money. In 2018, for example, we provided a total of EUR 48.9 million for the AHK network.

Together with the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK), I want to further strengthen and expand the AHK network. I would therefore welcome it if, in future, the Chambers of Commerce Abroad could make an even greater contribution to the placement of foreign skilled workers with their experience in the field of vocational training. I also see a central role for the AHK network in setting up an African business network, with which we want to actively support German companies in selected African emerging markets.



Peter Altmaier
Federal Minister for Economic Affairs
and Energy

Our Highlights 2018



◀ Departure into a new time

Digital transformation is rapidly changing our lives - both from a private and professional point of view. The AHKs are also undergoing major changes as a result of this process. For example, our representatives from 92 countries discussed the future of the AHK network at the AHK World Conference in May 2018.

Together with representatives of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (IHKs) and other invited experts, we talked about the power of platforms, the relevance of bitcoins and the future of mobility. Our AHKs showed worldwide innovation and highlighted the development in the world regions. As a result, we have adopted our

AHK INNOVATION COMPETITION

Promote creative ideas ▶

As part of the AHK World Conference 2018, we introduced the **competition “Innovation@AHK”** for the first time. It rewards innovations at our locations and promotes new and creative ideas among our employees. Sharing ideas, spreading innovations and best practices in the network: for us, communication among each other is a key factor for a strong network.

The AHKs were able to apply for Innovation@AHK with innovative solutions, projects and internal processes in the three business segments **Services, Membership** and **Economic Advocacy**. As part of the AHK World Conference, the Top 3 presented their innovations to the jury, which, together with the audience, chose the winners in each category. The winners of the AHKs in Russia, Chile and the USA (Chicago) were awarded a DIHK-funded teambuilding event.

AHK Strategy 2025: It defines the first milestones for strengthening our brand, for launching a new AHK intranet and for supporting the future digital transformation of our organisation.

With more than 1,100 guests, including about 100 AHK board members, the winners of the IHK International School Competition from Madrid, Buenos Aires and Nairobi were also awarded. In the spirit of Richard David Precht’s keynote, this year’s meeting marks the “departure into a new era” for our AHK network.



16th ASIA-PACIFIC CONFERENCE

Shaping the future together ▶

The significance of Asia for the German economy is steadily increasing in the context of the fourth Industrial Revolution. This was underlined by the 16th Asia-Pacific Conference (APK) of the German Economy, hosted by our AHK in Jakarta and coordinated by the DIHK. Over 1,000 decision-makers from business and politics met from 3rd to 5th November 2018 in the Indonesian capital to discuss economic and security policy opportunities and challenges in the region. The focus was on future topics such as mobility, artificial intelligence, urbanisation and the further development of the global trading system.



FOCUS ON AFRICA

◀ New AHK office in Tanzania

The African market is gaining increasing importance for the German economy. East Africa in particular is the focus of companies and our partners. So it was a logical step for us to expand our network of AHK locations in this region to include an office in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Dr. Martin Wansleben, DIHK, and Andreas Mattfeldt, Member of the German Bundestag, opened the office together with a delegation from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi). Since its opening on 16th April 2018, we are now already represented in eight countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

As a branch of the Delegation of German Industry and Commerce in Nairobi, our office is a direct point of contact for companies and partners in the field of bilateral economic relations. Our competent on-site colleagues have local knowledge and a comprehensive network at their disposal and they actively represent the interests of the German economy in a wide range of areas - from renewable energies for nationwide power supply and resource-saving technologies in agriculture, to knowledge transfer in vocational training or practical support for market entry.

MULTIMEDIA PROJECT

AHK is "Russland-Meister" ▶

Unlike the German national football team, the German economy successfully defended its championship title in Russia in 2018. It is represented in Russia with more than 4,500 companies. The Deutsche Bundesbank reports net direct investment in the world's largest state of EUR 2 billion, one of the highest levels since the collapse of the Soviet Union. As the only foreign trade association, we have succeeded in growing strongly over the past two years with an increase in membership of 10%.

Especially in the light of the political "ice age" between Russia and the West, the sanctions and growing protectionism, the AHK board of directors decided early on to use the Football World Cup for a performance show of the German economy in Russia. For the multimedia project "Russlandmeister", the AHK Russia was able to collect more than EUR 450,000 sponsorship funds from three dozen German companies. It created a 274-page illustrated volume with company portraits, which was presented on the eve of the Football World Cup in the famous department store GUM on the Red Square with a prominent participation.

Together with Volkswagen, the AHK rallied parallel to the World Cup with a team of journalists, a photographer and a video journalist through all Football World Cup cities and distributed the reports via the AHK website, the AHK Morning Telegram and the DIHK. In addition, hundreds of thousands of people strolled through the Arbat pedestrian zone in Moscow, passing by the AHK travelling exhibition with the best "Russlandmeister" photos.

However, the innovative point is the online platform www.russlandmeister.de: In addition to a wealth of numbers and contacts, it offers exciting reports, image series, infographics and professional company videos. The platform enables companies to present themselves in a fresh way, making it an ideal point of contact not only for business partners, suppliers and partners, but also for potential customers.

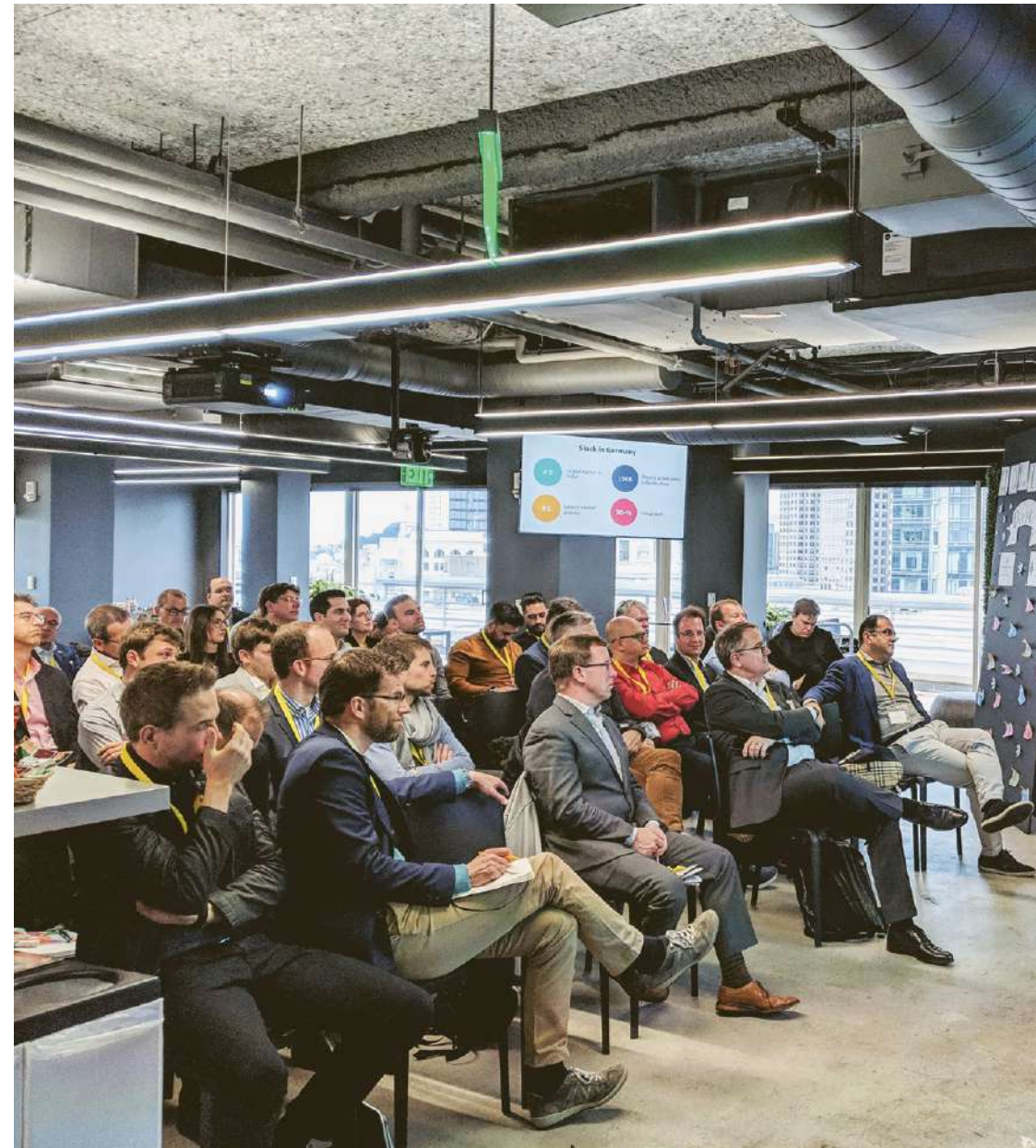


FURTHER OFFICE OPENINGS

In Sri Lanka and Cuba ▼

DIHK Chief Executive Officer Dr. Martin Wansleben opened the Delegation of German Industry and Commerce in Sri Lanka in spring with a delegation of IHK and BMWi.

In Cuba, Thomas Bareiß, Secretary of State BMWi, Reinhold Festge, Chairman of the Latin America Initiative of German Business (LAI), and Dr. Achim Dercks, DIHK Deputy Chief Executive Officer, inaugurated the Delegation office in autumn. This further strengthened our worldwide network of German Chambers of Commerce Abroad in 2018 as well.





AHK GERMAN HUB

◀ Office opening in San Francisco

Learning from one another, growing and promoting the transatlantic exchange between Germany and the USA: This is the aim of the hub in San Francisco, which unites all the important representatives of the German economy under one roof. In September 2018, DIHK Chief Executive Officer Dr. Martin Wansleben together with Thomas Bareiß, Secretary of State BMWi, opened our new office, making it the fifth location of the German-American Chamber Network (AHK USA). Our members can use the AHK German Hub in the heart of the San Francisco Financial District and benefit from the innovation culture of the Silicon Valley.

We connect German medium-sized companies with American companies and organisations in the western US. The focus of our new delegate office is on innovation topics and digital transformation. But the American west coast also has a global pioneering role in the areas of renewable energies, smart grids, e-mobility, air and space travel, and the film and entertainment industry. It has a unique innovation ecosystem consisting of a close interdisciplinary network of world-renowned leading universities, renowned research institutions and development departments of companies, a high density of venture capital investors, start-ups and accelerator programmes, as well as a unique entrepreneurial culture.

Large German companies have already invested heavily in this region to explore new technologies, develop new digital products and be part of the ecosystem. **In our new office, we offer German medium-sized companies services such as technology scouting, tailor-made delegation trips, business partner search, as well as information and networking events with corresponding focuses.** A very successful example of this is the “InnovationCamp BW”, a three-week individualised programme that introduces SMEs from Baden-Württemberg into the Silicon Valley ecosystem.

We offer a
Platform



MEMBERSHIPS

A strong network

We are a strong and reliable partner for both small and large companies. Over **50,000 members** in 2018 confirm this. With us they will find a platform to establish contacts, exchange information, participate to events and to form a common voice towards politics. In doing so, we support them and engage with political actors for the interests of the economy - committed and competent.

The right contacts are often crucial for business success. Our members benefit from our global network of knowledgeable contacts from the fields of industry, institutions and associations as well as from politics - in Germany and in more than 90 host countries.

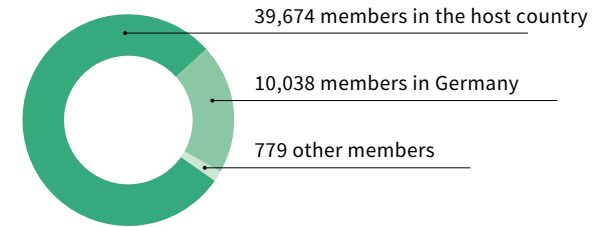
We see ourselves as an intermediary and strategic partner. Connecting people, discussing current developments, challenges and trends, discovering synergies and possibilities for cooperation - our events offer an exclusive forum for this purpose. More and more companies are taking advantage of this opportunity, because the exchange of ideas is becoming increasingly important, especially in times of increasing digital communication.

COMMITTEES

Experience as key factor for success

Time and expertise - this is what our volunteer representatives bring to the AHK work, making a vital contribution to our ability to do our job in the best way possible. They share their valuable knowledge with the main office and form a fundamental pillar in our AHK network.

Around **2,200 people** worldwide volunteer their expertise as part of AHK boards and committees and support our work in a sustainable and effective manner. They are always available to help and advise us and to help us recognise challenges, trends and market changes at an early stage and to react accordingly. This benefits us and above all the local companies.



50,000

MEMBERS WORLDWIDE

2,200

VOLUNTEERS



AHK EVENTS

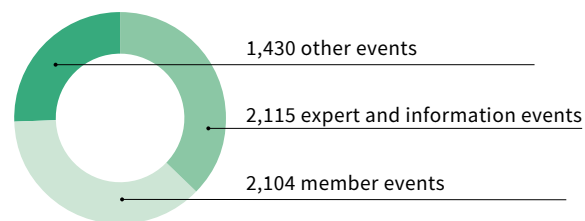
Inform, discuss, connect

AHK connects people: In **more than 5,600 events**, several customers, members and interested parties in Germany and around the world came together in 2018 to establish new contacts and cultivate old ones or to discuss about new trends with experts.

Whether professional and informational events, member and network events or high-level receptions: they offer companies an ideal platform to inform themselves about current developments and local issues. Of course, they also benefit from our wide international network: here you will find competent contact persons for individual questions as well as potential partners for your project.

2,400,000

PARTICIPANTS



5,600

EVENTS



“In the digital age the questions of our member companies change. Globalisation and digital transformation are the mega-topics of the upcoming decades. As part of Start.up! Germany Tour they will be united by the internationality as well as the innovative ideas of the start-ups.”

Wulf-Christian Ehrich

Deputy Chief Executive Officer, IHK Dortmund

START.UP! GERMANY TOUR

New ways in a strong network

No country in the world accompanies its firms on their way abroad as professionally as Germany. The Chambers of Commerce and Industry work together with the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad to provide a unique network worldwide. Regionally, we are the first point of reference for our member companies for international business. Abroad, we hand over to the AHKs, which help solving problems locally. Whether company foundation, market study or legal advice: our members are always in good hands with the AHKs!

In the digital age, however, the needs of our companies are changing. We are therefore glad to jointly explore new ways to answer such needs. Innovation happens locally, but it has global implications. Start-ups in particular occupy an important place in the economy and with innovative ideas and products they are changing entire industries at breakneck speed. Our network responds to these developments.

The Start.up! Germany Tour is an outstanding example of this: It was launched in Dortmund in 2017 together with the DIHK and the support of several AHKs, and it immediately attracted 40 start-ups from 15 countries to the Ruhr area. By 2018, there were already 50 young companies from 22 countries. The AHKs offer to foreign start-ups access to the German market and we present our member companies with innovations from all over the world. Thus, the Tour offers great added value for our local economy.

In 2018, 22 Chambers of Commerce Abroad identified start-ups for the German market via their local networks. Pitching events were held during which young companies were able to win participation in the trip to Germany. The quality of the foreign start-ups was correspondingly high. Eight IHKs (Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Essen, Duisburg, Bochum, Hagen, Gelsenkirchen) set up the one-week programme on-site and made sure that well-known corporations and medium-sized companies were visited. The DIHK assumed a coordinating role. In this way, numerous contacts were established and cooperation was stimulated. Due to its great success, the Tour 2019 will even take place twice in different locations and is thus a good example for new ways in a strong network of IHKs, AHKs and the DIHK.

We are
Service Providers



SERVICES REVENUE

Bridge between markets and cultures

Under the service brand DEinternational, we offer interested companies worldwide professional advice and support for the successful establishment and expansion of their business activities abroad.

We offer companies tailored services from a single source - from market analysis to the placement of suitable partners and the founding of a company. Together, we lead business ideas to success. Our multilingual staff help you find your way in a foreign environment, because they know the opportunities and risks in the respective countries and are familiar with the local conditions.

Thus our AHK network forms a bridge between markets and cultures. In 2018, with our **services** we achieved a **revenue of EUR 126 million** worldwide.

€ 126m

2018

WEBSITE VIEWS

All information only a click away

We are also well connected digitally: Interested companies can find information on our global AHK network as well as our services and activities on our website www.ahk.de.

An initial overview of a specific country, its market and our local offers can be found on our respective country websites. They provide information about events, projects or funding programmes as well as our contact persons on various topics.

In 2018 more than **8.1 million visitors** used our digital information services at www.ahk.de. Since summer 2018, we have also integrated a bot on our website, which answers general initial questions about the AHK network as well as questions about contact persons at the various locations. The bot thus opens up a further channel of communication with potential customers and members and at the same time relieves us of the burden of answering repetitive questions.

8,100,000

WEBSITE VIEWS



CONSULTING SERVICES

We offer first-hand information

CONSULTING DAYS IN GERMANY

The step into a new market needs to be well pondered and well prepared. Reliable information on the framework conditions, opportunities and challenges in the respective target country form the basis on which companies decide whether or not to start their journey abroad.

Our consulting days pick up the companies where they stand. Because they offer companies the opportunity to inform themselves about their target market in Germany. Consulting days are mainly offered by the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, but they may be also found during events of industry associations and national associations. Here, companies can exchange views directly with our experts from the AHKs and, if they are interested, take advantage of their support for the following steps.

In 2018, our AHK employees participated in a total of **1,340 consulting days** throughout Germany and advised interested companies on their respective markets.

INQUIRIES TO AHKS

Anyone wishing to relocate their business abroad has many questions - from the right location to tax and legal aspects. Our AHK colleagues answer numerous questions on various topics concerning bilateral economic relations on a daily basis.

What are the business potentials in the new market? How to get started? How can activities be expanded? The roughly 2,000 employees of our global AHK network processed around **319,000 inquiries** in 2018, **65%** of which coming from **small and medium-sized companies**.

FREE INITIAL CONSULTATION

What potential does my new target market offer? Is it worthwhile to join for my company? Answers to these questions are provided by our AHK experts as part of the free initial consultation.

Small and medium-sized companies, in particular, use this entry service to obtain general information about a specific market and a preliminary assessment of whether it is worth investing in the respective target country.

In 2018, our AHKs supported over **150,000 companies** as part of a free initial consultation.

150,000

FREE INITIAL CONSULTATIONS



AHK DELEGATION TRIPS

First steps into new markets

Get first-hand local know-how and establish valuable contacts: Our delegation trips abroad pave the way for interested companies to enter new target markets and offer them important information and support in setting up and expanding their business.

From initial market investigations to the search of concrete business partners - our AHK staff support a varied programme of information and network events, political appointments or company visits in the respective countries. They provide the participants with advice and assistance as well as information about opportunities and framework conditions together with local political, cultural and economic peculiarities. Conversely, we offer foreign companies business trips to Germany in order to find out about business opportunities and establish useful contacts.

IHKs, industry associations and economic development agencies in Germany support our work. Some delegation trips are even supported by public programmes, such as the BMWi SME Market Development Programme for small and medium-sized companies.

In 2018, our AHKs have welcomed more than **9,000 participants** in more than **670 delegation trips** during their first steps in new markets.

9,000

PARTICIPANTS

670

TRIPS

Focus on GTAI

What are the main tasks of the GTAI?

Germany Trade & Invest (GTAI) is the central foreign trade agency of the Federal Republic of Germany. We inform German companies about opportunities and risks on foreign markets, advise foreign investors on settling in Germany and market Germany abroad as a business location. In doing so, we attach particular importance to the internationalization of the new federal states.

GTAI and AHK form a strong network of foreign trade. How does cooperation abroad look like?

The GTAI and the AHK network form a strong alliance in the field of foreign trade promotion. All foreign locations of the GTAI are organised as office communities under the umbrella of the respective AHK. With their complementary service offerings GTAI and the AHKs support the export business of German companies. While GTAI provides economic data as well as market and industry analysis, the AHKs can offer comprehensive and individual advice on site and provide valuable contacts.

To strengthen Germany as a business location, the GTAI is implementing the umbrella campaign “Germany Works.” Can you briefly explain the idea of the campaign?

The umbrella campaign “Germany Works.” addresses Germany’s biggest strength for business decision-makers: Reliability. In Germany, foreign companies wishing to expand experience a unique interlocking of location advantages. These include a stable socio-political system, qualified specialists, excellent infrastructure, an attractive internal market and a high quality of life. With “Germany Works.” we offer all our partners a central platform whose marketing activities and tools are aimed at the target group of foreign business decision-makers.

The year 2018 was characterised by a high degree of dynamism for the global economy. Which events had the most influence on your work?

Whether Brexit, Russia sanctions or a possible escalation of the trade conflict between the US and China: many of these events have become serious risk

factors for the German economy. The trend towards protectionism has increased all over the world. We saw it as our task to inform the German economy about such topics with events, brochures and consulting services and at the same time to draw attention to opportunities in new markets. In 2018, we were also able to help almost 200 companies to invest in Germany, and with CATL from China near Erfurt, we were fortunately able to establish the largest battery cell production facility in Europe.

AHKs have supported the GTAI in attracting investors for several years. In recent years have there been any examples of settlements supported by AHK colleagues?

In the investor recruitment, there are always examples of successful cooperation. For example, AHK Finland recently brokered a Finnish company from the digital economy to the GTAI. A real success story: the company will soon open two locations in Berlin and Munich with a total of 35 planned jobs.

How do you see the future cooperation between GTAI and the AHK world?

Ten years of successful cooperation and a framework agreement between AHKs and GTAI provide a clear basis for the continuation of cooperation. The coordination of topics, priorities, joint projects as well as the current expansion of offices in Morocco and the Ivory Coast are already contributing to this.



GTAI GERMANY
TRADE & INVEST

Dr. Robert Hermann
Managing Director, Germany Trade &
Invest

INVESTORS LEADS

Strengthening the economy

As a bilateral membership organisation, we at AHK are connected with both German and foreign companies. By serving our members and clients, we have access to potential investor groups with a particular focus on foreign companies in the high-tech sector.

Together with Germany Trade and Invest (GTAI), we promote Germany as a business location and for new investors.

GTAI 2018 IN FIGURES

360

EMPLOYEES AT HOME AND
ABROAD

50

LOCATIONS IN OFFICE
COMMUNITIES WITH THE
AHKS

33

ACQUIRED BY AHKS FOREIGN
INVESTORS

190

SETTLEMENT PROJECTS
TRANSFER OF FOREIGN INVESTORS
TO THE FEDERAL STATES



MARKET DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Support for SMEs

The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy supports more than 1,200 small and medium-sized enterprises every year in their entry into foreign markets as part of the market development programme for SMEs. On business trips, companies gain valuable insights into local conditions. They receive information on the target market and first-hand business opportunities, meet important multipliers and potential business partners on site, and can thus carefully plan their possible market entry and successfully build or expand their foreign business.

The MEP is open to all economic sectors nationwide. The spectrum of topics is wide and ranges from mechanical engineering, craftsmanship and Industry 4.0 all the way to creative industries. The BMWi export initiatives for environmental technologies, civil security technologies and health care use the market development programme as a central platform for the internationalisation of their industries.



“With the BMWi Market Development Programme (MEP), we are opening the doors to foreign business for small and medium-sized enterprises. It is also currently an important platform for the implementation of new initiatives and project ideas, especially in the context of Africa. Together with our partners, we want to test and further develop new creative project formats, such as, for example, innovation development, skilled worker acquisition or purchasing. The Chambers of Commerce Abroad are highly esteemed as a competent and reliable partner.”

Assistant Secretary Dr. Andreas Nicolin

Head of the Department of Foreign Trade Promotion; Representative for Asia, Australia, New Zealand in the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy



**MITTELSTAND
GLOBAL**
MARKTERSCHLIESSUNGS-
PROGRAMM FÜR KMU

The AHKs have been a dedicated programme partner for years, building bridges to the companies and ensuring economic proximity and orientation towards needs. In addition, the AHKs provide important impulses for the development of innovative project formats and they represent an important sparring partner when it comes to further developing the programme and prioritising topics.

Due to the economic proximity, the cooperation with strong partners and the clear industry focus, the projects develop a high degree of efficiency and a very high level of participant satisfaction. Based on the results of the survey, the 2018 business trips alone generated export revenues of around EUR 125 million for the participants.

Further information can be found at: www.ixpos.de/markterschliessung



190,000

FOREIGN VISITORS

10,000

FOREIGN EXHIBITORS

VISITORS AND EXHIBITORS

A global partner

Thanks to our excellent networking with the companies in our 92 host countries, we are an important sales partner for German trade fair companies. We support them in attracting exhibitors and visitors, and through our intensive on-site work, we are constantly increasing our numbers.

In 2018, more than **10,000 foreign companies** exhibited at German trade fairs, over **190,000 foreign visitors** were acquired with our help. This benefits not only the trade fair industry, but also the German retail trade as well as the hospitality and restaurant industry.



“We need more companies that use sustainability as a competitive advantage. With the Environmental Technologies Export Initiative, we are working together with the DIHK and the network of German Chambers of Commerce Abroad to support German companies in benefiting even more from these markets.”

Nilgün Parker

Head of Unit at the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGIES EXPORT INITIATIVE

Promoting green technologies

German products and services stand out internationally for their high quality and standards - even in the markets for environmental technologies. However, the political, financial and legal framework is complex, especially for smaller applicants. Since 2016, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety has been promoting activities with its “Environmental Technologies Export Initiatives” that position innovative German companies as local partners for sustainable economic development.

We as AHK are the strong partner of the Ministry for the Environment in the target countries: from waste management in South East Europe to drinking water supply in Africa to traffic pollution in South American megacities, in 2018 nine of our AHKs again focused on current environmental problems. Together with local decision-makers and German experts, we developed ideas for bilateral projects - always with the aim of making entrepreneurial know-how usable for solving environmental problems.

In close cooperation with the DIHK and the 79 IHKs, we also connected relevant players in Germany and informed them about market opportunities. In 2018, our AHKs reached almost 1,000 participants from business, administration and science through events in Germany and abroad.

Since 2016, our AHK network in 20 countries has been working to improve environmental conditions and increase export opportunities for GreenTech “made in Germany”.

Gefördert durch:



Bundesministerium
für Umwelt, Naturschutz
und nukleare Sicherheit



aufgrund eines Beschlusses
des Deutschen Bundestages



DUAL EDUCATION

Made in Germany

As in previous years, in 2018 the topic “Dual vocational education & training abroad” was high on the agenda in many of our AHKs. According to the DIHK Autumn Survey, 45 of our AHKs now offer a broad range of training and further education service and are systematically expanding this business segment. This enables us to offer German companies in Europe, Asia, America and Africa a wide portfolio of high-quality vocational training services. The quality of our vocational training offerings, transparent organizational processes, the worldwide recognition value and global availability in the most important markets have already convinced around **2,000 companies**.

Supported by more than 150 AHK employees, these companies regularly take advantage of our vocational education and training offerings and train **approx. 8,200 apprentices** on the basis of the German model worldwide. The top training occupations include (automotive) mechatronics technicians as well as industrial and tool mechanics. The AHK-DIHK and AHK certificates awarded to around **10,000 graduates of initial and further vocational training programmes** document the promise of good dual education “Made in Germany” and contribute to raise awareness of the “AHK Dual Education” brand.

We advocate for the Economy



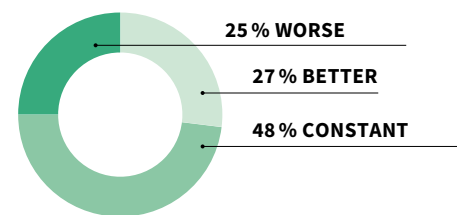
Seismograph for economic developments

The AHK World Business Outlook is the flagship for our AHK network. No other organisation can better present the global perspectives and challenges for internationally active German companies.

With our survey, we can point to challenges such as increasing trade barriers or current political developments. This not only interests the political Berlin, but it is also a building block for the positioning of the German economy worldwide. Thanks to the survey conducted by our AHKs, in 2018 we were able to evaluate around 8,500 responses from German companies, branches and subsidiaries, as well as companies with a close connection to Germany.

“If you look at the current issues of trade policy, you can already be dizzy”, said DIHK President Eric Schweitzer, as he presented the survey results together with DIHK Foreign Trade Chief Volker Treier in Berlin. At present, the global agenda is determined in particular by the US trade policy and the US trade dispute with China. Accordingly, the global economy has lost considerable momentum. “The impact on the German economy is clear to me”, warned the DIHK President.

Our AHK World Business Outlook shows that the global economic expectations of German companies abroad declined significantly in 2018. Half of the companies worldwide consider the economic policy framework to pose the greatest risk to foreign business. More than a quarter fear disadvantages due to trade barriers.



ASSESSMENT OF THE MEDIUM-TERM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORLDWIDE

CONTACTS ON SITE

Always well connected

Good contacts are a decisive factor when entering a market and expanding companies abroad. Our global network makes us the central contact point for bilateral economic relations in Germany and in the world, as it enables us to bring members and customers together with the right contacts and thus actively support their business projects.

We have competent and high-ranking contacts from business, politics and administration, institutions for investment and foreign trade promotion as well as chambers and associations, educational institutions and trade fairs - in the host countries and in Germany. Thanks to our excellent network, we can learn about developments and projects at an early stage and can inform and position German companies. This is how we ensure that corporate interests are successfully represented in the fields of politics and administration. Companies as well as representatives from politics value us as a competent partner and knowledge provider.



96,000

CONTACTS

SUCCESSFUL TOGETHER

AHK as an important partner

Our unique AHK-IHK-DIHK network is valued in our partner countries worldwide. This can be seen above all in the stemming of major economic policy initiatives: an example of this is the agreement signed in 2018 between the DIHK and the Chinese Ministry of Commerce to carry out the 1st China International Import Exhibition (CIIE) in Shanghai. Our delegation in Shanghai designed the official participation of Germany as a partner country and was responsible for its implementation. With great success: the German economy presented itself on 12,000 square metres to over 600,000 visitors.

Other highlights included the establishment of the "German-Qatari Joint Task Force for Trade and Investment" in the presence of German Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel and the Emir of Qatar in September 2018, as well as the agreement signed in October 2018 with the US State of New Jersey on cooperation in the field of vocational education and training.

AHK DELEGATION TRIPS

A link between politics and business

Over the decades, we have established ourselves as an important point of contact for bilateral relations between Germany and our host countries. German delegations with representatives from politics and business therefore frequently consult us on economic and politico-economic issues and visit us at our numerous AHK locations to find out about business opportunities.

We work closely together with the other German foreign representative offices abroad: We offer briefings as well as background information on business topics and connect the delegation participants with local representatives from the fields of politics and business. At the same time, we voice the concerns of business and promote political support.

In 2018, we welcomed around **670 delegations** at our AHK sites, with a total of around 9,200 participants worldwide.

670

DELEGATIONS



125 YEARS AHK

The German Chambers of Commerce Abroad: our economic history

1894

Foundation of the first German Chamber of Commerce Abroad in Brussels: "Chambre de Commerce Belgo-Allemande". Besides the USA, Germany, Great Britain and France, Belgium is one of the major economic powers.

1900

First founding wave of AHKs: German retailers are looking for a trusting network abroad and are opening new Chambers in neighbouring European countries, the Caribbean, as well as in Central and South America.

Up to 1916

1929

Reconstruction of broken trade relationships: At the end of the Weimar Republic, AHKs were founded in countries that were enemies of Germany during the First World War, such as Italy and Greece.

1949

World Economic Crisis and Second World War: International trade collapses again and German economic relations come to a standstill. Most AHKs cease their activities.

Up to 1945

Up to 1973

"Wirtschaftswunder" in the West and AHK founding wave: German products are in demand, trade with foreign countries is steadily increasing. The Federal Government is stepping up financial support for AHKs.



World market leader, export world champion, hidden champions: Above all, German companies are so successful because their products and services are in demand worldwide. The German Chambers of Commerce Abroad help to turn a national success into an international success. We build bridges, create accesses, arrange contacts and solve problems. We are #PartnersWorldwide. Regardless of whether a company is about to go abroad or it has been there for decades.

Up to 1989/90

Go East: Fall of the Iron Curtain and German reunification. Opening of the AHK Poland as the first Chamber of Commerce Abroad in a previously planned economy.

Altogether there are today 140 offices in 92 countries worldwide. This has been our success story for 125 years.

2000

Active trading despite economic crisis: Trade with the Eastern bloc countries, where trade promotion offices have been set up at embassies instead of Chambers of Commerce since the 1960s, is experiencing a particular growth.

Wide network in a globalised world: There are 140 German Chambers of Commerce Abroad in 92 countries with around 50,000 memberships.

Starting in 1981

Up to 2019

More about the history of the AHK network can be found at:

www.125jahre.ahk.de

Outlook

WE STRENGTHEN AFRICA

Africa will become more important for our organisation in the coming years. A stronger presence in the world's second largest continent is necessary not only politically, but also from an economic point of view. As a logical step, two new delegations will be opened in Africa: Ethiopia and Côte d'Ivoire are characterised by a high level of economic dynamism and convince with high growth rates. With 16 locations on the African continent it will be even more valid in the future: we are the strong partner in Africa.

WE CONNECT THE NETWORK

Our AHK network is multi-layered, talented, dynamic, powerful, dedicated and global. Through a new internal communication platform we want to promote the exchange, learn from the experiences and successes of our colleagues, share resources and bring our network closer together. This new digital home will be the new intranet of the organisation - our AHK Connect

WE ARE GOING DIGITAL

Digital transformation offers opportunities and risks for individuals, organisations and societies. It will also affect our AHK network and change our work. In order to face these new conditions, the "AHK Digital" project was launched with the support of the BMWi - with the aim of making our organisation more sustainable. The project evaluates the need for digital transformation of the AHK network worldwide and, together with our colleagues, it develops concrete recommendations for action. Here, our customers and members get more attention: as your partner for growth worldwide, we will continue to offer you modern, professional and market-driven services in the future.



“Next year, the opportunities and, at the same time, the challenges for our network will not diminish. However, we are happy to face these challenges and with an increase in our commitment in Africa, a well-founded AHK digital strategy and the introduction of our new global communication platform AHK Connect, we want to take the right and necessary steps to remain your #PartnersWorldwide in the future.”

Benjamin Leipold

Managing Director, German Chambers of Commerce Abroad

Imprint

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NOTE

If this publication refers to employees, etc., this naturally also refers to employees of both genders. The use of only one gender was chosen for better readability and is not meant to be discriminatory.



PartnersWorldwide

The German Chambers of Commerce Abroad (AHKs) offer companies and politicians - both in Germany and in the host countries - access to a unique, professional and global network. Our work serves one goal: a dynamic, successful and open German foreign trade, in the interests of our customers and members.

www.ahk.de

As of: 2019