

Chairman's Report for 2022 MV/AGM on 12.06.2023

Dear Members,

Allow me again to address you in English. 2022 was an extraordinary year in many ways:

On the **European continent** we experienced war for the first time in decades; a huge energy crisis; galloping inflation and surging interest rates; slumping bond and equity markets.

In **Britain** there was a political crisis, with three PMs in just over three months; and further crises in Northern Ireland, the UK government debt market, the NHS and the cost of living; on top of that, since mid-2022 the country has been suffering from disruptive rail, bus, teachers', junior doctors', nurses', ambulance drivers' and civil service strikes.

For the **British Royal Family** a wonderful Platinum Jubilee from February to June (with excellent Queen's Birthday Parties in Berlin, Hochheim am Main and Heidelberg) was followed only three months later by the sad passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II. Into 2023, HM King Charles III impressed on his State Visit to Germany in late March. And, despite internal problems (Harry & Meghan), questions raised by British Republicans and some Commonwealth leaders (and typically poor British weather!) his coronation took place successfully and with due pomp, circumstance and impressive pageantry in May.

In **Germany** an unprecedented SPD/Green/FDP coalition government started quite well (and performed better than several other European administrations - notably that of the UK) but has since run into big problems around the war in Ukraine, as well as energy and fiscal policy

What about the **DBG Rhein-Main**? All in all we have come through Covid, the energy crisis and inflation/cost of living worries pretty well: membership has stayed more or less stable, our financial situation remains solid and we have a full schedule of events reaching into 2024.

The majority of our 2022 events again took place online, with good attendance not only from Frankfurt and region, but also from other DBG centres, and occasionally from overseas. Since mid-2022 we have partially reverted to physical/hybrid events, but continue to offer online talks. These are often more convenient for speakers and audience alike, besides being cost-effective. Also, physical attendance at our two hybrid events so far in 2023 has, frankly, been a bit disappointing (maybe an after-effect of Covid?)

Brexit

A brief word on Brexit:

Many Brexiteers continue to pretend that Britain's current economic problems are more or less unrelated to Brexit. However, it is clear to most of the rest of us that the decline in Britain's GDP and exports since 2019 has a great deal to do with Brexit.

British SMEs have been particularly hard hit and the London City, although still a very powerful financial centre, continues to lose business to the EU. A further alarming trend is that many large companies with main listings on the London Stock Exchange are contemplating a move to exchanges in the US. Brexit also continues to cast its shadow over many other areas including Health, Education, Culture and Tourism.

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Unlike his forerunner Boris Johnson, PM Rishi Sunak is now trying to re-establish stable political and trade relations with the EU. The recent “Windsor Framework” agreement on Northern Ireland is an important step in this direction.

Covid-19

A very brief word on Covid-19:

For most of 2022 the pandemic remained a global problem, albeit a less serious one than in 2021. Into 2023, most countries have now fully dismantled their anti-Covid arrangements. A recent new outbreak in China (with maybe as many as 65m new cases per week by June?) is alarming but mostly regarded as a regional phenomenon, unlikely to cause big new problems elsewhere.

DBG R-M events in 2022

The majority of our 2022 events again took place online. These were well attended not only from Frankfurt and region, but also from other DBG centres, and occasionally from overseas. Since mid-2022 we have partially reverted to physical/hybrid events. We continue to offer online talks as these are often more convenient for speakers and audience alike, besides being cost effective. Also, physical attendance at our hybrid events so far in 2023 has, frankly, been a bit disappointing (possibly an after effect of Covid?).

- 27.01.22: “A sovereign currency? Britain and European monetary policy in the 1980s” by Juliana Clegg, the first in our new series “Junior talks at DBG R-M”
- 24.02.22: “Die Macht der Bilder” (especially those of HM Queen Elizabeth II) by Dr Ulrike Grunewald
- 24.03.22: “Today marks the day in Great Britain that millions of neighbours became foreigners” by Daniel Trilling
- 21.04.22: “Levelling up British Cities – Brave New World or Old Wine in New Bottles?” by Andrew Carter, in cooperation with the Urban Future forum in Frankfurt
- 19.05.22: “The United Kingdom? What next for Scotland and Northern Ireland?” by Colin Munro (hybrid event)
- 23.06.22: “Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg & Gotha as Collector, Educator & Cultural Transferant” by Dr. Jana Riedel
- 15.09.22: “What we really write about when we write about wolves: are animals in literature facing extinction?” by Piers Torday
- 20.10.22: “Election & Eviction of Party Leaders in the UK” by Dr. Johannes Jäger
- 24.11.22: “After Capitalism” by Sir John Kay (hybrid event).

In addition, DBG Berlin invited us to attend, inter alia, the following online events in 2022 and early 2023:

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- 02.02.22: “Elizabeth II. – Das Leben der Queen” by Thomas Kielinger, OBE
- 28.02.22: “In 50 years’ time what will be seen as more remarkable? That the UK joined in 1973 or that it left in 2019?” by Gisela Baroness Stuart of Edgbaston.
- 02.08.22: “Großbritannien in der Post-Brexit-Ära – Ein Inselstaat auf Abwegen?”: Discussion by David McAllister, Dr. Ulrich Hoppe & Thomas Matussek
- 07.11.22: “Lessons from a Lifetime in Diplomacy” by Lord Simon McDonald
- 21.09.22: “Zoll oder kein Zoll?” by Rainald Vobbe, Tax Adviser
- 27.03.23: Discussion around the State Visit to Germany by HM Charles III, with Miguel Berger, German Ambassador to the UK, and Peter Barnes, President, BGA London
- 28.03.23: Further discussion on the subject above, with Claud Budelmann, OBE, Annette Dittert, ARD London & Thomas Matussek.

DBG R-M events events in 2023

- 26.01.23 via Zoom: Dr. Ellie Woodacre on “The Role of Regnant Queens in Shaping Britain’s Monarchy”
- 28.02.23 in cooperation with and at the Freies Deutsches Hochstift: Dr. Charlotte Lee on „Nim den Schwung: Lyrik und Bewegung bei Klopstock, Hölderlin und Rilke“
- 23.03.23 at the Frankfurter PresseClub and via Zoom: Sinclair McKay, best-selling author of “Berlin”, “Dresden” and “Bletchley Park” on “Dresden: The Light and the Darkness”
- 28.03.23 in cooperation with the Hermes Romantikmuseum in Marbach and at the Freies Deutsches Hochstift: Shakespeare First Folio Anniversary Lecture by Prof. Tobias Döring
- 27.04.23 via Zoom: Dr. Stephen Harris “On plants”
- 25.05.23 at the Frankfurter PresseClub and via Zoom: Dr. Catherine Mason on “German literature taught at British schools”
- 29.06.23 via Zoom: Harry Cliff on “In Search of the Origins of Matter”
- 21.09.23 at the Frankfurter PresseClub and via Zoom: Prof Rüdiger Görner on “Stefan Zweig – The Reluctant Anglophile”
- 26.10.23 at the Frankfurter PresseClub (tbc): Adrian Goldberg on a topic regarding either the British press or the Kindertransport of German-Jewish children to the UK before WWII
- 23.11.23 at the Frankfurter PresseClub and via Zoom: Angela Findley on “In My Grandfather’s Shadow”.

Also planned are:

- 27.06.23 at the Frankfurter Literaturhaus, at the invitation of the British Honorary Consul, a celebration of HM King Charles III’s Coronation and Official Birthday (Members only)
- 28.06.23 at Schloss Kronberg a performance of Shakespeare’s “Romeo & Juliet” by TNT Theatre London (Members only)

In the second half of 2022, by way of delayed in-person celebration of DBG R-M’s 70th Anniversary in 2021, we were hoping to arrange a proper get-together outside in nice weather. Various events conspired against us last year. Let’s see what we can do for our Members this year....

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Huge thanks again this year to Michael Gehrig for all the interesting speakers he has found for us and for all the associated organisational work!

Dagmar Westberg-Preis

The 2022 Dagmar Westberg-Preis was awarded to Dr. Ulrike Kern, who will use the money to part-fund her prestigious research into “Die britische Kunstwelt und der Kontinent. Kulturelle Transfers der frühen Neuzeit” in the UK in 2023.

Membership

We currently have three Institutional Members: Mazars, AK Yarm/Kulturkreis Schwalbach and Greenhill Europe & Co. KG. Institutional Membership (corporate/profit-based) costs EUR 1,000 p.a., enables 10 named individuals from the institution concerned to attend all DBG R-M events, provides good access to Königswinter Conferences (see below) and offers the opportunity to work on joint events with the DBG and our network. Last year we introduced flexible arrangements for cultural institutions. We continue to look for additional institutional candidates in both categories and would appreciate any suggestions you may have. Individual Members now total about 200, membership having remained reasonably stable in 2022. In addition, we maintain a Members & Friends List of about 600 people; we still need to convert more Friends to Members, as well as to identify and interest new candidates. As I have said before, Members are our life blood! Thank you all very much for your continued support!

Board of Directors

- Eva Hoßdorf resigned from the Board at the AGM/MV on 16.05.22.
- All members of the Board as at 01.01.2023 have agreed to stand for election for a further two years at today's AGM/MV.

Königswinter Conferences in 2022 & 2023

- The 22nd Economic Conference took place in January 2022
- The Young Conference was held in Berlin 20-24.06.22
- The Main Conference was held in London in December 2022 (see below)
- The Defence conference took place 16-17.03.23 in Berlin
- The Young Conference will be held 21-25.07.23 in Berlin
- The Main Conference will take place 14-16.09.23 in Neuhardenberg
- The Economic Conference is planned for the 2nd half 2023 in the UK.

The Königswinter Conferences are undoubtedly the crowning achievement of the DBG. The 2022 Main Conference was due to take place over two days in September in Birmingham, but was postponed out of respect for HM Queen Elizabeth II, who passed away the previous week. Having

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already booked my journey I went to Birmingham nevertheless. I grew up in the West Midlands, so this was a trip down Memory Lane after many years away. Birmingham is, of course, where the annual Frankfurt Christmas Market takes place, Birmingham being Frankfurt's twin city in the UK. The conference eventually took place in an action-packed day in December 2022 in London. The key topics in a series of talks and panel sessions were Security, Energy and the Retreat from Globalisation. Brexit was inevitably mentioned, but "en passant", as something to be managed going forward rather than as a cause for perpetual debate and mourning. There were numerous influential individuals in the audience. My highlight: Außenministerin Baerbock, stranded at Dublin Airport and thus unable to join us, took the trouble to record a very personal video message of thanks to, and support for the DBG.

DBG-Netzwerktreffen

DBG Berlin organised an excellent physical "Netzwerktreffen" over two days in May at the Auswärtiges Amt in Berlin. This was attended, inter alia, by Peter Barnes, Chairman of the British German Association in London, several leading officers of the "British in Germany" group, Ilka Hartmann, MD, BCCG Berlin, the designated new German Ambassador to Britain, Miguel Berger, as well as representatives from all of the regional DBG societies. It was a very useful and enjoyable forum to share ideas towards a successful future for the whole DBG group. There was a follow-up "Netzwerktreffen" online on 22.11.22.

Cooperation with other organisations and societies

During 2022 we maintained our cooperation with:

- Young Königswinter Alumni, BCCG, Oxbridge Stammtisch, the British German Association, London, and the Frankfurter Wirtschaftsbotschafter
- We also continued to support the International Stammtisch
- We kept up our dialogue with the Goethe-Universität, in connection with the Dagmar Westberg-Preis, and on cooperation with universities in the UK (Birmingham and London). We hope to start holding joint events on the Campus there during the second half of this year
- And we remain in discussion on cooperation with the Goethe and Gude Clubs at the Goethe-Universität.

Overall, despite a tricky environment, 2022 was a better than satisfactory year for DBG R-M. 2023 has started quite well. Let's hope that the second half continues in this vein.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Jefcoat
Chairman
(01.06.23)

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