

## DBG R-M MV report by NJ on 11.12.2024

- Geopolitics: as you know all too well, Russia invaded Ukraine in Feb 2022; this was the start of a new phase of European geopolitics, which continued into 2023 and intensified on a global scale in 2024 with the horrific attack by Hamas on Israel on 07.10.23, followed by Israel's brutal retaliatory invasion of Gaza, and, very recently, the fall of Assad's regime in Syria.  
As a result, 2023 was a year of crisis, esp in the UK but also throughout the EU, with ballooning energy prices, surging inflation and interest rates and painful cost of living increases; thankfully, these problems have become a bit less acute throughout 2024 but the situation remains fragile and 2025 will again be a challenging year.  
In Europe it does, indeed, feel like a Zeitenwende after 70 years of peace and unprecedented prosperity. Longer term, I wonder where we are heading: gradually back towards pre-2022 conditions or into a darker age. In any case, I hope that benign AI (KI) and other technological advances will help us overcome some of the many problems confronting us.
- And now a few words about the British Royal Family: you will recall that QE II died at 96 on 08.09.2022, whereupon KC III, aged 74, acceded to the throne. He and Camilla were crowned King and Queen on 06.05.2023 at Westminster Abbey. We celebrated both the Coronation and the King's Official Birthday at a party arranged, with our support, by the British Hon Con Dr. Andreas Fabritius at the Literaturhaus, Frankfurt on 27.06.23.  
In the meantime both King Charles and Queen Camilla visited Germany in late March 2023, testifying to the close friendship between the United Kingdom and Germany. KC III addressed the Bundestag on 30.03.2023, partly in German.  
On a less positive note, Buckingham Palace announced on 05.02.24 that KC III had been diagnosed with cancer. And the Princess of Wales Catherine (Kate) announced her own cancer diagnosis in March 2024.
- Königswinter conferences:
  - Defence 16-17.03.23 in Berlin
  - Young 21-25.07.23 in Berlin
  - Main 14-16.09.23 in Neuhardenberg
  - Defence H2 2023 in UK – if it actually took place
- Netzwerktreffen Berlin: following the excellent physical meeting at the Auswärtiges Amt in Berlin in May 2022, the 2023 Netzwerktreffen was held via Zoom on 07.12.2023. As usual, this was a constructive forum for sharing ideas among the various "chapters" of the DBG, with a view to securing a successful future for the whole group. One of the key topics was a possible new Mission Statement; after much discussion DBG Berlin proposed a longer form "Erklärung" rather than a pithy short statement; DBG Rhein-Main took the opportunity to sign up to this Erklärung.
- Cooperation with other societies & clubs:
  - In 2023 we continued to work with the BCCG, the Oxbridge Stammtisch, the Young Königswinter Alumni, the British German Association in London, and the Frankfurter Wirtschaftsbotschafter
  - We also continued to support the International Stammtisch
  - We kept up our dialogue with the Goethe-Universität, especially in connection with the Dagmar Westberg-Universitätspreis, but also on cooperation with universities in the UK

(Birmingham and London), and on possible joint events on the Campus Westend. But, sadly, there was little real progress here during 2023.

Working with the Goethe-Universität we did, however, identify a worthy recipient of the Dagmar Westberg-Universitätspreis.

The 2023 prize was awarded on 21.03.24 to James Rawlings for his outstanding piece of work for his Master's Degree: "British Heritage in JD Wetherspoon. A Construction of Englishness", which (to put it very briefly) is an analysis of the conservative pro-Brexit "phenomenon". (JD Wetherspoon is a pub company in UK & Ireland owned by Tim Martin, an outspoken supporter of Brexit)

- Membership: counting partner memberships as „2“we continued to number about 200 Members in 2023 and, indeed, into 2024. However, the current membership trend is one of slow decline, for demographic and other reasons. This is a cause for concern regarding the long-term future of the DBG Rhein-Main.
- Your Board of Directors: remained unchanged at the AGM (MV) in 2023. The same team will be in place until the AGM (MV) in 2025. Let me say a few words about that in a minute.
- And now a brief observation about developments since 2023 and a quick look into 2025:

In 2024: we again, thanks to MG, enjoyed a full events calendar; however, attendance was sometimes disappointing, esp by the physical side of our hybrid audiences; indeed, we were obliged to postpone indefinitely our planned event in Oct. On the other hand, I would like to highlight two outstanding events: Nigel Longley's talk on the Henley Royal Regatta in early Sept at "Germania", followed by a guided tour of the rowing club and an informal picnic in its gardens (a pity not more Members attended this!); and the excellent performance "Born to be Wild(-e)" by Andreas Sturm at the FPC in Nov (which many Members did attend in person).

As for 2025: we are looking ahead to a year of change at your Board of Directors, which will also impact the DBG Rhein-Main's organisation in general. I prefer not to go into details at this stage but we will certainly need your ongoing support, and, more specifically, your help in identifying possible new (younger) Board Members and in encouraging other people in your respective circles (especially youngsters) to join the DBG Rhein-Main.

Before moving on to the "Bericht des Schatzmeisters" let us have a quick look together at our Events in 2023. MG again came up with an impressive group of speakers and performers – many thanks, Michael!

- Slide 1
- Slide 2

That's it for now from me. Vielen Dank für Ihre/Eure Aufmerksamkeit! Ich gebe das Wort an Schatzmeister Hendrik Schmidt weiter.