

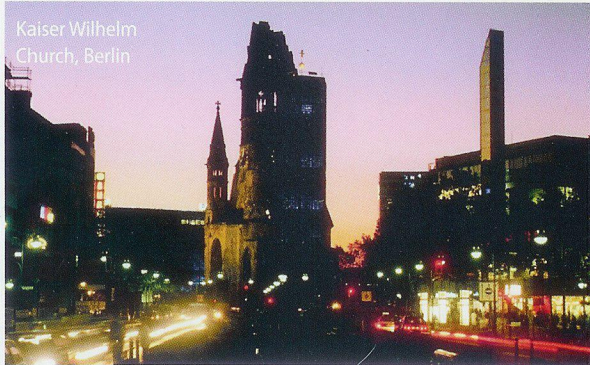
A long-standing partner

JUST over 700 years after William Wallace wrote to German merchants encouraging trade between the two nations following the defeat of the English at Stirling Bridge, Germany is firmly established as Scotland's biggest Eurozone trading partner and second only to the US globally.

Companies like the Royal Bank of Scotland and Standard Life have built up major operations there and Germany is also a significant investor in Scotland with an estimated 130 companies with interests here.

As many as 40,000 Germans currently live in Scotland with around 300,000 tourists visiting each year. Such close ties were a factor which prompted Anna White, founder of online retailer **ScotlandShop.net** to invest in a new German-focused operation.

"The Germans are very keen on high quality goods, love Scotland and are also increasingly big internet shoppers so it



Kaiser Wilhelm Church, Berlin

was an obvious location for us to try and establish ourselves in."

Nele Andersch, Edinburgh-based secretary of Scottish arm of the **German-British Chamber of**

There is a lot to consider if you are serious about doing business in Germany

Commerce, argues that proper preparation and having the resources available are crucial for firms looking to trade with Germany.

"There is a lot to consider if you are serious about doing business there – even down to making sure

Nele Andersch, German-British Chamber of Commerce

← FACTFILE: Germany

Population: 82 million
GDP per head: £23,158
Major import sectors: Healthcare products; aerospace; chemicals; creative industries

you write invoices with a comma in the amount instead of a full stop.

"German business people also tend to expect a lot of communication with the companies they are dealing with and to be kept up-to-date with what is happening all the time," says Andersch.

David Scrimgeour, a Scottish lawyer who has lived in Germany for 17 years and has helped many UK companies establish themselves there, believes there is a false perception that it is a difficult market to break into.

"It is tough because it is very competitive but it is almost a no-fail market if you have something they want and go in there with the right strategy and price. You can also see what the risks are far more easily than you could somewhere like China or India." ■

Danish reliance on foreign trade could be good news for Scots firms

← FACTFILE: Denmark

Population: 5.4 million
GDP per head: £21,047
Major import sectors: Financial/legal services; ICT; life sciences

A QUICK glance at Denmark's economic statistics demonstrate why it is often held up by politicians as the small country Scotland should aspire to be.

With an economic growth rate more than twice that of the EU average, the Danes now enjoy the continent's third highest standard of living.

Heavily reliant on foreign trade, imports and exports account for around a third of Denmark's GDP.

Around 65 per cent of trade is within the EU and after Germany

and Sweden the UK is its biggest trading partner.

In terms of Scottish export destinations it also punches above its weight. Although the smallest of the Nordic countries, £315m of Scottish goods and services went to Denmark from Scotland in 2006 compared to £405m for Sweden which has almost twice the population.

According to John Donald, a former marketing director at Wolfson Microelectronics with experience of trading in Den-

mark, Scottish firms looking to export there have a head-start over European competitors.

"Danish businesses see the UK as we see the US and regard it as the big market to trade with," explains Donald.

English is so widely spoken that companies looking to trade there may not even have to produce separate marketing materials and brochures.

Thomas Clemens Jensen, of **Invest in Denmark**, believes there is significant potential for

companies from both nations to work together.

"Scotland has a very strong reputation in life sciences and we are trying to encourage more collaboration with companies from Denmark," says Jensen.

Denmark's renewable energy industry has also developed close alliances with companies in Scotland.

"The energy sector as a whole is one we are focusing on to strengthen links between the UK and Denmark," adds Jensen. ■