



AHK Annual Report 2021

**The German Chambers of Commerce Abroad.
Your Partner Worldwide.**



Supported by:



on the basis of a decision
by the German Bundestag

Contents

- 1 Foreword
- 2 Highlights 2021
- 8 AHKs offer a platform
- 12 AHKs are service providers
- 24 AHKs represent the interests of the business community
- 28 Outlook
- 30 Our locations
- 33 Imprint

SINCE
1894

OVER

46,000
MEMBERSHIPS

150
LOCATIONS

92 COUNTRIES

128 years

AHK Annual Report 2021

Foreword

How much we have firmly assumed for many years that there is such a thing as a strong international economic bond – even beyond the ups and downs of political moods and tensions! The dramatic war in Ukraine has taught us otherwise. Such a war shatters too much, in doubt everything – including economic ties. The “black swan” of torn economic relations politics is now entering our risk management systems, our thinking and our actions. The pandemic is added: when the world holds its breath and regional lockdowns interrupt supply chains – currently being observed with the example of China – then the “accumulation risk” of too much one-sided dependency on individual supplier countries or customers becomes apparent. This is also highly relevant for companies beyond political issues, i.e. purely from a business perspective. After all, being a reliable supplier, having one’s own costs and thus prices under control are not optional virtues, but are already part of the duty of market- and customer-oriented behaviour. The diversification of supply chains is therefore now the order of the day in order to reduce excessive one-sided dependencies on suppliers and/or customers to a level that can still be dealt with if the worst comes to the worst – a particular challenge, especially for SMEs. Especially as energy insecurity in Germany and Europe, a global economic downturn and soaring prices are added. If the German Chambers of Commerce Abroad did not exist, we would establish them now at the latest: as a reliable local partner and bridgehead, as experts on local culture, language and business and, last but not least, as a lively network that is worth joining. The good thing is: they already exist. They have experience and prove their skills again and again – especially in view of the current challenges. It is now important to realign foreign business under changed circumstances. The AHKs have already done an outstanding job in this regard in 2021. And entrepreneurs will be able to rely on these services in the future as well!



A handwritten signature in blue ink.

Peter Adrian
DIHK President

The world of international trade is suffering badly due to the war in Europe and the COVID-19 pandemic, and the German economy also feeling the full force of this. We are highly dependent on specific sales markets, and our imports of fossil fuels and other raw materials have long been driven by a desire to push prices down as far as possible. This legacy is severely restricting our scope for action.

In these times of escalating crises, we need to reposition our trade policy more than ever. We must create the necessary policy environment to put German and European foreign trade on a broader footing, and reduce our dependence on single countries by working more closely together with many nations. We need to further develop the principle of open markets by strengthening fair competition and pressing ahead with an ecological social market economy that functions in the interest of the people and helps to mitigate climate change.

To this end, we need not only new laws, agreements and political declarations of intent, but also solid structures and experienced partners around the world. The global network of German Chambers of Commerce Abroad has the specialist and local expertise needed to make a decisive contribution through its strong networks on the ground. I want to thank the members of the boards of our Chambers of Commerce Abroad, working as they do on an honorary basis, and the employees for keeping up their efforts throughout the pandemic and for conceptualising and shaping the necessary changes.

A handwritten signature in blue ink.

Dr Robert Habeck
Federal Minister for Economic Affairs
and Climate Action



Highlights 2021

FE:START

AHK
SUMMIT
2021

AHK SUMMIT 2021

◀ Ready for the RE:START

How has the AHK network used the pandemic to develop innovative offers for companies and make already popular services even more attractive? How can the AHKs support companies – especially SMEs – to increasingly restart their international business?

These topics were discussed at the virtual AHK Summit 2021 from 2 to 11 November 2021.

During the six-day event, representatives of the IHKs and AHKs, companies, associations and politicians came together with the DIHK to discuss current foreign trade issues. The World Economic Day on 4 November 2021 focused on the growing pressure on international supply chains.

In total, the AHK Summit 2021 recorded over 1,400 participations.



THE AHK NETWORK IS ALSO GROWING IN THE USA

Delegation of German Industry and Commerce opened in Washington DC

In January 2021, the Delegation of German Industry and Commerce in Washington, DC (DGIC) opened its doors. As the fifth office of the AHK USA – alongside Atlanta, Chicago, New York and San Francisco – the new Delegation in the US capital is the mouthpiece for German companies. It establishes contacts between German companies and political decision-makers in the US government and Congress, and speaks for German business and its more than 5,500 subsidiaries in the US.

The newly formed delegation highlights the diverse investment opportunities for German companies in the Washington metropolitan area.

The region is especially a centre for biomedicine and life sciences, cybersecurity, technology start-ups and public procurement.

The official opening ceremony of the Delegation was attended by the German Ambassador to the USA, Dr Emily Haber, DIHK President Peter Adrian, Member of the DIHK Executive Board, Dr Volker Treier, and the Head of Division of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, Dr Christian Storost. With the new US administration, the establishment of the Delegation came at an important time to promote and deepen transatlantic economic relations.



4TH GERMAN-UKRAINIAN ECONOMIC FORUM

◀ Prime Ministerial delegation visits the Haus der Deutschen Wirtschaft

Former German Chancellor Dr Angela Merkel, Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal and then DIHK President Dr Eric Schweitzer opened the 4th German-Ukrainian Business Forum on 19 March 2021, which was held predominantly digitally due to corona. One year after Prime Minister Shmyhal's government took office, the forum focused on the topics of digitalisation and industry, the energy sector, agriculture and the food industry, as well as logistics and infrastructure. In a total of four high-profile discussion rounds, representatives from both countries spoke about current opportunities and challenges for German companies in these sectors.

EXPO 2020 IN DUBAI

Trip to Dubai on the occasion of the German Nation's Day ▶

On 29 November 2021, the official German Nation's Day took place as part of EXPO 2020 Dubai. One day later, Northern Africa / Middle East Initiative of German Business (NMI) organised the 1st NMI Gulf Future Conference together with the AHK UAE.

The conference was aimed at decision-makers from business and politics from Germany and the Gulf region. The topics ranged from trade policy to future developments in production and consumption to geostrategic issues. The conference was chaired by Ralf Wintergerst, NMI Chairman and Chairman of the Board and Group CEO of Giesecke+Devrient.





GERMAN-DUTCH HYDROGEN SYMPOSIUM

◀ Royal visit to the Haus der Deutschen Wirtschaft

As part of a state visit, King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima of the Netherlands attended the hybrid German-Dutch Hydrogen Symposium at the Haus der Deutschen Wirtschaft on 6 July 2021. Together with the Federal Minister of Economic Affairs and Energy, DIHK President Peter Adrian and BDI President Siegfried Russwurm received the royal couple. In interesting panel discussions and pitches, companies presented German-Dutch projects on various aspects of hydrogen production – a virtual reality contribution was also included.

SAFRI EVENT

G20 Investment Summit in Berlin ▶

At the suggestion of the Federal Chancellery, the “G20 Investment Summit – German Business and the CwA Countries” took place on 27 August 2021. The G20 Compact with Africa (CwA) was initiated under the German G20 Presidency to promote private investment in Africa, including infrastructure projects. Around 5,000 participants attended this hybrid conference. Here, as at the dozen or so side events in the run-up to the summit, they took advantage of the opportunity to obtain first-hand information on business opportunities and to arrange personal talks with African heads of state and ministers. The great success of the summit in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic once again shows the great and growing interest of German business in sustainable business on our neighbouring continent.



“GERMANY WORKS. – GLOBAL AGIEREN, VORWÄRTS DENKEN”

Foreign Trade Days 2021 ►

The COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown imposed to contain it in the winter of 2020/21 have hit the German economy hard. To help German companies get back on track for success in their foreign business, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) initiated the first digital BMWi Foreign Trade Days with the GTAI and numerous partner organisations. The event kicked off on 19 April with a high-level political launch event with Federal Minister of Economics Peter Altmaier and DIHK President Peter Adrian.

As part of the BMWi Foreign Trade Days, the DIHK, together with the AHKs, held twelve specialist and regional partner forums with over 2,000 participants. In addition, thirteen companies and twelve AHKs shared insights on their cooperation in opening up new international markets as part of the “Business Talks”.

**Außenwirt-
schaftstage 2021**
19. – 23. April



**Global agieren,
vorwärts denken**



100 YEARS AHK ITALY

◄ 15th German-Italian Business Forum on Lake Como

In 2021, the German-Italian Chamber of Commerce (AHK Italy) turned 100 years old. This special anniversary was celebrated at the 15th German-Italian Business Forum on 14 September 2021 at the Villa Erba Congress Centre in Cernobbio on Lake Como. Numerous entrepreneurs involved in German-Italian economic relations were able to exchange ideas with each other and with guests from the world of politics such as Claudia Dörr-Voß, State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. The anniversary forum under the motto “100 Years of the Future” was opened by German Chancellor Dr Angela Merkel and Italian Prime Minister Dr Mario Draghi via video message. DIHK President Peter Adrian devoted his keynote speech to the topic “Recovery and Resilience: Opportunities for European Competitiveness”.

DIVERSIFY SUPPLY CHAINS

The AHK Industrial Suppliers Forum becomes a digital supplier platform ►

The disruption of global supply chains was a major problem for the German economy in 2020 and 2021, which is why this topic was also the focus of many AHK events. However, AHKs are not only a source of information and an exchange platform, they are also problem solvers. And as such, they have sought practical solutions to supply chain problems and, among other things, launched the European AHK Industrial Suppliers Forum. This took place for the first time and in virtual form at the end of 2020.

The interest in this format was so great that the AHKs decided to create a permanent platform. The result is a virtual platform that currently consists of just under 500 suppliers and buyers and aims to grow to 1,000 registered users by the end of 2022. The platform is completely free of charge for German buyers. It is aimed at a diverse range of industries: Automotive and Engineering, Metal and Plastics Processing, Electronics and Engineering Parts, and Automation and ICT Solutions for the Industry. The platform offers B-2-B matching options, market and tender information as well as different event formats.



“In foreign trade, the balance is shifting: sustainability, diversification and supply chain security are increasingly in the focus. It's world class how much support institutions like the federally funded AHKs already offer here!”

MinR Dr Christian Storost

Head of the Promotion of Foreign Trade Department at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action

AHKs offer a platform



MEMBERSHIPS

Strong networks as an anchor in the crisis

The right contacts are often the be-all and end-all for business success – especially in turbulent times.

The AHKs are expert intermediaries and offer small and large companies a valuable platform to network and exchange information locally. In 2021, **more than 46,000 members** benefited from the expertise and global network of the AHKs with competent contacts from business, politics, institutions, associations and societies – in Germany and in 92 host countries.

Especially in times of work from home, personal exchange is central. That's why the AHK member events offer an exclusive forum that brings people together virtually and, increasingly, in person again, offering them space to discuss current developments and challenges in confidence and to discover opportunities for cooperation.

As intermediaries and strategic partners, the AHKs also support companies in forming a common mouth-piece vis-à-vis politicians and advocate for the interests of business with political actors.

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Valuable expertise

Interest in volunteering in the AHKs is growing steadily – even during the crisis: while there were 2,200 volunteers in 2018, in 2021 **more than 3,000 people** were involved in the boards and committees of the Chambers of Commerce Abroad with their many years of experience. This increase underscores the importance that companies attach to the chamber work.

Voluntary representatives on the board share their valuable knowledge with the full-time staff and support the AHKs in performing their tasks in the best possible way. Due to their management experience in German and local companies, the board members are also important advisors and initiators for expanding networks together with the AHKs and effectively representing the interests of the members. They thus form an indispensable pillar in the AHK network.



46,000

MEMBERSHIPS WORLDWIDE

PEOPLE SERVING ON AHK COMMITTEES



3,000

VOLUNTEER BOARD MEMBERS



AHK EVENTS

Expertise meets network

With the onset of the pandemic, the AHKs managed to shift their range of technical and information events into the virtual space within a very short time. In the course of the year, the AHKs dynamically adapted their technical and information events to local pandemic developments and regulations. In addition, they took up many issues related to corona in order to highlight them in trade publications for the German and local business community with up-to-date information and approaches to solutions.

With a total of almost **6,500** digital, hybrid and face-to-face events organised by the AHKs, the total number actually increased compared to the previous year, and the number of participants almost reached pre-crisis levels.

6,500

EVENTS

FOCUS ON

“Members are important sources of impetus”

Mr Nöther, we are looking back on two years of the pandemic, in which classic networking was clearly limited. What is the benefit of AHK membership for a company at all?

The past two years have been marked by major individual and entrepreneurial challenges. The network of German Chambers of Commerce Abroad reacted prudently, flexibly and extremely innovatively to the framework conditions that changed virtually overnight. In doing so, the more than 2,000 employees of our global AHK world supported a large number of member companies, often outside of the tasks actually assigned to us.

In addition to the role of information broker with regular reports from 92 countries on the current status and economic impact of the pandemic, the AHKs surveyed their members on the ground about their greatest challenges and geared activities to this feedback – quickly and unbureaucratically. Traditional trade fair activities led to digital supplier exchanges, delegation trips, business partner searches and training. Other services were presented virtually, even charter flights to China and Vietnam for employees of German companies. These were organised by the AHKs after obtaining special permits from the local governments and were looked after from A to Z.

Our members greatly appreciated the tireless efforts of our globally active colleagues, who knew neither days of the week nor times of the day. The AHK proved to be a reliable partner on the ground and endeavoured to maintain communication between business partners when individual trade transactions faltered or supply chains were interrupted.

Even if the past two years were not easy for the business sector or for our AHK network, our actions underpinned the great appreciation of AHK members for having an experienced and reliable partner at their side, even in times of crisis.

Does this mean that the AHK membership offers have now been completely relaunched?

Since the members of the AHK network set the impulses that are important for our work, our tasks have always been in a state of flux. We face the challenges of the future with targeted expansion of know-how and act as an individual solution provider and as an “eye-level platform” for moderating private sector dialogues. If we take a look at the recent past, we see, for example, newly established regional competence centres to provide even more targeted support to our corporate partners in financial matters, in questions of regional free trade agreements or also in the area of raw materials.

It is of great importance to learn from each other and to apply the strengths of the global presence

in the interest of our members. This will closely accompany our future actions, for example when it comes to nearshoring, the effects of the German and European supply chain acts abroad or global issues such as climate change, health or education.

The AHK network has existed for almost 130 years. Do you still see any growth potential at all in AHK memberships?

There is, of course, further potential for growth in AHK memberships. It will be important to continue to be seen as an attractive partner.

While our traditional role as a promoter of economic cooperation between Germany and our host countries remains important, we will also be confronted with new tasks: issues such as advocacy, sustainability, support for the dismantling of non-tariff trade barriers, and the regional expansion of trade and investment structures will shape our future actions much more than in the past. One example is that by 2050, the African Continental Free Trade Area is to be the world's largest free trade area – with 2.5 billion people.

How can we support the interest of the German industry in a targeted manner and contribute to creating added value? A far-sighted answer is that our AHK network is already represented in more than 20 African countries with more than 200 employees at 13 locations. In 2022, our presence in Africa will be further strengthened and a Delegation

of German Industry and Commerce will be opened in Côte d'Ivoire.

The AHK network will continue to succeed in fulfilling the diverse tasks in high quality and in further strengthening the partnership structures of our network.



Jan Nöther
AHK World Spokesperson

AHKs are service providers



SERVICES REVENUE

AHKs are problem solvers and partners for success

The global AHK network is the first point of contact for German companies wishing to establish and expand their activities abroad. The range of services offered by the AHKs provides German and local companies with tailor-made answers to their questions – from market analysis and the procurement of business partners to legal and tax information.

The multilingual staff at the AHKs on site know the opportunities and risks in the respective countries and have versatile industry knowledge. This enables them to offer German and local companies competent and individual advice. They form a bridge between the markets and cultures and, together with the companies, lead business ideas to success. In 2021, almost **255,000 concrete enquiries** from companies – more than a third of them new customers – were made to the AHKs.

In 2021, the AHKs achieved a global **turnover of 115 million euros** with their **services** according to preliminary calculations – a significant increase compared to 2020 and almost back to pre-crisis levels.

255,000

CONCRETE ENQUIRIES

€ 115 MILLION

SERVICES TURNOVER



TRADE FAIR EXHIBITORS AND VISITORS

AHKs as key intermediaries

For many years, the AHKs have acted as representatives and sales partners for numerous German trade fair companies. They also acquire exhibitors and visitors for trade fairs abroad and in Germany. The close ties to the companies and the successful work of the AHKs at their locations are the key to the effective acquisition of trade fair exhibitors and visitors.

In view of numerous trade fair cancellations and postponements in the digital space or to the following year, however, trade fair business until the end of 2021 is far behind the previous years up to 2019, or even declined completely.

This is not least due to the fact that the AHK trade fair business is strongly influenced by the activities of the German trade fair companies, whose business came to a virtual standstill with the pandemic. In the regions where the AHKs also participate in the local trade fair business and where local trade fairs became possible again in the course of the year (such as Russia, the Gulf region and later China again), things looked better. However, this does not change the general picture of another difficult year for the AHK trade fair business in 2021.

AHK DELEGATION TRIPS

Hybrid market exploration

Delegation trips abroad are an excellent opportunity for companies to quickly and comprehensively find out about business opportunities with the support of the AHKs at the respective locations. Participants can establish initial contacts with potential partners as well as with representatives from politics and business and familiarise themselves with the political, cultural and economic characteristics of the respective target market.

Due to the pandemic-related travel restrictions, numerous delegation and business trips to and from Germany took place in 2021 in virtual and partly also hybrid formats. In Europe, the first trips were able to take place in person again.

The virtual delegation trips were organised by the AHK staff in such a way that they could be easily integrated into the daily office routine and time zone of the participating companies. Thus, despite COVID-19, numerous companies were given the opportunity to get an idea of the potential of their own industry in other countries.



From the business community, for the business community: AHKs train professionals



COMPETENCE CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING (KIBB)

Bundled know-how for vocational education and training “Made in Germany”

The internationally active German economy is also dependent on well-qualified employees abroad. That is why the DIHK Competence Centre for International Vocational Education and Training (DIHK-KIBB) supports companies that want to train skilled workers abroad according to German quality standards. AHKs, IHKs and DIHK are jointly committed to dual vocational education and training abroad. The overall global concept and the specific local VET services fit seamlessly into the mandate for foreign trade promotion.

The DIHK Competence Centre for International Vocational Education and Training was founded by DIHK e. V., DIHK-Bildungs-GmbH and DIHK Service GmbH at the end of 2019.

The DIHK-KIBB has set itself the task of working together with the AHKs and acting as a pilot for technical and funding issues in the field of international vocational education and training. It offers (new) AHK vocational training staff a modular training and coaching programme, and ensures digital networking of the AHK vocational training community in order to accelerate the exchange of know-how and experience.

Vocational education and training “Made in Germany” demands high quality standards and requires a lot of know-how from those who organise it. Employees who are to advance the AHK business field of vocational education and training benefit from bundled know-how, pragmatic sparring partners, quality-assured and manageable support tools.



AdA-International is the best-known and most widely used product of DIHK-Bildungs-GmbH for the AHKs. We are currently working together with the AHKs on a schedule and implementation recommendation including digital teaching and learning materials. This will enable AHKs to conduct the AdA-International course completely online in the future!

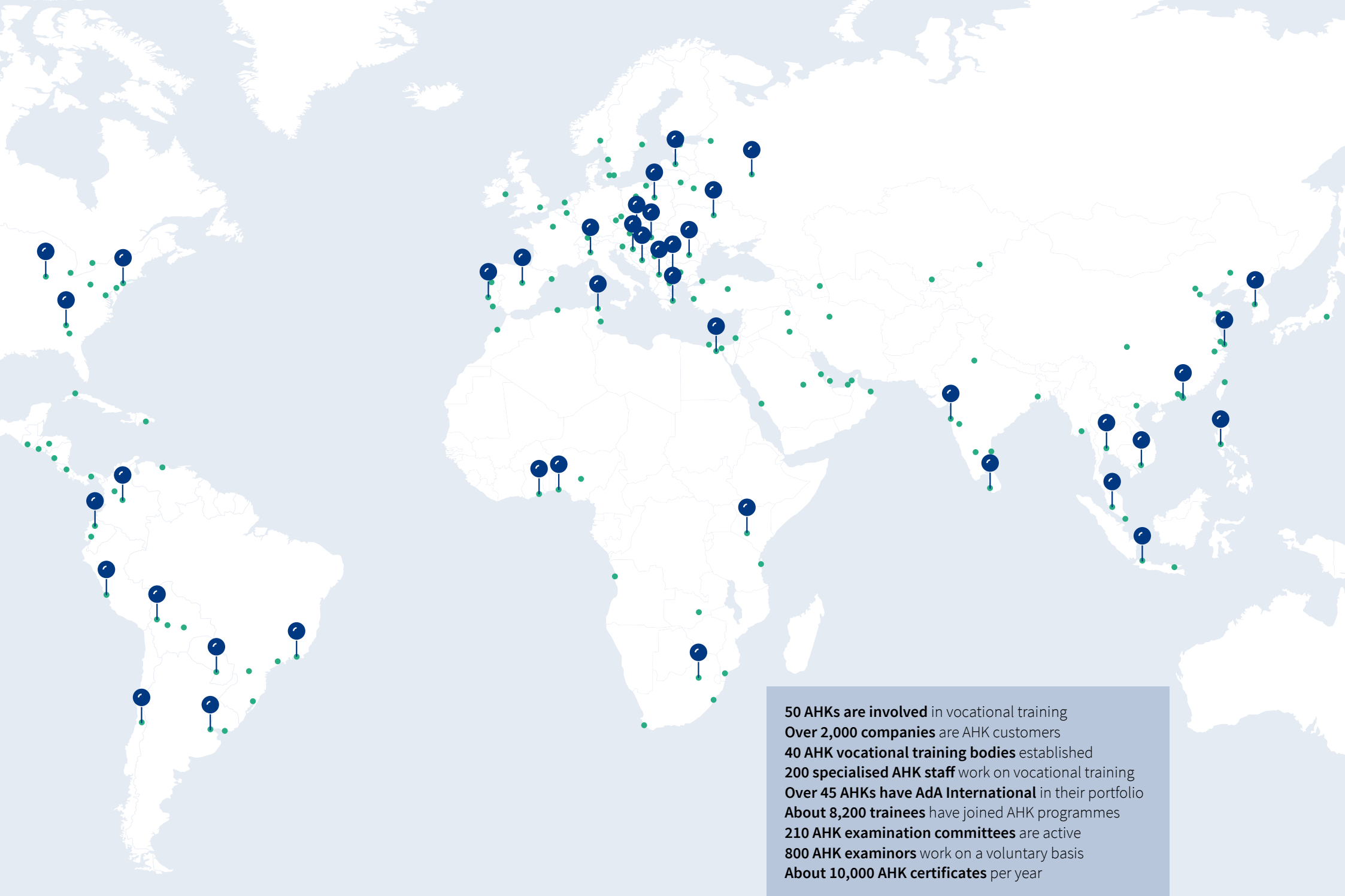
AHKs are partners in vocational training

The AHKs are the central actors in what used to be called the “export of German vocational education and training”. Due to the lack of success in the one-to-one transfer of the historically developed German system, the aim nowadays is to transfer important elements of the German system. But this is also a big challenge, especially in countries with different traditions and a more or less well developed school-based VET system. Not only the responsible politicians in the respective country have to be convinced, but also the young people and their parents, but above all the companies.

The offers of the AHKs are adapted to the legal framework in the respective country and, above all, to the needs of the member companies. According to a recent survey by DIHK-KIBB, AHKs see the needs of companies as the most important reason for creating and developing vocational training offers in AHKs. However, for more than half of the AHKs, the needs of local stakeholders are also relevant. If the AHKs contribute to securing skilled labour, the image of AHKs in the host country can benefit.

The AHKs

- advise companies on the best type of dual vocational training and the associated requirements in the destination country,
- organise and moderate processes in which companies can adapt and define training content based on German standards,
- conduct training and examinations of in-company training staff by means of the qualification concept “Training of Trainers (AdA) – International”, which is used worldwide,
- network and coordinate all partners involved in training, such as training companies, trainees, vocational schools or inter-company training centres,
- support companies in all matters relating to training and advocate for the recognition of qualifications in the target country,
- organise valid and quality-assured examinations based on the DIHK quality standards for AHK vocational training activities,
- award participants with an AHK-DIHK certificate after passing the exam.



50 AHKs are involved in vocational training
Over 2,000 companies are AHK customers
40 AHK vocational training bodies established
200 specialised AHK staff work on vocational training
Over 45 AHKs have AdA International in their portfolio
About 8,200 trainees have joined AHK programmes
210 AHK examination committees are active
800 AHK examiners work on a voluntary basis
About 10,000 AHK certificates per year

WE DO EVERYTHING, EVEN EXOTIC PROFESSIONS

Greece trains its own brewers

In recent years, more and more small and medium-sized Greek breweries have appeared that taught themselves the art of brewing or attended a training course in Germany. Today there are around 50 small and medium-sized breweries all over Greece, especially on the islands. At a time when a shortage of skilled workers is widespread, the sound training of young people in the companies is essential. Especially in the craft sector, many apprenticeships remain unfilled. In Germany, brewing and malting is a three-year recognised training occupation in industrial or craft breweries or in the beverage industry. The brewing and malting profession does not exist in Greece. So here the question arose why Greece does not train its own brewers.

In June 2019, an initiative of the AHK Greece started in cooperation with the EZA brewery: vocational training for the brewing/malting profession according to the German vocational training model. Among other things, the training ordinance and the school framework curriculum of the profession were translated into Greek and the trainers were trained according to the training-of-trainers course of the AHK Greece (AdA full version). Four trainees started their three-year training. The theoretical part took place in a specially equipped classroom at the EZA brewery in Atalanti, the practical part in the production area of the company. In May 2021, the first intermediate exams were held – according to German standards and organised by AHK Greece. The long-term goal of this project is for the brewing/malting profession to be introduced throughout Greece and recognised by the state.



Skills Expert Programme of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK)

Small and medium-sized German enterprises abroad are supported by the Skills Expert Programme of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action in qualifying local workers in the mid-skills segment through needs-based in-company training.

In concrete terms, this means that so-called “skills experts” are based at the Chambers of Commerce Abroad and drive the development of activities in the field of vocational training there.

This is currently done at eight AHK locations: in Indonesia, Croatia, Northern Macedonia, Vietnam, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa.



PRORECOGNITION

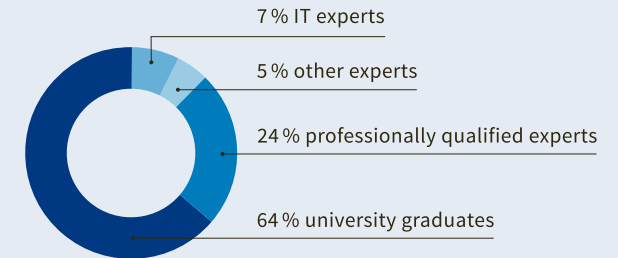
AHKs advise on the recognition of foreign professional qualifications

The ProRecognition project, which is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and coordinated by DIHK Service GmbH, has been offering individual advice on the recognition of foreign professional qualifications at AHKs and German Delegations of Industry and Commerce since 2015 (currently in Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, India, Iran, Italy, Poland and Vietnam).

In 2021, 5,000 skilled workers were advised and 1,700 persons submitted an application for recognition to a competent body in Germany. This is almost twice as many applications as in the previous year, which is also due to the Skilled Immigration Act (FEG).

With the FEG, skilled workers from third countries have had access to the entire German labour market since 2020, regardless of their professional qualification, if they have a certificate of recognition. This document certifies to the applicant in German the extent to which their foreign professional qualification is equivalent to the German reference profession.

Significantly more workers than before contact the AHKs for advice on their chances of recognition. In addition, skilled workers receive further support from ProRecognition for their path into the German labour market. Last year, 400 people alone reported that they had found a job in Germany.



20,370

ADVISED PROFESSIONALS

“Recognition alone is no guarantee for successful labour migration. Recognition counselling is very often followed by follow-up counselling. Whether it's advice on language courses, visas or information on the German labour market: at ProRecognition we accompany our professionals all the way to their destination.”

Recognition Advisor Mohamed Nadjib Belagguone
Project Manager ProRecognition at AHK Algeria





VISA-SERVICES

Cooperation with the Federal Foreign Office

The AHKs are one of the most broadly positioned partners of the Federal Foreign Office abroad and can support visa applicants in preparing the visa procedure.

This service, which has already been offered at various locations for many years, is the subject of the latest cooperation agreement signed by the DIHK and the Federal Foreign Office on 27 August 2021. The aim of the agreement is to enable both immigration support for skilled workers and the offer of an improved service for visa applicants as well as support of visa offices by the AHKs.

The AHKs help applicants to collect complete documents in the required form. They also offer advice on how to fill in the application forms correctly, as well as on how to indicate the correct purpose of stay and the related correct booking of appointments.

HAND IN HAND FOR INTERNATIONAL TALENTS

Jointly breaking new ground in securing skilled workers

Funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) and in cooperation with the Federal Employment Agency (BA), the project “Hand in Hand for International Talents” is building an ideal process and sustainable structures to test how qualified skilled workers from third countries can be recruited for German companies. In an initial pilot framework, the project works with non-academic skilled workers from IHK professions such as electrical engineering, IT or hospitality in selected third countries (Brazil, India and Vietnam). These are placed with companies in five IHK pilot regions – (Düsseldorf, Erfurt, Reutlingen, Rostock and Lübeck).

For the internet agency Netigo from Düsseldorf, one of the participating companies, the high quality of the project is convincing. Netigo Managing Director Tobias Bühne sums up: “I was honestly surprised that there were really so many good applicants. We could have hired several at once. My impression was that the applicants were super well prepared in the interviews. I also liked the support provided by “Hand in Hand”. There is a lot of commitment behind it from the –project partners and that led to success afterwards. I am very happy with it!”

The “Hand in Hand” project’s support only ends when the foreign skilled worker has full professional recognition in Germany, has a good command of the German language and has arrived in the company and in the new environment. This holistic approach means that the participating companies and skilled workers receive personal and competent support every step of the way from the AHK colleagues, the project coordinators at the IHKs and the institutional partners of the DIHK-IHK-AHK network.



IHK company survey on foreign business

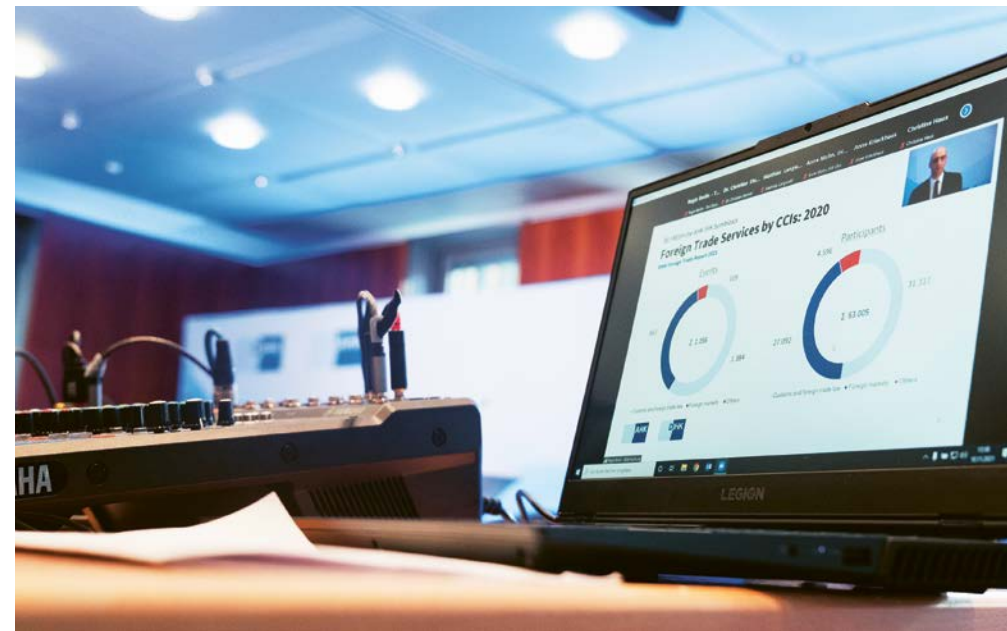
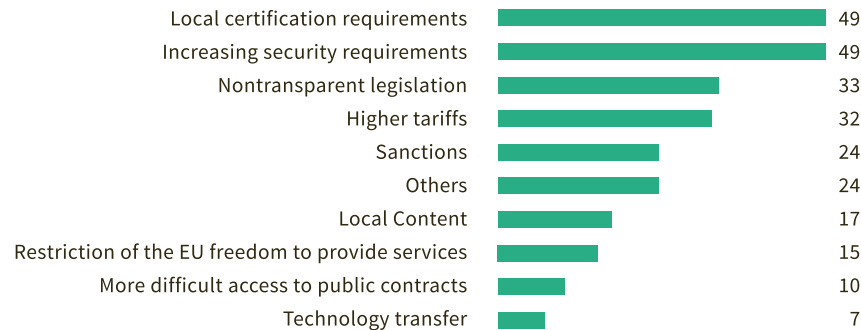
Once a year, the Chambers of Industry and Commerce (IHKs) survey internationally active companies in Germany about their experiences and expectations in foreign business. The most recent survey took place at the beginning of February 2022, shortly before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. An increase in trade barriers and ongoing effects of the coronavirus pandemic disrupting production processes and supply chains are making it more difficult for internationally active German companies to do business globally this year, according to survey findings.

The global business outlook of internationally active German companies is negative overall. 21 percent expect foreign business to deteriorate, only 18 percent expect an improvement in 2022.

Expectations for international business were still mostly positive in Europe and North America at the beginning of the year. In contrast, even before the start of the war and the renewed pandemic-related lockdowns, business prospects were poor in China, Russia, Turkey and the United Kingdom. Supply chain and logistics problems, lack of goods and services and travel restrictions are affecting global business.

Regardless of the coronavirus pandemic, 54 percent of companies reported in February that they have perceived new trade barriers in their international business in the past year – the figure reaches a new high. As in previous years, companies see hurdles mainly in local certification requirements and increased security requirements. A third see themselves confronted with non-transparent legislation in their target markets.

INCREASING TRADE BARRIERS IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS IN PERCENT, MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE





DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

AHKs are valued knowledge carriers for current business issues

The pandemic was also the all-dominant topic on the websites of AHKs worldwide. Especially where companies, customers and members could seek information on the current restrictions and conditions for their foreign business, traffic increased steadily. Whether updates, live tickers or news pages – the AHKs often kept the media service up to date and comprehensive on a daily basis and were thus able to establish themselves as important information providers during the crisis. With well over 300,000 clicks each on their COVID-19 info, the AHK websites in Turkey and Indonesia took top positions in the joint web presence.

In a global comparison, significantly more than half of the visitors to AHK websites come from Germany. The AHK network is also reaching more and more companies via LinkedIn. In the meantime, the German LinkedIn channel of the AHK network – set up in 2021 – enjoys over 4,000 followers. The vast majority of them work for German MSMEs. The AHK network thus succeeds in reaching one of its most important target groups on a daily basis with business updates from all over the world.



AHKs represent the
interests of the business community



Keeping an eye on the development of the global economy

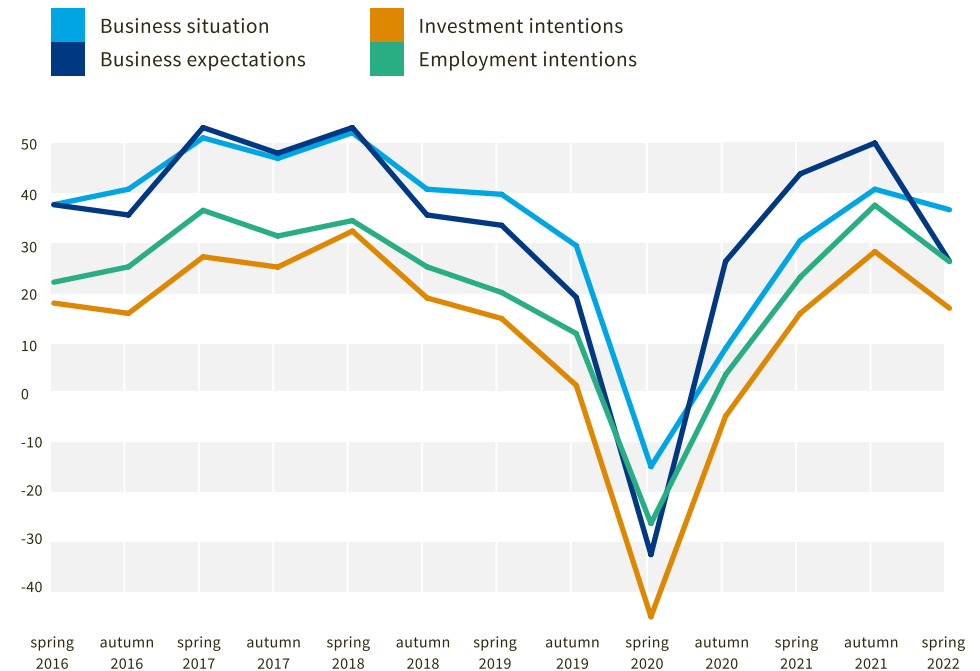
Companies in the AHK network are facing major challenges in many places: Although business has improved over the course of the past year following the first waves of COVID-19, the situation is still difficult. However, persistent supply chain disruptions, pandemic-related lockdowns and the economic consequences of the Russian war of aggression on Ukraine are currently making business difficult for companies in many locations.

For the AHK World Business Outlook, the member companies of the AHKs are surveyed twice a year on their business prospects, the local economic development and the biggest risk factors. In addition, the companies share their assessments of investment and employment intentions. The survey is a unique selling point, because no other organisation can better present the global prospects and challenges for German companies operating internationally.

With around 8,000 company responses, the AHK World Business Outlook in 2021 was once again able to reveal important insights into the situation and expectations of companies. In many places, the economy has developed positively and companies have expanded investments and increased staff. However, due to problems in global supply chains and logistics, as well as existing travel restrictions, many German companies at their international locations are forced to look for new suppliers, change transport routes or relocate parts of production to new locations. This causes high costs and planning efforts for the companies.

GERMAN COMPANIES ABROAD

BALANCE OF "BETTER MINUS WORSE" REPORTS IN POINTS



TOP 5 BUSINESS RISKS FOR COMPANIES IN SPRING 2022 IN PERCENT



CONTACTS ON SITE

AHKs network people and institutions

Good contacts are a decisive factor when entering and expanding a market abroad. Their global network makes the AHKs a central point of contact for bilateral business relations in Germany and around the world, because it makes it possible to bring AHK members and customers together with the right contacts and thus actively support their business projects.

The AHKs have competent and high-ranking contacts from business, politics and administration, investment and foreign trade promotion institutions as well as chambers and associations, educational institutions and trade fairs – in the host countries and in Germany.

Through this excellent networking, the AHKs – but also their members – learn about developments and projects at an early stage. This is a key point in informing the German economy early and comprehensively and positioning it successfully.

11,000

CONTACTS WITH LOCAL POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES



Live broadcast from the AHK Italy



DIHK-BMWK delegation visits the AHK Chicago



Gala Event 25 Years AHK Poland



“In turbulent times, the German economy needs reliable and well-connected partners – abroad, these are the AHKs.”

Dr Volker Treier

DIHK Head of Foreign Trade | Member of the Executive Board Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK e. V.)



Outlook AHKs as a global partner in turbulent times

“The global economy is getting reorganised – and AHKs provide us valuable support”

Mr Wansleben, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine, the strict COVID-19 policy in China, plus ongoing supply chain disruptions – rarely have the conditions for German companies operating abroad been as difficult as they are today. What does this mean for the network of German Chambers of Commerce Abroad? Will the mission of the AHKs change in the future?

Wansleben: There are truly plenty of challenges. And thus also starting points for further developing existing services and offering new ones. Just think of the charter flights for employees of German companies to China or the shifting of trade fairs and delegation trips into virtual space. It is precisely the core competence of the AHKs to adapt to difficult situations and to look for pragmatic solutions for the companies – that is exactly what the AHKs do best. Ultimately, the services offered by the AHKs will become even more differentiated in the future. All the better that over the years we have developed a culture of jointly launching such product innovations.

For AHK member companies, persistent supply chain bottlenecks and incalculable price increases for raw materials and energy are currently ongoing issues. Quite a few companies active abroad are even considering pulling up stakes at certain locations. Won't the AHKs dry up sooner or later due to a loss of members?

Wansleben: The globalisation of the economy – purchasing, production, sales – will remain the basis for the economic success of our companies in the future. We therefore have no better alternative. However, globalisation is currently being reorganised. Excessive one-sided dependencies are being reduced, chronic supply bottlenecks are being compensated for by new supply chains. The enormous price increases for energy, raw materials and important bought-in parts inevitably lead to the search for substitution – be it through technological solutions or alternative business relationships. Our AHK World Business Outlook shows that companies are active in this area. And this is precisely where companies need partners like their local AHK. Because it speaks the language, has the necessary market knowl-

edge and is part of the relevant local networks. Yes, there will be shifts. But overall, our market is growing rather than shrinking. I am convinced of that.

You are addressing it yourself right now: AHKs as partners in the world. Times of crisis also show how important it is to communicate with countries and regions for peaceful coexistence and fair trade. What is the role of the Chambers of Commerce Abroad in preparing such cooperation?

Wansleben: Trade agreements are the key to functioning world trade. Their necessity cannot be overestimated. AHKs can play a preparatory role as trailblazers and door-openers, and have proven this many times in the past. The aim is not to assert as many German interests as possible, but to create a balanced win-win situation for both sides. AHK staff usually bring both cultures with them, from Germany and from the host country. This predestines them to use their know-how and expertise at the decisive points.

It will continue to be a concern for German companies to carry the quality of their products “Made in Germany” along with our values into the world. But we have to become smarter and promote a new way of cooperation with new ideas and cooperations. Here, too, I see AHKs as architects who are helping to build this new path.



Dr Martin Wansleben
DIHK Chief Executive Officer

OVERVIEW OF THE LOCATIONS

**For the economy. Worldwide.
At 150 locations.**



AMERICAS

Argentina
Bolivia
Brazil
Canada
Chile
Colombia
Costa Rica
Cuba
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
El Salvador
Guatemala
Honduras
Mexico
Nicaragua
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Uruguay
USA
Venezuela



Current information on the AHK network



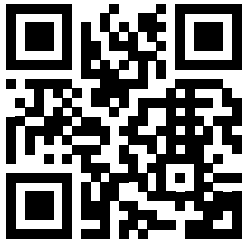
Your AHK experts

The AHKs support you in setting up and expanding your business abroad. Find your contact here, listed by target market.



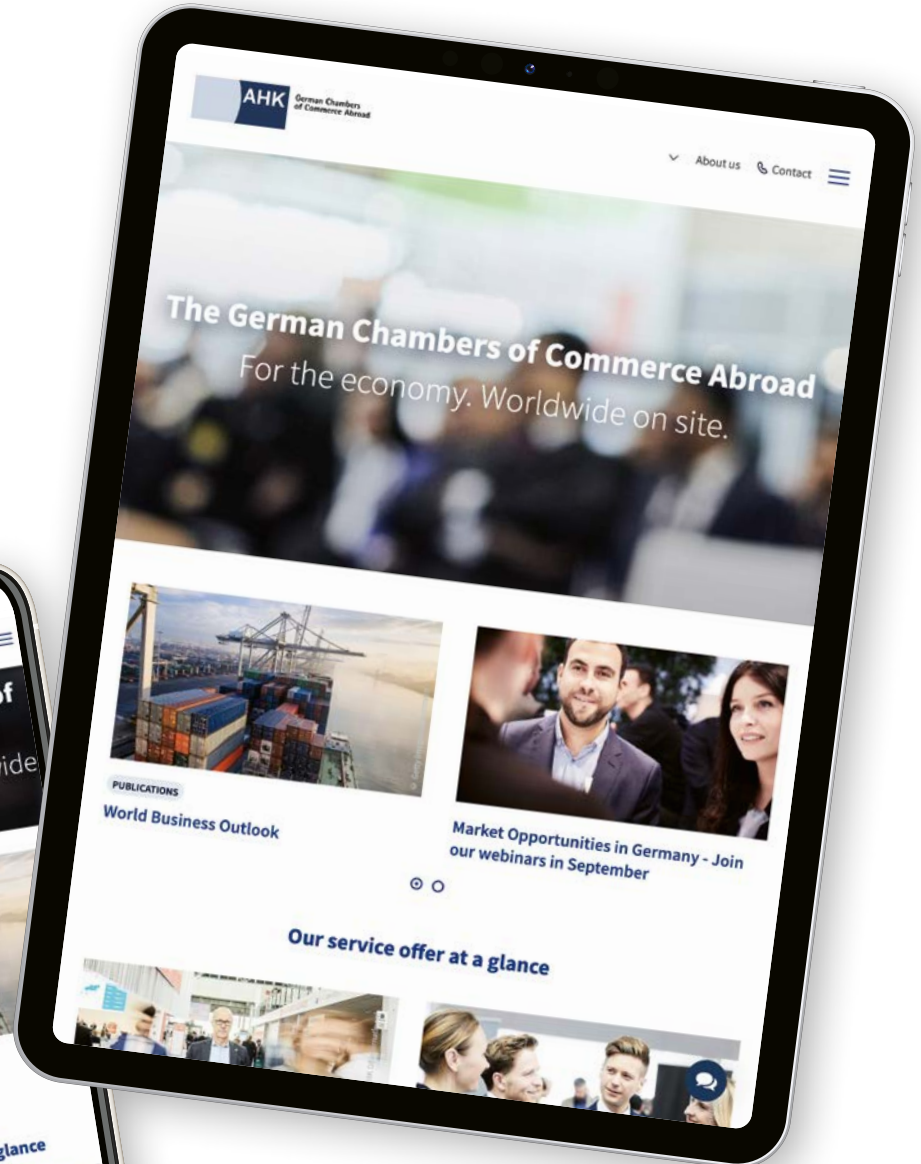
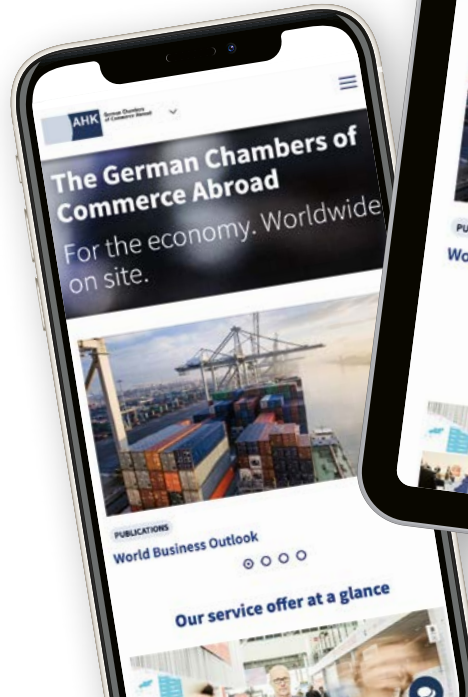
News from the AHK network

Our new AHK LinkedIn page keeps you up to date with the latest news from the global AHK network.



Get more information here!

The AHK website provides more detailed information on our more than 150 locations. Visit the “Corona Compass” to get first-hand information on the latest pandemic developments.



Imprint

PUBLISHER

DIHK e.V. | Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry

Postal address:

DIHK | 11052 Berlin

Visitor address:

Breite Straße 29 | 10178 Berlin, Germany

T. +49 30 20308-0

info@dihk.de

www.ahk.de

As of July 2022

EDITORS

Sophie Lwin-Waldschmidt

DESIGN

Lorenz & Konsorten, Cologne

PHOTO CREDITS

DIHK / Nils Hasenau Fotografie (title), DIHK (page 1), BMWK / Dominik Butzmann (page 1), DIHK / Nils Hasenau Fotografie (page 2), DIHK / Nils Hasenau Fotografie (page 3), Federal Government / Jesco Denzel (page 4), AHK UAE (page 4), Jens Schicke (page 5), DIHK (page 5), BMWK (page 6), AHK Italy (page 6), AHK North Macedonia / Andrej Ginovski (page 7), BMWK (page 7), AHK Netherlands / Martijn Beekman (page 8), Delegation of German Business for East Africa (page 10), DIHK / Nils Hasenau Fotografie (page 11), AHK Uruguay (page 12), German Business Office Taipei (page 13), AHK Chile (page 14), AHK Chile (page 15), Delegation of German Business for East Africa (page 18), AHK Algeria / Mohamed Nadjib Belaggoune (page 19), DIHK (page 20), Margit Wild (page 21), DIHK / Nils Hasenau Fotografie (page 22), AHK Finland (page 23), DIHK / Nils Hasenau Fotografie (page 23), AHK Slovakia (page 24), AHK Italy (page 26), AHK Chicago / Sean Su (page 26), AHK Poland (page 27), DIHK / Nils Hasenau Fotografie (page 27), Getty Image (page 28), DIHK / Nils Hasenau Fotografie (page 29).

NOTE

The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) has been called the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) since 8 December 2021.

Partner Worldwide

The German Chambers of Commerce Abroad (AHKs) offer companies and politics – 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 to meet the interests of our clients and members.

www.ahk.de/en



As of: 2022