

Cambrian News

8 Thursday 29 August 2019 www.cambrian-news.co.uk

German car company wants to keep strong Welsh ties after Brexit

THE chairman of a Criccieth-based German company has called for a strong ties between Wales and Germany to remain post-Brexit.

German Industry UK, whose head offices are in Criccieth, is the voice of German business in the UK which employs 450,000 people in 2,500 companies. They take a special interest in Wales as the head office is in Criccieth, north Wales.

Chairman and chief executive, Dr Bernd Atenstaedt, spoke this week of the importance both Wales and Germany have on each other's culture and economy.

Of the Welsh exports to the EU, 18 per cent goes to Germany. Germany is the top export destination for Wales. The six main Welsh exports in goods to Germany are transport equipment, road vehicles, electric machinery, iron and steel, medicinal and pharmaceutical products, power generating machinery and equipment.

Speaking of the relationship post-Brexit, Dr Atenstaedt said: "As the new Minister for International Relations of the Welsh Government, Eluned Morgan, said recently, Brexit makes the need for a new strategy for Wales all the more urgent. Strengthening the special relationship with the US may be of great importance for Wales, however, the valuable relationship with Germany should also be encouraged as Germany will continue to be of great importance to the Welsh economy and

of course Germany is an important member of the EU and will provide the next President of the European Commission.

"The trouble is that Wales voted to come out of the EU in June 2016 which did not go down too well in Germany. We wanted Wales to remain. Here Scotland has a great advantage over Wales as the Scots voted to remain which was very welcome in Germany.

"As it is, investment of the 70 German companies in Wales is now on hold waiting for the outcome of the Brexit negotiations. If it comes to a no-deal on 31 October with border controls, tariffs etc, I expect investment from German companies in Wales will decline somewhat. However, I am confident established German business with Wales will continue more or less as before. That will probably go for established Welsh exports to Germany also and of course for tourism.

"The relationship between Wales and Germany has always been strong and should continue. The Welsh Government has recently opened two new offices in Germany, in Berlin and Dusseldorf, to underline the Welsh Government's determination to maintain, and even further strengthen, the relationship between the two countries after Brexit. Brexit should not dampen the partnership with Germany.

"This is very welcome. Hopefully there will be enough Government funding for this initiative to have an impact in Germany."