

Building bridges in difficult times Extending the economic area from Lisbon to Vladivostok!

Under the **patronage of Ilse Aigner, President of the State Parliament**, the Economic Forum Russia - Bavaria took place on 3 April 2019 in the Maximilianeum with more than 200 participants.

Invited were the Society Russia Germany, the Eastern Committee - Eastern European Association of German Business and the OstWestWirtschaftsForum Bayern.

An economic area from Lisbon to Vladivostok is the vision of this forum. On the way to this economic area bridges are necessary also in difficult times. After five years of mutual sanctions, German direct investment in the Russian economy rose to two billion euros in 2018. The trade volume is growing by 8% to €62 billion.

The share of non-energy products in Russian exports to Germany continues to increase and the presence of Russian companies on the German market is growing.

"The Russian-German economic dialogue is currently the most effective instrument for correcting our bilateral relations and maintaining them at a traditionally high level," said Vladimir Grinin, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the International Society "Russia Germany" and former Russian Ambassador to Germany. The diplomat praised the recent statement by the Chairman of the Eastern Committee of German Business to politicians, parliamentarians, businessmen not only from Germany but also from other EU countries, in which he unequivocally supported the call by Federal Foreign Minister Heiko Maas for a "new Eastern policy" based on the common interests of Germany and Russia, the EU and Russia.

"Bavarian companies are above all interested in a permanent presence on the Russian market and in participating in the process of further modernizing the Russian economy," said Eberhard Sinner, President of the OstWestWirtschaftsForum Bayern and former Minister of State. He sees cooperation in two areas as the most promising: Innovation development and cooperation in the energy sector. To this end, the partnership in the security sector must be expanded. Eberhard Sinner finds it unacceptable to forget the common strategic goal: the need to create a common Eurasian economic area from Lisbon to Vladivostok, involving the EU and the Eurasian countries.

Among the negative factors hindering the conclusion of transactions between German and Russian partners, the German participants in the Forum, representing mainly medium-sized and small companies, mentioned difficulties in finding Russian subcontractors to set up their own production in Russia, the low exchange rate of the Russian national currency, which hinders German exports, and bureaucratic factors. The elaboration of financing and credit terms and the inappropriately high lending rates of Russian banks were also addressed.

At the same time, the German participants in the Forum repeatedly expressed their satisfaction with the positive indicators for the current development of the Russian economy, the growth of Russian GDP, the stabilization of the Russian domestic market as an encouraging factor for the further development of economic cooperation with Russia.

The economic forum Russia - Germany gave good impulses on how existing difficulties can be reduced and new instruments - for example digital platforms - can be used to initiate and deepen economic relations. In the final round, "Russia in Practice", successful entrepreneurs have been passing on their experiences and assessments of future development in the Russian market for many years. At the following reception of the Russian Consul General Sergey P. Ganzha the exchange of ideas between the participants was continued in a personal conversation.

Among the participants were, among others, from the Russian side:

Consul General Dr. Sergej Ganzha - Consul General of the Russian Federation in Munich

Prof. Dr. Ruslan Grinberg - Russian Academy of Sciences

Ambassador a. D. Vladimir Grinin - Society "Russia - Germany"

Consul General a. D. Dr. Michail Logwinow - Society Russia-Germany

Vladimir Matwejew - Sberbank AG Germany

President Vladimir Platonov - Moscow Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Vladimir Polenov - Society Russia-Germany

Deputy Trade Delegate Pavel Rubzov - Trade and Economic Office of the Embassy of the Russian Federation

Nikolai Vardul - Moskovskij Komsomolez

from the Bavarian side:

Honorary Consul Max J. Aschenbrenner - Royal Norwegian Honorary Consulate Munich

Jürgen Baumgärtner , MdL - Chairman of the Working Group for Housing, Construction and Transport of the CSU Parliamentary Group

Prof. Elmar Baur - Verein der bayerischen Textil- und Bekleidungsindustrie

Hubert Berndt Wolf Heiz- und Klimatechnik GmbH

Alexander Bierwagen - Knorr-Bremse Systeme für Schienenfahrzeuge GmbH

Jens Böhlmann - Ost-Ausschuss - Osteuropaverein der Deutschen Wirtschaft e.V.

Consul General Dragomir Dimitrov - Consulate General of the Republic of Bulgaria in Munich

Norbert Dünkel, MdL

Petra Guttenberger, MdL

Honorary Consul Honorary Consul Dr. Hanns J. Huber - Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Turkey, Regensburg

Honorary Consul Nikolaus W. Knauf - Honorary Consulate of the Russian Federation, Nuremberg; Gebr. Knauf KG

Alexander König, MdL

Bernd Kränzle, MdL

Consul General Dr. Andrei Kulazhanka - Consulate General of the Republic of Belarus Munich

Dr. Fabian Mehring, MdL