

TESTIMONY OF THE INTERVENTION



PANEL I – INTERNATIONALIZATION, TRENDS AND CHALLENGES



Business opportunities in the German market

Simeon Ries

“What we learn today is that for cooperation, we need investment and vice versa, we need a common project, where we invest both parts and that is the cultural process that is happening today, if we speak in innovation of the economy and of opportunities, my first response is that Portuguese companies invest in a common good that can be traced for a sustainable future ecologically, socially, culturally and in the competitive advantage of an entire region, that is Europe. “

“For many years I have been working with Portugal and with Portuguese companies both here and in Germany. I was president of the association of Portuguese businessmen in Germany for 7 years.

I would like to present the background, the stage that has been changing in recent years and I would like to begin by telling you about a situation that I experienced on my flight from Frankfurt to Lisbon. I was standing next to a lady who said that she was the leader of a chemistry company and that she was going to speak to Portuguese businessmen. I asked her why she cooperated with the Portuguese and the answer was “we like to work with Portuguese, because they fulfil what they promise, until the deadlines. They are open to develop new solutions and that is why we prefer to work with Portuguese people.” I was surprised by this answer. As you can imagine, I’ve already spoke several times with entities and companies about the subject and had several reasons to explain why the projects did not work out. The economy does not advance or the Portuguese do not adapt, etc. So, I was surprised by the lady’s response. The Portuguese now are in a position of meeting deadlines and open to new solutions.

In fact, there is a decades-long relationship between Germany and Portugal on a political, social, cultural and economic level. In the first decades, the basis of cooperation with large companies, such as Siemens or Bosch.

Today we talk about global challenges and trends. We no longer talk about trade fairs in Germany, because I suppose everyone is already active on the international stage.

When I first came to Portugal in the early 1970s, the illiteracy rate in Portugal was well over 50%.

Every time I come to Portugal I notice the speed of development in many sectors, be it in education, training, business development or the fast pace of new challenges. Coming from Germany, I get the feeling that sometimes the Portuguese are much



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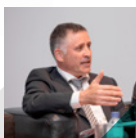
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faster than us and know how to adapt better to the challenges and developments of life.

The Portuguese culture became dynamic and the economy came to be recognized, at least on the German axis. In addition, there are the virtues of Portugal, knowing how to welcome and be welcomed. The trade balance between Germany and Portugal is identical.

When I had to compare the industrial sectors of Germany and Portugal, I realized that we are working in the same sectors and with the same percentage when compared to the general economy.

Regarding the opportunities to work with Germany, I would like to point out that we are facing common challenges. At the macro level, what is happening is the process of regionalization and growing disbelief towards traditional institutions, whether they are political parties or large corporations.

The world is diversifying, which means that we are at a stage of culturally and economically reinventing what we are doing. There are many associations and organizations, such as the AICEP, governmental political programs, which try to align these processes.

At the micro level, in SMEs, we are on the same path and in cooperation. Today it is not enough to sell things, it is necessary to reinvent the innovation process of the economy itself.

In economic terms, Germany has been pursuing a 6-year trend in all directions: export growth, GDP growth, employment rate and 5% to 6% unemployment, which is a natural rate of employment. The economy in Germany has been in balance since 2014, but in my view, with the trends we are experiencing worldwide, Germany is in crisis. Because? Because it does not reinvest the profit. What do you do with profit? German companies and identities prefer to economize. And in this aspect, they are much closer to the Portuguese.

What we learn today is that for a cooperation, we need investment and vice versa, we need a joint project, where both parts invest and this is the cultural process that is happening today. If we talk about innovation in the economy and opportunities, my first answer is that Portuguese companies invest in a common good that can be traced for a sustainable future ecologically, socially, culturally and in the competitive advantage of an entire region, that is Europe .

It is in this parallel attitude, that Germany is learning from the Portuguese partners, to economize instead of invest. German companies save profits and pay dividends to investors, buy market power and export capital, the German economy invests in the global finance market, it is a capital escape, it is an escape of knowledge.

Now on the opportunities for the Portuguese: consumption in Germany is growing, also in the construction sector. We are building houses and roads. The construction area is very strong in Portugal and in terms of engineering knowledge and manpower is well recognized in Germany.

The second point that accelerates German consumption is refugee support policy. There is much discussion around this in Germany. In economic terms, refugee support projects are very good.

Thirdly, the productive efficiency of the machines is 87%. We are at the maximum possible, but we give up investing in new machinery. A sector that is also strong in Portugal. In the current situation, the economy has the opportunity to follow the



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CONCLUSIONS

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end of the life cycle of the machines that are in Germany, to make another proposal, which is also a strong part of the Portuguese economy.

I will now talk about the trends of the German industry and economy.

Germany has been strong for 200 years in terms of industrialization and culture in terms of engineering and Germany is therefore one of the world's masters when it comes to process specialization and product standardization.

Portugal also has history in this matter, but in another way.

The difference, in my view, is that Germany has a strong system of education and vocational training, which is geared to the demands of the economy. Germany has developed this process for decades or centuries when it comes to leadership, processes and organizations. It is not only the technology that is worked on, but it is also a social, cultural and political process. We have established the so-called social state, a combination of economic responsibility and access to resources to share this with the rest of the population.

Globally, we have been talking about this development for 15 years. If we want to sell our products and services, we need customers and people who can buy them. Then we will have to pay better wages and ensure a decent life for all. This is a social, traditional and humanistic attitude. The social state in Germany has a very systemic perspective. One of the messages I'd like to focus on here is that we need to think about the whole system, we do not need to think only about our own short-term advantage, but we need to think that we are part of a larger context.

The current discussion in Germany focuses on the transformation of the economy itself, by changing the focus on the logic of creating goods and services that is industrialization. Basically, it's the logic we're discussing here too, a real-time database transformation logic. What we are designing and discussing now in Germany has to do with the so-called economy 4.0, which is not only the advantage of having a single product or service, but of contributing to offer products and services to the real database.

Digitizing in a nutshell, what is it? Digitization is the integration of all economic segments with all areas of human life, the integration of all economic segments, industry sectors, companies with all areas of individual human life, social, political; now through the use and exchange of data.

In real time it's a bit tricky because we are inventing a new language. In the background, global scanning has to do with IOT (internet of things), the interconnection of machines, the combination of operational technology with information technology. The machines collect data in an autonomous way, process and evaluate and even perform "smart measures". That is the future. The economic system is diversifying, it is being more model-based, more integrated more processual and more dynamic.

When I recall my praise of performance in Portuguese, about the transformation in the education, political and technological system, these are Portuguese virtues and I repeat my observation, that in my perspective there are small and medium sized companies in Portugal that already do things beyond what in Germany one can think, but nobody knows about them. This is an old dilemma in Portugal.

The opportunities for Portuguese companies in this dynamic of the economy 4.0 are obvious. On the European stage, we need to combine this dynamic of Portuguese economic youth with the great experience of centuries.

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The re-elected chancellor is already working on a master plan for the digital economy until 2023. There are still five years left and the budget is one hundred billion euros, to wage on 5G throughout Germany. We are preparing ourselves for an infrastructure that can feed and sustain this new economy we are projecting. Every economic cooperation and investment in the future has to be rational. Innovation and development must be encouraged throughout the year.

Perhaps this is the final word of my first contribution on this panel, because we are all, Germans and Portuguese, learning the same things. We are on the same path. Perhaps with different bodies, but the basic question is the same and I am sure if a company or a Portuguese entity, comes to Germany, even through different ways to contribute to the clarification of the next steps, be it at a technological level or at a products level, it will have the same chances, but with new virtues. Portugal has a good perspective and I'm curious to see what will happen in the next few years! "