

Dear Members, dear Readers,

We are nearing the end of a turbulent year. Next June will mark the fourth anniversary of the British referendum, in which approximately 52% of the votes were cast in favour of Brexit. In the meantime, we have learned to expect the unexpected. Theresa May, the country's prime minister for less than three years, was defeated by Parliament's indecision. This past August, she was succeeded by Eton graduate Boris Johnson, whose promise to deliver Brexit by 31 October has remained unfulfilled. Criticism has been vociferous, particularly in Great Britain. According to John le Carré, for instance, the island is being led by a group of "post-imperial nostalgics who aren't even capable of running a fruit stand". This is, of course, a matter of opinion, but the fact is that the decision to hold general elections in the United Kingdom on 12 December has been the only point of agreement in three years of parliamentary Brexit debates. The EU, meanwhile, has patiently approved another extension; this one, until 31 January 2020.



Michael Schmidt



Andreas Meyer-Schwickerath

The Tories seem to be moving towards a more freewheeling form of capitalism, while Jeremy Corbyn would put the state at the heart of the economy. The result of the vote is simply not predictable, but, as The Economist argues, "Britain's Christmas contest is its most important in living memory".

If the election is won by the Tories, or any form of coalition government is formed after mid-December, it is likely that the Brexit deal will be pushed through Parliament soon thereafter. After that, however, the negotiations about the future relationship between the EU and the UK will begin. The negotiating teams will then have the formidable task of

coming to an agreement on crucial issues – especially on trade, security and travel – by the end of the interim phase, which is to conclude by the end of 2020, barring a further extension.

The UK is Germany's fifth largest trading partner. With over 176 billion euros in bilateral trade and services, the economic consequences of Brexit will be serious on all sides. If the agreements are such that trade and other relations with the EU are upheld as much as possible, then businesses can concentrate on building for the future, once again. It remains to be seen how many compromises will be made.

In September 2019, the BCCG marked its 100th anniversary with a much-talked-about conference and gala dinner in Berlin attended by over 200 members and guests. The events succeeded in raising the BCCG's profile on social media and amongst political influencers and institutions even further. In fact, our social media and website visits have increased exponentially, suggesting a growing public awareness of the BCCG.

With the support of our members and the BCCG Brexit expert groups, events were organised to provide answers on Brexit-related issues. You can find the most prominent features in this Bulletin.

In order to meet future Brexit-related demands, the BCCG has hired additional staff at its central office in Berlin, strengthened its sponsorship base, and gained new members. At our events, in our publications and on our website, we at the BCCG will keep you apprised of current developments in bilateral issues of trade, business, and politics. We are well aware that the challenges have grown, and we are ready to take on the future of Anglo-German relations.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to all of you – our members, sponsors, and cooperating partners – for your support and continued activities. We wish all of you much success in the coming year and hope you enjoy our 2020 Bulletin. |

Yours sincerely,

Michael Schmidt
President

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Managing Director

For upcoming events please visit www.bccg.de/events. Please contact our office if you wish to receive BCCG invitations: info@bccg.de