

## **SECURITY AND SAFETY**

**Three tractor-trailers crashed into each other at Autobahn intersection “Biebelrieder Kreuz” (17, Jan 2012)** A 39-year old truck driver who ran into the back of another tractor-trailer caused a several kilometer long traffic jam at Biebelrieder Kreuz on Monday. The truck in front of him had to break and was pushed into another truck due to the impact. Nobody was injured. The estimated damage is 40,000 Euros.

**Merkel plans dialogue about future – Chancellor wants to have discussions with experts and citizens (18 Jan, 2012)** In the next months more than 100 experts and thousands of citizens should think about how living and working in Germany should look like in the future. In 18 working groups experts from various fields are discussing how a big industrial nation can operate economically, how the working world and the society can deal with demographic changes, what digital competence the people of tomorrow need to have, what role the family will play and how other countries think about the Germans. The second phase of the dialogue about the future will run from February to the middle of April. On a special internet platform citizens can voice their ideas. In addition, Angela Merkel will hold town hall meetings in Erfurt, Heidelberg and Bielefeld. In her New Year’s speech the chancellor summoned the Germans to get involved more. She asked: “How can we help those who are on the fringe of society? How can we secure our prosperity and how do we learn as a society?” Nobody, probably not even Chancellor Merkel knows exactly what will become of this dialogue about the future except that the results will be published in a book.

## **ECONOMICS**

**Electronic Cars - Bavaria wants to have a leading role. (17 Jan, 2012)** Bavaria and Saxony together want to play a leading role when it comes to electronic-mobiles in Germany. With approximately 80 individual projects and 150 supporters from the economy the two states jointly will apply for a promotion project “Display Elecontronic Mobility” of the Federal government which will receive 180 million Euros in funding within the next three years to promote a breakthrough of electronic cars in Germany. According to Bavarian Minister President Horst Seehofer: “It is a matter of safeguarding the future in a field in which the Germans are still leading in the global market.” Included is also one of the Bavarian pilot projects in Bad Neustadt (District Rhön/Grabfeld).

**Industry fears for seal of quality “Made in Germany” EU committee rejects plans for limitations of quality seal “Made in Germany (17 Dec, 2012)** “Made in Germany” is not acknowledged as a seal of quality – at least not in the opinion of the industry – but nevertheless a fierce argument arose concerning the future of this “indication of origin” label. Hans Heinrich Driftmann, President of the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce, gave alarm: In the future only products which consist of a minimum of 45% of German reusable materials are allowed to wear the quality seal. Brussels is planning a respective change of the product identification. However; a judicial decision made in 2009 states that there is no European policy which indicates if the quality seal “Made in Germany” can be used or not. Decisive are the customs code and the fair trade law – and they make clear: There cannot be a

deception of customers. The quality seal will only be used for products that have received a treatment decisive for its quality. Only then, according to experts for trademarks, it is clear that the customer can have special expectations in regards to product quality and dependability.

## **LEADERS AND POLITICS**

**U.S. Army withdrawal would affect county of Schweinfurt (16 Jan,2012)** County Commissioner: Prepare for “if worst comes to worst.” In the past weeks announcements concerning the reduction of U.S. forces in Europe were made in regular intervals. Should the Schweinfurt garrison also be affected it would have a severe impact on the county. This is what County Commissioner Harald Leitherer announced during his annual press conference last Friday at the office of the County Commissioner: “It would be disastrous should the garrison be closed.” Because of the approximately 12,000 Americans the majority of whom lives in communities in the county of Schweinfurt. It would be especially hard for the landlords who built two or more family houses for U.S. Soldiers and who would lose the rent income. Such housing units were built for example in Poppenhausen, Geldersheim and Niederwerrn. Furthermore, there would be the question on how to deal with the military properties since a large part of the installations, namely Conn Barracks belong to the county. Leitherer states: “Therefore we have to get together with the surrounding communities Geldersheim, Euerbach and Niederwerrn to develop a concept for future use “if worst comes to worst.” He said that he would start making corresponding discussions, soon.

**More information on troop reductions end of January - Lord Mayor Remele will talk to the Commanding General, U.S. Army Europe (20 Jan, 2012).** That the Americans will reduce their forces in Europe seems to be agreed upon. Uncertain is which garrisons will be affected. Lord Mayor Remele does not have any additional information; however; he used the meeting of the environmental committee to inform the public about the heavy activities in regards to this matter. For understandable reasons many of the citizens are concerned about this Subject. The town hall will give out information as soon as “applicable information” is available.

Remele showed initiative: On 13 January he talked to LTC Michael D. Runey, Commander of the USAG Schweinfurt. On 17 January he contacted the Bavarian State Chancellery; on 18 January he had a conversation with the responsible secretary of state at the Federal Defense Department. So far nobody knows anything concrete but there are signals that this may change by the end of the month. Lord Mayor Remele hopes to get first hand information when he will meet the Commanding General, U.S. Army Europe. He asked the members of the city council not to send out wrong signals and not to give room for speculations. One of the members of the city council (left wing) recommended that the city should be thinking of an alternate use for the military properties. Lord Mayor Remele did not like this suggestion at all and stopped any talk about this subject.

Speculations were triggered by reports concerning a drawdown of forces and the cost saving plans of the U.S. government mainly affecting the U.S. troops stationed in Europe.

The defense budget of the Pentagon supposedly will be announced in February. Known so far is that two of the four combat brigade teams stationed in Europe will return to the States. It is said that affected will be the 170<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade in Baumholder and the 172<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade in

Grafenwoehr. At the present time approximately 6,000 Soldiers and as many family members are living here in Schweinfurt

### **Drawdown of U.S. Soldiers from Bavaria (20 Jan, 2012)**

Will the United States Army Garrison in Schweinfurt close due to planned force reductions? If so, approximately 600 civilian employees would be affected. According to the trade union Ver.di, indications are on the rise. Two of the four large brigades currently in Europe will be withdrawn. Since there are hardly any combat troops stationed in Schweinfurt, the concern was not too great. However, speculation is that the support units stationed in Schweinfurt could also be withdrawn. The uncertainty among the approximately 600 civilian employees is growing says Michael Dörfer, chairman of the works council. He, together with the trade union Ver.di, requests if the garrison does close, the employees at risk of losing their jobs will be properly trained to be able to compete in the German job market.

### **Drawdown of U.S. Soldiers from Bavaria (13 Jan, 2012)**

In a radio announcement concerning the reduction of U.S. forces in Bavaria Lord Mayor Remele of Schweinfurt said: "There are between 4,500 and 5,000 Soldiers stationed in Schweinfurt and about the same number of families who are living here. The U.S. Army employs approximately 520 civilian employees. In Lord Mayor Remele's opinion the concern about the future of the Schweinfurt garrison is almost an every year occurrence. Lord Mayor Remele's concerns are put into perspective with the indication that there are hardly any combat troops but mainly support units stationed in Schweinfurt, a city with 53,000 residents.

### **Germany is growing – Majority of immigrants are coming from Poland (14 Jan, 2012)**

The number of citizens in Germany increased in 2011. Mostly immigrants from other EU states such as Poland, Rumania and Italy increased Germany by a number of citizens the size of a city like Passau or Speyer according to the Federal Statistics office. More than 81.80 million people were living in Germany at the end of 2011 – 50,000 more than the year before. In 2011 about 240,000 more people moved to Germany than people left Germany. That is the highest number in 10 years. However; in middle term and long term the numbers of citizens will decrease. The society will consist of more foreigners and will be more colorful and that is a chance for Germany according to Andreas Steinle of the future institute in Frankfurt. The younger generation is more mobile, thinks more global and sees Europe as their home.

## **SPORTS/ATHLETICS**

### **It was a great weekend for the Mighty Dogs – Hollweg meets his successor at his final game (16 Jan, 2012)**

After the game against Königsbrunn which the Mighty Dogs won with 7:2 the club manager finally announced Hollweg's successor – the 26-year old Teemu Koskinen from Finland. He used to play for the Knongsvinger Knights, 2<sup>nd</sup> Norwegian League. Before introducing the new player, the American Bryce Hollweg was bid farewell. The U.S. Soldier who has to serve six months in Afghanistan played a good game and scored the 3:2 which brought the Mighty Dogs on the way to victory.