

**Comment by Simon McDonald, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Germany  
Oxford German Forum, 18 January 2013:**

*The Future of European Integration: British, German, and European Perspectives*

I am delighted that the Oxford University German Forum Society is organising the Oxford German Forum 2013 to discuss UK-Germany relations and perspectives on the future of the European integration. The Society with its annual Forum is a prime example of bringing together British and German students, politicians, academics and other leading minds to discuss and advance our bilateral relationship.

At the beginning of 2013, the UK can look back at a special year. We celebrated The Queen's Diamond Jubilee. We staged wonderful Olympic and Paralympic Games; London 2012 was a huge success and will deliver a lasting regeneration, sporting and economic legacy. The Diamond Jubilee and London 2012 have successfully demonstrated the continuous soft power of the United Kingdom; one magazine at least ranks us at No 1.

In 2013, Britain and Germany will continue to work together in the EU and international institutions to tackle European and global challenges. Our relationship has been deep and strong. Germany is the UK's second largest export market worldwide and provider of the greatest share of UK imports. The UK remains the No 1 investment destination for German companies.

On Europe, there is no more important issue than resolving the Eurozone crisis. It is a British interest for the Eurozone to recover. But the EU is about more than the Eurozone. The EU's greatest recent achievements are the establishment of the Single Market and EU enlargement. Both have helped to spread peace, democracy and the rule of law across Europe. We should recognise these achievements and embrace Europe's diversity.

We need to discuss Europe because both the German and the British perspectives matter to its future. That is why I welcome the Oxford German Forum and wish you good discussions and a successful conference.

Simon McDonald