Current company survey / Decision-makers from the United Kingdom want to expand abroad - Germany and Rheinisches Revier in demand

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More than half of decision-makers in the UK plan to expand abroad in the next five years, according to a recent YouGov survey commissioned by NRW.Global Business. 72 percent of the respondents are considering Germany and even 84 percent specifically Rheinisches Revier. The younger generation of corporate decision-makers is particularly enthusiastic about the industrial hub in western Germany. That's no coincidence, as the study shows: Rheinisches Revier corresponds exactly to the expectations of a good business location.

Decision-makers in companies from the United Kingdom are open to expanding abroad and have rated Germany as a particularly attractive location. According to a recent YouGov survey (in Switzerland, the Netherlands and the UK), 22 percent of decision-makers surveyed in the UK plan to expand abroad in the short term, with a further 27 percent planning to do so within the next two to five years. According to the survey, young people in particular are keen to expand: seven out of ten young decision-makers (aged up to 34) are seriously considering expansion within the next five years or are about to do so.

Germany is highly regarded by UK decision-makers: almost three-quarters of respondents (72 percent) rate the location as attractive (31 percent "very attractive", 41 percent "rather attractive"). According to the survey, Germany convinces them with key factors: they appreciate the "geographical location" as well as the "well-developed infrastructure". In addition, the decision-makers see a high "availability of skilled workers" and highlight "strong research partners" and a "digital environment".

Rheinisches Revier excites the young generation

In particular, Rheinisches Revier, which is currently transforming from Europe's largest open-cast lignite mine to a climate-neutral industrial region, convinces decision-makers from the United Kingdom: with around 84 percent, a clear majority of respondents find the region attractive ("very attractive" and "rather attractive"). In the target group of 18 to 34-year-olds, almost all respondents (94 percent) are enthusiastic about the industrial hub in western Germany. Jochen Pollotzek, General Manager of Rheinisches Revier at NRW.Global Business, is not surprised by these figures: "We offer companies from the United Kingdom access to important EU markets and a clear vision." He goes on to say: "We are pleased that we can attract the young generation and are able to shape the future together with them."

Rheinisches Revier meets crucial site requirements

The high level of approval is no coincidence: the transformation region meets the criteria that are important to decision-makers for a location: "geographical location" (38 percent), "availability of skilled workers" (36 percent), "well-developed infrastructure" (31 percent) and, for some, also "strong research partners" (10 percent) - factors such as these were recognised by the respondents as decisive for investments.

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"Around 60 million people live within a radius of 250 kilometres, including, of course, many highly trained specialists," Pollotzek emphasises, referring to its proximity to the economic metropolises of Cologne and Düsseldorf as well as to Europe's most important seaports. In addition, according to Pollotzek, there's "commercial space in a prime location as well as attractive funding instruments". "We are also working on digital transformation together with a network of internationally leading research institutions in the region," says Pollotzek.

Likewise, the technological priorities of the UK decision-makers are in line with the future fields of Rheinisches Revier: "Artificial intelligence" and "IoT" are mentioned by a large number of respondents as important trends for the next five years. "We have created an environment that explicitly relies on these future technologies," says Jochen Pollotzek. "Rheinisches Revier offers a particularly innovation-friendly setting for AI and IoT," says Pollotzek, "also thanks to Microsoft's planned hyperscale data centres."

In addition to technological aspects, sustainability also plays a relevant role in the investment decision. 23 percent of decision-makers cite it as an important factor. The transformation of Rheinisches Revier into a climate-neutral industrial location is therefore likely to be well received.

About the survey

The data of this survey on behalf of NRW.Global Business is based on online interviews with members of the YouGov panel who have agreed to participate in advance. For this survey, a total of 554 company decision-makers in the UK were surveyed in the period from 12th to 18th May 2025. The survey was not quoted and the results were then not weighted. The results are not necessarily representative.

About Rheinisches Revier

Rheinisches Revier in the west of North Rhine-Westphalia is Europe's largest lignite mining region and a centre of energy-intensive industry in Germany. The region will phase out open-cast lignite mining by 2030. Thanks to a transformation budget of 14.8 billion euros and favourable starting conditions, Rheinisches Re- vier is now being developed into Europe's first climate-neutral industrial location. North Rhine-Westphalia's state-owned trade agency NRW.Global Business works to convince international companies to participate in this project and capitalise on the momentum for change.

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