

Press Release

Moers (Germany) 14.1.2014

Ireland's GATHERING and a German Irish Cultural festival series to promote it

We are no strangers to Irish Tourism and know that the Gathering issue has been discussed in your country quite controversial. Some "Friends of Ireland" in Germany, with various connections to the Emerald Isle, have undertaken a massive promotional campaign to maximise the marketing potential of your wonderful nationwide festival of events:

We have created our own series of events, have called it "**500 Days of Irish Life in Germany**" (which in fact now are even rather **800**) in order to coincide with Ireland's EU Presidency.

We use them for promoting the idea of going to Ireland in 2013 – not any later. Because of the Gathering.

We have communicated **two main "reasons"** to the public:

1. The Gathering is this year's unique and one-off chance to experience all that Ireland is about, in particular it's many facets of arts and culture.
2. Tourism has the potential of balancing out regional imbalances if managed properly. And because tourism in Ireland is mainly characterised by locally organised and family-owned structures, revenue arrives quicker where it is needed strongly: at the landlady, the local shop owner or at the pub owner who still provides his guests with handmade music in the region.

In the following we want to give you the shortest possible update on our project in connection with Ireland taking over the EU presidency on 1 January 2013:

* The original idea of the project was to organise 30 Nights with really huge events relating to Irish Arts & Culture.

* For time and other reasons we changed our plans and returned to the at the same time old and new project of coordinating a host of Irish related events organised by others (practised already in a similar manner in 1996 with Ireland being guest of honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair): **500 Days of Irish Life in Germany 2013** (during the first half of the year).

* Application for funding through Culture Ireland was made (15 August 2012) but turned down on 23 October 2012.

* However: The small association in charge, Netzwerk Irland, got strong support from the magazine *irland journal* (office work) and the travel agency Gaeltacht Irland Reisen (use of staff members, office facilities and expertise).

*** The main goal has been achieved: We have just published our calendar of events – not only containing 500, but 800 Irish cultural events nationwide (months January till June). First events have already taken place.**

Most of these events will be used as a (additional) platform to promote the idea of travelling to Ireland this year – and we will employ the strong message the Gathering represents to invite all the 150,000 attendants to these events (our original guess was just 100,000) to the Green Isle.

Our last three newsletters have presented the relevant **new landing page for this project**; most of our many other websites are linking to it already as well:

www.gaeltacht.de/days

There, you and the public can find online:

- **all participating artists/groups (updated every 1 or 2 days)**
- **all locations/venues (including an interactive map of Germany of these)**
- **a downloadable and sortable excel table containing the whole calendar (revised every fortnight)**

Our main 252 page “**IRISH LIFE – Story and Travelbook on a green Island**” is out.. **You can view it online here only at this moment:**

E-Book Link:

http://www.bestofireland.de/Ebooks/irlandjournal_412/index.html

PDF Link:

<http://www.gaeltacht.de/download/pdf/ij-4-12.pdf>

All visitors of “Day” events get it for free – a huge logistical challenge. Irish Ambassador to Germany, Dan Mulhall wrote a warm welcome message for it as well as Moya Brennan from Clannad. Fortunately, our partner agency Wild Heart Management from Hamburg (www.wild-heart-management.de) managed to win over some well-known sponsors such as Kerrygold, Guinness, Kilkenny, Sony Music and many more (see list below) for supporting the project.

- For time, staff and financial reasons we did *not* manage, yet, to include the approximately 4,000 German secondary schools or those 1,300 so-called German Community Adult Education Centres (Volkshochschulen) to become part of this all but are still keen and planning to approach them.

- We also have a list of about 100 artists of all kinds still waiting for an opportunity to perform as well. This individual networking process requires just a “little” more time.

Nationwide German papers have **up to this date** already featured Ireland’s current new and old European role.

We hope there will be more support from what side ever in order to maximise the marketing potential all these events carry. Because we also have a first (and already big) list of events taking place **in the second part of the year**. Or next year, for that matter.

You will easily understand our position: We would be foolish to stop our activities after these six months of Ireland's EU Presidency. With huge efforts we again have a structure and a network in place which we will use more often in the future and which we can make available to all interested parties. There will be many more opportunities and everybody, who wants to and sees a chance in benefitting from it, can become part of it. As with your Gathering.

All our good wishes for the Gathering 2013!

The more community groups, local artists and small festival organizers will be part of it, the bigger the success will be! We also believe that a downloadable list of Gathering events would be extremely helpful for international guests – they could sort it themselves for locations, counties or type of venues.

Christian Ludwig, January 14th, 2013

(Gaeltacht Irland Reisen/irland journal)

and on behalf of the registered association Netzwerk Irland (Network Ireland).

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Websites/more information:

www.gaeltacht.de/days
www.irland-journal.de
www.netzwerkirland.de (90% of all stuff is in English)

List of sponsors as per 28 December 2012:

A.S.S. Concerts (**Clannad**), Warsteiner (for **Guinness** and **Kilkenny**), **Sony Music**, **DEAG**, **Karsten Jahnke**, IDB Deutschland (for **Kerrygold**), **Europartner aktiv**, **Meisner Spirituosen**, **Siamsa Tíre**, Campari (for **Tullamore**), **Temple Bar Trad**, Borco (for **Locke's Whiskey**), **P&O Ferries**, **DFDS Seaways**, **Irish Ferries**, **irland journal Magazine**, **Gaeltacht Irland Reisen**. More (hopefully) to come ...

PS:

Our sponsor, tour operating and specialist travel agency Gaeltacht Irland Reisen (doing nothing else but Ireland, celebrating it's 30th birthday in May 2013) is possibly the only one in the world to start it's brochure with an 12-page appetising list of Gathering events, online and offline:

http://www.gaeltacht.de/download/pdf/Zusammenkommen_low.pdf

More information:

Combined History of **Gaeltacht** (Travel Agency + Tour Operator) & Magazine **irland journal**:

http://www.gaeltacht.de/index_A0001273011.htm