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**on behalf of**

- the registered charity “**Netzwerk Irland**” (see below)
- the **magazine irland journal**

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**COPY OF THE LETTER TO THE TAOISEACH,  
TO THE PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. HIGGINS AND SOME OTHER  
DEPARTMENTS...**

Moers / Germany – 7.8.2012

**Subject: Germany 2013 – Revised plan/ Why urgent action is required /  
The new concept of “500 Days of Irish Life in Germany 2013”**

Dear **XXX**

You may remember or have heard about the suggested cultural projects during Ireland’s EU presidency in 2013. **GERMANY 2013** is an opportunity to showcase what is unique and great about Ireland, its people and its culture. The project “30 Nights of Irish Arts & Culture” was supposed to be an important part of it, its organisation is still possible, but it is critically late. We want to keep it as an option while **now focusing** on another project with the title “**500 Days of Irish Life in Germany**”.

Our plans “30 Nights of Irish Arts & Culture” received a lot of attention and positive reactions like these:

**Michael D Higgins:** “I’m more than willing to be the patron of these... nights”,

**Dan Mulhall, Ambassador to Germany:** “marvellous and very important”

**Zoe Redmond, Frankfurt, Manager Central Europe:** “We’ll support it wherever we can”

**Dinny McGinley, Minister of State in the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht:** “Very important for Ireland – I will bring it to Minister Jimmy Deenihan’s attention”

**Individual members of the community (incl. artists):** “Best idea ever. Can we be part of it?”

**However, no progress has been made since.**

This is why some “Aficionados of Ireland” are, at this minute, re-inventing the old (existing, but until recently “sleeping”) registered charity “**Netzwerk Irland e.V.**”, founded around the Frankfurt Book Fair 1996, in order to network people and institutions on basis of the new project.

In order to keep the “30 Nights of Irish Arts & Culture” as an option we (Netzwerk Irland and the irland journal magazine) are already working on the

**“500 Days of Irish Life in Germany 2013” :**

**500 small and big cultural events to happen in the first four or six months of 2013:  
concerts, readings, lectures, other performances – all over Germany.**

All relevant institutions, promoters, but also private persons will be asked to come up with ideas; we will match those who want to organise such an event with those artists, lecturers, musicians, who can “perform”.

Background - we have considerable experience in this:

**1996: Frankfurt Book Fair, our masterpiece:** Focal Theme: Ireland and its Diaspora. Insiders do know that we were responsible for an Irish participation – we even granted (and gave) some considerable money as sponsors. Our idea was simple: We should not have the party (events) all over Frankfurt and its surrounding area – but all over Germany instead! *At the end, some 1.300 cultural events were part of this nationwide festival - “A Day of Irish Live in Germany” - and took place in the months of September to December, all under one umbrella and all co-ordinated by an (necessarily) expanded team of the *irland journal* and by *Gaeltacht Irland Reisen* – with a lot of input by *Netzwerk Irland*.*

**The main reasons, motives and the target for these “500 Days” are the same as for the originally planned “30 Nights of Irish Arts & Culture”:**

The huge publicity for Ireland goes up in smoke if you cannot offer something personal, something real, something you can personally “experience”. Arts & Culture must be experienced personally. To create such a physical promotional platform is the ideal thing to do if none other suitable platform does exist.

**Target:** Potential Visitors. **500 Days:** present Ireland, the new Emerald Island, make it palpable. Expected audience: **100,000 people** and more.

The 500 Days will have a clear promotional aspect, it is much more than l’art pour l’art.

Each night will follow a plan, which will strengthen the guests` desire to visit Ireland soon. A process like this can work on different levels, but the preparation of plan and holiday should at least be initiated on that night, which of course challenges the organisers.

Nationwide press coverage is a key for the success of the “500 Days”. Regional media will report about Ireland, its policy and culture, if the cooperation with local partners is securely planned. Tourism in Ireland and others (big attractions, big or small festivals in Ireland will also have a part in the regional media, because Ireland is a very popular destination for Germans since the 1970s.

**All press publications should incorporate a clear “Gathering message”.** Promotional activities (online/ social media/ press releases) for one of the events should always include information on the other events. We can explore ways of jointly promoting via a website etc. We can also bring German “Day of Irish Life events” together with Irish Gathering events. **(See appendix I)**

See **Appendix I** for further information on German-Irish (Cultural) Relations – in a critical European context of today.

**Furthermore – the issue and mechanism of detailed “Funding applications”:**  
**The following text was posted on the website of Culture Ireland, but relatively late (June 2012):**

*Culture Ireland is planning a cultural programme to mark Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union which spans the first six months of 2013. Proposals are invited from Irish artists and companies and European presenters. Tours to multiple locations are welcome.*

*Through this programme it is hoped to engage with citizens within Europe and beyond. The Presidency coincides with the 40th anniversary of Ireland's accession to the EU and 2013 is also likely to be designated as the European Year of Citizens.*

*The cultural programme offers the opportunity to expand the reach of Irish culture to new audiences and to build on the presence of Irish artists at key European festivals and venues. It is intended to present a range of artistic events across the EU with a special focus on France and Germany. Proposals are invited from Irish artists and companies and European presenters. Tours to multiple locations are welcome.*

Projects should be submitted online [here](#) as part of our Special Initiatives programme. Large scale significant projects which may require early confirmation for contract purposes should be signalled as early as possible. Closing date for submission of proposals is the **15th of August 2012**.

It appears to me that 50% or more of the required information (in the application form) can't be given yet: Part of our projects are still in a process of developing, other parts of our projects are just not meeting some specific criteria.

Questions: **How can we bridge this gap? How definite is the deadline?**

On the other side a lot of **different funding opportunities** are listed on the Arts Council's website. We cannot understand all the secrets and implications of them. I take only this one as an example:

<a href="#">Regularly funded organisations</a>	11 October 2012	The purpose of this programme is to strengthen and make more secure a group of key arts organisations, by contributing to both Un-their operating and artistic programming costs. This funding limited programme is not open to general applications. Instead, the Arts Council will invite organisations to participate on the basis of published criteria.
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You can imagine that we already invested a lot of time and manpower (see: **Appendix 4**) in our plans and projects of **GERMANY 2013**. You will find even more information on that in **Appendix 2**. We are happy about the verbal support from official side (see above).

However, we don't know how to achieve any further progress.

We need your concret support and funding.

It's August 2012 now, and it's high time for action if we do want to initiate our projects of "**500 Days of Irish Life in Germany**" and **GERMANY 2013** successfully.

**How can you assist us in exploiting this once in a lifetime opportunity of marketing Ireland? Geermany 2013 will benefit its people and its artists and expand the exchange between our countries greatly.**

At this stage it is me (Christian Ludwig) to forward all these information to you. But I'm acting on behalf of the charity "Netzwerk Irland". This is (as said above) currently re-invented (after some years of no activities at all) and will be completely back on track in about 8-14 days.

**Please take this as an advanced and urgent cry for help.** Yet, everything can be done as outlined. But we can't come any further alone.

With my kindest regards

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(On behalf of Netzwerk Irland, irland journal magazine and further supporters)

**List of Appenixes / Enclosures >>>>>>**

## List of separate appenixes / enclosures:

- I **German-Irish (Cultural) Relations – in a critical European context of today**  
And:  
**How to connect all projects in Germany 2013 with each other and multiply media coverage - The importance of the Gathering message**
- II **Projects we already started in support of GERMANY 2013**
- III **Projects and work we already started in support of GERMANY 2013:**
- IV **Estimated costs**
- V **Most crucial: the timetable**
- VI **So many more most concrete ideas**
- VII **“Thank you Letter from the Arts Council 1996 re “Day of Irish Life”**

## Separate Ecnclose:

- VII **Background & History: the Day of Irish Life Festival 1996 – around the Frankfurt Book Fair (“Ireland and ist Diaspora”)**  
**What happened in Germany 1996?**  
**Extracts from the two main brochures/programmes**