

Unfortunately, this is not a nightmare, It is the reality



British business leaders warn Brexit would deter investment, threaten jobs.

EPA/ANDY RAIN



by Ingeborg Graessle

A German Member of the European Parliament and Member of the European People's Party Group she is on the budgetary committee, the budgetary control committee and on the Palestinian delegation.

More than one week has already passed since the "incident", and we still have difficulties believing what has happened. Everything feels like after a bad dream: bathed in sweat, you wake up from an imaginary chase with an indistinguishable dark stranger – only to find out that this time, Evil Brexit Man caught you for real.

For us Germans, the fact that the conditions of the future relation between the United Kingdom and the EU single market have been put in limbo is an economic debacle indeed. As a Member of the European Parliament, I represent Baden-Württemberg, one of Europe's economic powerhouses. Our economy is based on machine construction. Tens of thousands of people, Germans and EU citizens, get to hold attractive posts and earn a good living thanks to our precise engineering and the innovative quality of our products.

The UK is our 4th most important client after the US, China and France, and we earn 5 billion euros every year through trade with the UK in this industry alone. The cars produced in my region are well known: who has never dreamt of driving a



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Porsche, a Mercedes or an Audi?

Now, we see the pound sterling being sent on a frightening rollercoaster. We see hesitant SME entrepreneurs who ask themselves if they should continue their investments in the UK. Here, more than anything else, predictable conditions for and access to the single market are of utmost importance.

I have asked the mayors of the cities in my constituency to provide sites for British companies which might feel the need to relocate to the "continent". But we would all appreciate if they remained in the UK, and if the UK remained in the EU. We need them, they are our friends, likeminded people sharing the same values – yes, also on the best use of EU money.

Since 1914, very courageous British

people came to the continent's rescue twice and helped it survive. They gave their own blood to bring us back on the right track, in particular us Germans. Now, in times of peace and great prosperity, they seem to have lost confidence in themselves and their ability to bring things back on the right track yet again.

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I regret the decision taken by British voters first and foremost with a view to the young generation of Britons, who have been

outvoted in the referendum by their elderly compatriots. Analyses of the voting behaviour have shown that about three quarters of voters between 18 and 25 years voted in favour of remaining in the EU, whereas a large majority of pensioners backed Brexit. It will be those young Brits, not their parents and grandparents, who will have to bear the full consequences of this decision for decades to come. It is with those young people in mind that we have to work towards a continued good cooperation with the UK, whatever legal form this cooperation may take.

Do not worry, we will survive, and the European Union will survive. But our hearts are bleeding as we see the UK taking a fatal step in a really bad direction. Unfortunately, this is not a nightmare. It is the reality.