

## World Eye Reports

## North Rhine-Westphalia

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## NRW offers fresh opportunities

Of Germany's 19 states, North Rhine-Westphalia is arguably the most industrialized, most cosmopolitan and most advanced – boasting a myriad of small- and medium-size businesses, technical universities, as well as research and design facilities.

Economically speaking, NRW accounts for 22 percent of Germany's total gross domestic product (GDP), displaying particular strength in the automotive, chemical and biotechnology industries, metal production and processing, rubber and plastics production, mechanical engineering, logistics, energy supply, consulting and health care.

The state's ideal investment environment and excellent infrastructure have attracted billions of dollars in investments from around the world, including Japan.

"As an independent export entity, the total volume of trade (of NRW) is €54.80 billion," says Petra Wassner, CEO of NRW.INVEST, the state agency tasked to attract more foreign capital to the region.

Generating one-third of all the electricity in Germany, NRW has emerged as a leader in the industry, both in the country and in the rest of Europe.

In fact, it has become a hotbed for innovation in energy, developing the latest technologies for renewable energy such as solar power systems, fuel cells and wind generators.

Meanwhile, the state's univer-



North Rhine-Westphalia Minister of Economic Affairs and Energy Christa Thoben

sities and technical institutions have stepped up their research in "greener" energy technology for power stations and energy grids, as well as in increased uses of hydrogen.

For more than a century now, Japan has shown a strong commitment to NRW, whose capital Düsseldorf hosts the third-largest Japanese population in Europe.

To date, there are 533 Japanese companies in NRW, led by global giants such as Hitachi, Toshiba, Daikin and Mitsubishi.

In 2011, NRW will celebrate 150 years of relations with Japan by launching an expanded Japan Week, the first of which was held in 1993 and attended

by Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko.

Since 2002, the state has organized a Japan Day sometime in May, an event that showcases Japanese culture through exhibits, food tastings and various business conferences.

"The festival attracts 1 million visitors. It might be one of the largest intercultural events worldwide," says Wassner.

"We are appreciative of the regional support given to the Japanese community. Factors such as attainability of visas, low tax percentages and logistics make starting a business in North Rhine-Westphalia very accessible," says Japanese Chamber of Commerce President Tokio Kawashima.

To complement previous efforts to promote the region, the state government also launched the WE LOVE THE NEW campaign, which enlists the private sector in organizing several conferences and projects around the world.

"The promotion of the region has expanded globally with special support from the state government. The idea is to promote our state abroad, define our image and describe what is happening here. We do this through foreign ambassadors and various companies headquartered here who share their love for the region. We love the new leading state in Europe and that is North Rhine-Westphalia," says Minister of Economic Affairs and Energy Christa Thoben. ♦

## Toyota continues to be a powerful player in the German market

With 75 manufacturing plants in 28 countries and sales and marketing operations in more than 170 countries, global car giant Toyota has needed to localize various aspects of its business and capitalize on the benefits of each of its territories to achieve its success.

From its headquarters in the German city of Cologne, Toyota Deutschland takes advantage of the country's strength in high technology to market cars that satisfy the sophisticated tastes of the European driver.

Around 1 million passenger cars are produced for the world market every year in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia.

"A localized approach for each region is essential. We study customer demand in each region and implement this strategy on all platforms," explains Toyota Deutschland President Toshiaki

Yasuda.

Its top-selling model, the Yaris, was designed specifically with the European customer in mind.

"This particular model has grown in popularity here because of its small size and reliability. At Toyota Germany, we are promoting the notion that small is beautiful," says Yasuda.

"We are in one of the most competitive markets in the auto industry and customer demand is very high. This is because the German customer's knowledge about vehicles is advanced. This is a big asset for Toyota and therefore, Germany is so important for car manufacturers," he adds.

"There is a car culture here that has given Toyota opportunities to learn about German business. My hope is for the market share in Germany to increase. We don't want to be a giant. We want people in each country to be familiar



Toyota Deutschland President Toshiaki Yasuda

with the Toyota vehicle. For a Japanese manufacturer, we have a lot to learn from Germany," he also says. ♦

www.toyota.de

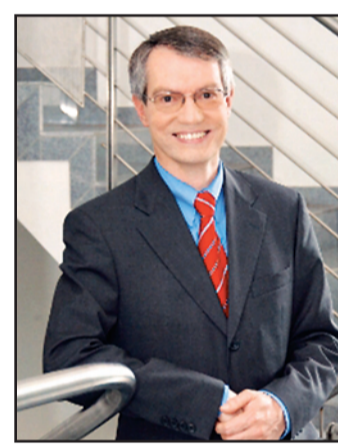
## BYK strikes the right chemistry in Japan

BYK launched its first Asian operation in Japan 30 years ago, supplying the country with its advanced line of additives and instruments for coatings, inks, plastics, adhesives, sealants and paper surfaces.

From its recently opened head office in Ichigaya in Tokyo and its two laboratories near the cities of Osaka and Nagoya, BYK oversees its business with clients in the paint and plastics industry that includes leaders such as Nippon Paint, Kansai Paint, DIC and DNT.

"We provide knowhow that helps our Japanese clients gain access to new applications and markets that will improve their competitive position. And there is a good fit between Japanese and German cultures as both countries are very technology-driven," says CEO Dr. Roland Peter.

With global business growing



BYK CEO Dr. Roland Peter

increasingly aware of environmental protection, BYK launched last year the Greenability program, aimed at helping all its customers worldwide achieve their own particular "green" objectives and targets.

In fact, BYK currently allots 50

percent of its R&D spending on the development of environmentally friendly products, such as VOC (volatile organic compounds)-free and UV (ultraviolet) radiation absorbing systems, and on the use of renewable raw materials in its products.

Confident that business in Japan will grow stronger, BYK has made more investments in new technological services and laboratories.

"We have 30 years of good relations with Japan. We understand their requirements and will continue to develop products for their needs. We have a reputation for being leaders in quality, innovation and service, and if our customers are successful, BYK is also successful," says Peter.

Based in the German city of Wesel, BYK employs 1,200 staff worldwide and has subsidiaries in 100 countries around the globe. ♦

www.byk.com

## Zwilling builds on long history, keen quality and cutting-edge design

Founded in 1731 in a medieval German city famous for its sword-making tradition, Zwilling J.A. Henckels is arguably one of those world-renowned brands that has become synonymous with the products it makes.

One of the world's oldest brands, Zwilling J.A. Henckels has combined a history of quality, easy functionality, excellent design and technological innovation in producing its various lines of cutlery, kitchen gadgets, cookware, scissors, flatware and beauty instruments.

From its headquarters in Solingen, known fondly as the "City of Blades," the company presides over its several overseas subsidiaries and export business, which accounts for around 85 percent of total turnover.

One of the company's top-selling products are the MIYABI knives, which are made in Seki, Gifu Prefecture, also famous for its knives, and which combine German engineering with Japanese craftsmanship.

"Every culture has its own tools. So, we address this by having a permanent exchange of ideas with our network of worldwide subsidiaries, sales force and designers to meet the demands of our worldwide consumers," says CEO Claus Holst-Gydesen.

In differentiating its brand from rival companies, Zwilling J.A. Henckels launched the concept of the Modern Living Kitchen, which highlights the kitchen as the heart of the home where families and friends gather to prepare and enjoy food.

"This broadens our perspective to other areas. It leads our efforts in extending our brand in the cookware market," adds Holst-Gydesen.



Zwilling J.A. Henckels CEO Claus Holst-Gydesen

The Zwilling Group is also affiliated with the following internationally recognizable cookware and cutlery brands: Arcos Hermanos from Spain, Tweezerman from the U.S., Demeyere from Belgium and Staub from France.

"We will continue to be at the forefront of the market by targeting consumers and retailers all over the world who appreciate applying and promoting the best quality products to prepare and enjoy food," says Holst-Gydesen. ♦

www.zwilling.com

## The future is found in North Rhine-Westphalia

The most economically powerful state in Germany has continued to develop and attract more business and investment.

With around 150 million people living within a 500-km radius of the capital Düsseldorf, North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) become an important European financial and business center as several companies choose to establish their headquarters in the state.

Dating back to the 1960s, NRW.INVEST is the state's one-stop economic development agency that helps companies set up operations in the region. In recent years, it has expanded support to include technology investment, as well as research related to new industries, such as renewable energy and e-mobility.

NRW.INVEST has increased efforts to promote e-mobility, the latest trend to take global business. "Our aim is to press ahead with research and development in this sector and to turn NRW into Eu-

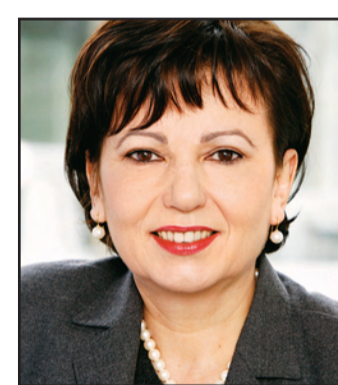
rope's first large-scale model. By 2020, there should be at least 250,000 electric cars in use here," says NRW.INVEST CEO Petra Wassner, who believes NRW and Japan will benefit much through collaboration in this field.

Hosting one of the densest populations of Japanese businesses and residents in Europe, NRW has placed much importance on its connection to Japanese companies, all of which have benefited from the region's central location and quality infrastructure.

Recognizing that valuable connection, the state government opened in 1992 NRW Japan K.K in Tokyo to help Japanese companies move to the German state.

"It is an attractive location with Japanese international schools, kindergartens, banks, hotels and restaurants," highlights Wassner, who describes the state as "living culture."

Every year, the state celebrates Japan Day with around 1 million visitors arriving taking part in the



NRW.INVEST CEO Petra Wassner

special event.

And next year, NRW will hold Japan Week, organized by NRW.INVEST, the city of Düsseldorf and the Japanese community, to commemorate 150 years of German-Japanese ties.

"For years, Japan and NRW have had a long-standing tradition that is not only reflected in our economic relationships but also in cultural collaboration. We would like to continue to strengthen this network of trade and investments. NRW is the ideal location for future-oriented companies and Japanese investors too can benefit from this sound basis," says Wassner. ♦

www.nrwinvest.com

## Shiseido – beautifying Germany for 30 years

Founded in 1872, Shiseido is one of the world's oldest cosmetics companies. Offering a wide range of skin care products, fragrances and cosmetics, the prestigious Japanese brand encompasses age-old Eastern tradition with Western science and innovation.

At the forefront of cosmetic innovation, Shiseido continues to unify art and technology. As the first brand to have applied biotechnology to the field of cosmetics, Shiseido gathers results from its vast network of global research centers to further solidify the brand as a pioneer in the world of beauty.

Shiseido has built its prestigious brand through a philosophy that combines the ideas of richness, human science and *omotenashi*.

Through the years, Shiseido has displayed richness as seen in its evolving product development, design and marketing initiatives, all results of the scientific data and responses from customers collected by its R&D centers. Underlying all these efforts is the principle of *omotenashi* – the welcoming spirit of acceptance, willingness and assistance to meet the customer's needs.

Celebrating 30 years in Europe, Shiseido Deutschland, based in Düsseldorf, oversees operations in seven other European countries, namely Austria, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Belgium, Luxembourg and Slovakia.

The subsidiary also boasts Shiseido's largest training center in Europe, which offers courses and product training to trade partners and employees.

"Counseling sends a message that skin care is our strength. Employees understand the product and relay this to our customers. In our 30-year history, our training center has always been very important for us because it brings us closer to our customers," says Shiseido Deutschland President Yoshinori Nishimura.

Shiseido counts on its unique, extensive experience in research and product development to satisfy customers.

"We have a lot of experience. That is the difference between our competitors and us. Experience is the heart of our business for success in the past and in the future," says Nishimura.

This year, Shiseido enhances its reputation as a global prestige brand with the launch of innovative products such as the limited edition fragrance ZEN Purple and the Urban Environment UV Protection Cream.

Meanwhile, Shiseido Deutschland looks forward to steadily growing success in the country and the rest of its territory.

"I want to continue to make our employees proud of being a part of the Shiseido family. My goal of 100 percent customer satisfaction is most important. We will take steps to achieve this every day," Nishimura explains. ♦

www.shiseido.de



Shiseido Deutschland President Yoshinori Nishimura

## eBOX

NRW.INVEST is the state-run economic development agency that markets North Rhine-Westphalia as a lucrative location for foreign investment. NRW.INVEST provides data, legal advice and information about the state's economic structure and industrial sectors. It works closely with local and regional economic agencies, the Ministry for Economic Affairs, companies, trade federations and chambers of industry and commerce. [www.nrwinvest.com](http://www.nrwinvest.com)

Based in Solingen, known as Germany's "City of Blades," Kai Europe marks its 30th anniversary in the region with a continued commitment to quality and perfection. A subsidiary of the Japan-based Kai Group, the company blends age-old samurai tradition and up-to-date technology in producing top-caliber knives and cutlery. To commemorate the milestone, Kai launched the Shun Premier line. [www.kai-europe.com](http://www.kai-europe.com)

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy of North Rhine-Westphalia creates ideal conditions for business in the German state and highlights the region as an innovative and attractive industrial location. Led by Christa Thoben, the ministry is responsible for areas such as industrial sectors, foreign trade, industrial and structural development, small- to medium-size enterprises and energy. [www.economy.nrw.de](http://www.economy.nrw.de)

Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) is a government-related, nonprofit organization that promotes mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Through its offices in Düsseldorf and Berlin, JETRO provides German and Japanese companies in Germany with investment support and business development. [www.jetro.de](http://www.jetro.de)

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