*Date: May 7, 2015*

**US Russian Initiative Group Meeting Minutes**

**Participants:**

* Louis Wendling – Member of the BoD for French and German Chamber of Commerce in Minnesota
* Olesja Serenko
* Anastassia Maxwell

**Meeting Minutes:**

The meeting focused on how French and German Chambers of Commerce are organized and operating. The following is the summary of Louis’s presentation of the topic.

1. German Chamber of Commerce has 11 members. Each Board Member is responsible for these duties:
   1. Events – Organize at least 1 event per year
      1. One of the most memorable events was ‘Doing Business in Europe’ in a full-day format. They invited panel speakers with academic, diplomat, business backgrounds. 150 people attended. Topics included export/import issues, customs, etc.
      2. Success of each event is determined by the topic, quality of speakers, venue, convenient date, price, food/beverage.
   2. Member recruiting
   3. Sponsorship for events
2. German Chamber of Commerce actively works with the following organizations:
   1. Associated with ACG – American Council of Germany,
      1. ACG sends speakers all the time
   2. Minnesota International Center
      1. The center picks a theme each year, and then they participate in the events relate to the topic
   3. GAI – Germanic American Institute
      1. Offers German classes to adults
   4. Associated with ACG – American Council of Germany
3. Sponsorship – Findings sponsors: Try not to lose money, try to raise money, try to increase awareness
4. Suggestions for our immediate focus:
5. Legal Structure
6. Set of passionate people who participate
7. Bringing knowledge – contact two people:
   1. Jeffrey Phillips, up until 2 months ago he was an International Trade Rep for Europe and Russia; he has depth and breadth of knowledge.

<https://www.linkedin.com/profile/view?id=9284224&authType=NAME_SEARCH&authToken=Qa4k&locale=en_US&trk=tyah&trkInfo=clickedVertical%3Amynetwork%2Cidx%3A1-2-2%2CtarId%3A1431042192809%2Ctas%3AJEffrey>

* 1. Aneta Lennartson knows a lot of people in the European community

<https://www.linkedin.com/profile/view?id=14704500&authType=NAME_SEARCH&authToken=Hp7b&locale=en_US&trk=tyah&trkInfo=clickedVertical%3Amynetwork%2Cidx%3A1-1-1%2CtarId%3A1431044058187%2Ctas%3Aaneta%20lennart>

1. Weaknesses and Failures
   1. When the events are not promoted well by Board of Officers
2. Ideas
   1. They use Constant Contact to mass mail:
      1. http://www.constantcontact.com/pricing
      2. They do buy lists to reach network
      3. Chambers of Commerce are free members
   2. Website
   3. Stay organized, keep on people, so they pay their dues.
3. Board of Directors Structure:
   1. German one has 11 board members. Needs to be an uneven number.
   2. They also 4 non-board Officers who have their own responsibilities.
   3. If the Russian one has 7 active members, then we should pick 4 Officers; remaining 3 will be Directors. Separate the responsibilities.
   4. Recommended fees: Corp, Individual, Students per German CoC system.
   5. Current German Structure: President, VP, Executive Director (part-time, paid), Secretary
4. We need an annual retreat to go over what has worked, what has not, the past events and etc.
5. Annual Gala of the German CoC – Friday 30, 2015
   1. They are doing a new thing this year: COTY – Company of the year
   2. Allianz Insurance and Heraeus
   3. They usually have a speaker – not this year
   4. Black tie, Hilton hotel, $150 per person
   5. http://www.gaccom-mn.org/en/events/upcoming-events/gala-event-der-stern-des-nordens/