

Thursday, 8th May 2008

Sprechen Sie Deutsch? Students argue for better career opportunities

Germany is Ireland's leading continental European partner and with more than 235* Germany-based companies in Ireland employing approx 15,000 people**, the importance for Irish secondary school students to develop German language skills has never been more apparent.

Keenly aware of Ireland's need to develop foreign language skills, the German Teachers' Association of Ireland in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut in Dublin, organised "The All Ireland German Debating Competition," sponsored by Siemens, the final of which takes place in the Goethe-Institut, 37 Merrion Square, on Thursday May 8th.

"Ireland should continue to develop foreign language skills, such as German, in order to remain competitive, both in attracting foreign direct investment as well as for indigenous firms involved in the export market," said Josef Ruetzel, German Language Advisor to the Department of Education and Science and the Goethe-Institut. "In the modern world you should be multilingual."

Now in its 12th year, the competition aims to give pupils an opportunity to develop German speaking abilities, sharpen skills of argument, build confidence and teamwork skills and use knowledge of the German language beyond the confines of the classroom.

Out of 160 pupils from 40 secondary schools nationwide, two teams from Our Lady's College, Greenhills, Drogheda and St. Mary's Knockbeg College, Carlow have successfully battled their way to the final. The two teams will debate the motion "Irland verliert seine Identität (Ireland is losing its identity)" in a bid to win the title of the competition, which was formerly awarded European Label for Innovative Language Learning and Teaching.

Siemens Ltd
Registered Office
Fitzwilliam Court
Leeson Close
Dublin 2
Ireland

Registered in Dublin, Ireland
Registered No: 7347
Vat Registration No. IE8Y49352A

Telephone: (+353 1) 216 2000
Telefax: (+353 1) 216 3900
<http://www.siemens.ie>

Speaking about the relevance of sponsoring such an event, Mr. Brian Sweeney, Chairman, Siemens Limited said "Given the international nature of Ireland's economy, we believe it's important to help students develop the necessary skills to avail themselves of the career opportunities open to them.

But gaining competence in the German language is not purely about communication and comprehension-- it is also the means of gaining an understanding of the culture and mores of the country and its people."

According to Ruetzel, "Participating students not only improve their competency in language, debating and teamwork but also experience great enjoyment from the event which is seen as a novel way to teach a foreign language. The competition and prizes provide an extra incentive, thanks to generous sponsorship from Siemens Ireland."

* Source: German-Irish Chamber of Industry and Commerce, **Dept of Education and Science

-ends-

For further information please contact:

Michael O'Connor

Siemens Limited
Corporate Communications and Marketing

Fitzwilliam Court
Leeson Close
Dublin 2
Ireland

Phone: +353 (1) 216 2751

Fax: +353 (1) 216 2079

Email: occonnor.michael@siemens.com