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Language skills key for career opportunities

Students entering the workplace will find better opportunities if they are multilingual. "As a small open economy, we have to trade our way out of the present recession. Language skills will be critical to our success," said Paul Lynam, CFO of Siemens Limited.

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 took place in the Goethe-Institut, 37 Merrion Square, on Thursday May 14th.

"Now in its 13th 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," said Josef Ruetzel, German Language Advisor to the Department of Education and Science and the Goethe-Institut.

St. Leo's College, Carlow claimed the winning title in the final of the Siemens All Ireland German Debating competition, out of 156 pupils from 39 secondary schools nationwide. In what was a very tense and animated debate, they narrowly beat Mercy College from Sligo at the

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finals in Dublin. The motion was “Frauen hatten es noch nie so gut wie heute (Women today have never had it so good).”

Speaking about the relevance of sponsoring such an event, Mr. Lynam said “Given the international nature of Ireland’s economy and the competitive employment market, we believe it’s important to help students develop the necessary skills to avail themselves of the career opportunities open to them. “

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

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