The Bridge Between Business and Politics—The CCIs and Their Normative Foundations

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Before presenting the practical work done by the Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Germany based on the example of the CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria, it is important to understand what CCIs are. This chapter is dedicated to explaining the idea and working principles of a Chamber of Commerce and Industry. To get the ball rolling, a general article will explain all the essential standards that parametrise CCI work. A key term in this context is compulsory membership. Thereafter, the key role of volunteering along with the central committees of CCI work is explained in detail: the general assembly, the regional committees as well as the specialist committees and working groups. The fact that CCIs have always been a brand and are now shaped by an explicitly defined brand identity that unites them all will be another focus of this chapter. An interview will lay out the brand identity in detail. Finally, we will delve into the history of the CCIs.

- This is the CCI—the normative foundations of CCI work
- Volunteering—putting yourself in the service of the economy
- General assembly—taking responsibility together
- CCI regional committees—ensuring a direct link to regional activity
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- Interview with Gerti Oswald: CCI brand identity across Germany—placing the honourable merchant at its centre
- Historical review—how the chambers arose and developed
- Interview with Dr. Eva Moser: Leap into the modern age—celebrating 175 years of CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria
- Bavarian Business Archive—preserving the past for the present.

This Is the CCI—The Normative Foundations of CCI Work

CCIs have developed over a number of centuries and boast many different histories—originating directly from entrepreneurship or at the initiative of a king, as is the case in Bavaria—but always acting as a bridge between the economy and the state or its political apparatus. The foundations upon which all CCI in Germany rest are based on the country’s CCI Act of 1956. It defines the normative foundations of CCI work.

What is a chamber of commerce and industry? Based on what premise does it assert its right to exist? Who are its members? What are its tasks? In Germany, all this is enshrined in law—in its own legislation known as the CCI Act of 1956.

Essentially, it stipulates the following: In a democracy like that in Germany, individual sub-groups of a democratic society (or even its economy) can be granted the right and freedom to manage and represent themselves and to set their own rules. This is also the case with the nation’s CCIs. CCIs and their work thus enjoy democratic legitimacy.

Germany’s current 79 CCIs can only be established or dissolved by the state. These are classified as public bodies. Companies do not become members by voluntary decision, but by law. They are required to pay a membership fee for their membership. The law, which specifies the status and tasks attributed to the CCIs is the CCI Act (in German: “IHKG”). In Clause 1 of the CCI Act, its tasks are formulated as follows:

The Chambers of Commerce and Industry are tasked with... addressing the overall interests of their associated commercial entities in their districts, promoting the commercial economy and taking into account the economic interests of individual branches of industry or companies in a way that is both measured and balanced; in doing so, they bear particular responsibility for assisting and advising the authorities by means of submitting proposals, expert appraisals and reports and safeguarding the decency and manners that characterise the conduct of the honourable merchant.

It is from these lofty aspirations that the fundamentals of CCI work are derived.

Here is a brief summary to begin with.

CCIs as a Manifestation of Self-organisation and Self-responsibility Within the Economy

The German Chambers of Commerce and Industry serve the self-organisation of the nation's economy. Legislators believe that business and the economy can service the needs and tasks that fall to them better and more efficiently than a government agency, which is why CCIs are well placed to implement business-related matters—a belief supported in no small way by the member firms' practical knowledge upon which all CCI depend. Self-organisation means, in specific terms: CCIs implement those business-related tasks delegated to them by the state, ultimately replacing those services rendered under the guise of government administration. In addition, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry strengthen and promote the economy through its many services regarding all questions arising from the life cycle of a company.

However, it is also an expression of self-organisation and, above all, of individual responsibility that the Chambers represent the interests of their associated industrial economy, as well as that of all companies irrespective of size or systemic relevance. This is managed through elected voluntary assemblies on the basis of democratic principles. They keep policy makers and government administration abreast of the interests and needs of companies and lobby for the interests of businesses in the political or administrative sphere. The possibilities for participation relate exclusively to economic issues and concerns. The operational remit pursued by CCIs does not involve the consideration of socio-political and labour law interests.

This structure transforms stakeholders into participants. At the same time, a win-win situation is created for both state and industry: The state is able to streamline its structures while receiving information, support and advice by accessing the economy's expertise thanks to the CCIs. The economy becomes self-organising while receiving needs-oriented services, information and, above all, the possibilities of co-determination and conceptualisation from CCIs. As the official self-governing body of the regional economy, the Chamber can and must, where necessary, intervene against individual members who fail to comply with commonly agreed rules.

CCIs as a Manifestation of Democratic Participation and a Democratic Society

The principle of CCIs representing interests is, simultaneously, a key expression of democracy and freedom. The legislature has enshrined democratic principles in the economy in the form of the CCI Act, thereby strengthening and promoting the democratisation of society as a whole. The economy receives no patronage and is not subjected to the legislature's requirements; on the contrary: Through the work of the CCIs, the economy determines and shapes its own framework conditions, it maintains an effective say with regard to economic conditions and it forms part of

the democratic decision-making process, as will be shown repeatedly in the course of this book. The CCI is also democratically structured within itself and selects its committees according to democratic principles. Each CCI member regardless of size enjoys the right (but not the obligation) to co-determine matters at hand, and it may (but is not obligated to) participate in the decision-making process of the CCI.

The following applies: In order for the general representation of interests to be representative in nature, compulsory membership is essential. Or, to put it the other way around: Without compulsory membership, the general representation of interests would not be possible. In view of the fact that compulsory membership affects all companies within a CCI's region, the general representation of interests is established, thus preventing a situation whereby interests are only represented on a selective, one-sided or otherwise biased basis. This structure distinguishes the CCI in Central Europe from a mere private association, such as the chamber organisations found in Anglo-Saxon countries. These are mere service providers for their members, who may demand a corresponding fee for their services.

CCIs as a Mirror of the German Constitution

Furthermore, in their structures, the Chambers reflect the German understanding of the state and its fundamental principles—of representative democracy and the freedom of autonomous responsibility, federalism and the concepts of subsidiarity and solidarity.

Experts consider the CCI Act a modern law—it consists of only 15 paragraphs, its rules are not too constrictive and, above all, it establishes a clear framework. This facilitates creative freedom, and the implementation of legal tasks can be adapted to the changing times. The CCI principle is also compatible with European law. The Federal Constitutional Court (Bundesverfassungsgericht) has expressed its support for the current regional CCI system precisely because of a wave of increasing Europeanisation and globalisation.

The essential normative principles of Chamber work in detail.

Statutory Membership

Companies within a certain region become members of the regional CCI that bears responsibility for them, assuming that they fit with the definition set out under the CCI Act: Chamber members, therefore, are all natural persons, commercial companies, other pluralities of persons and legal entities under private and public law, to the extent that they are subject to trade tax and maintain a permanent establishment in the district of the respective Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The scope of membership also includes all natural persons and companies in the chamber district who exercise a freelance profession or who work in agriculture and forestry and are registered in the commercial register. Trade businesses, such as carpenters or

Fig. 2.1 Bavarian companies represent a broad mix of industries

Source: Bavarian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, 2019

bakers, however, do not belong to the CCI, due to the fact that they have their own Chamber. The CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria has roughly 390,000 members. In Germany, approximately 3.6 million companies are registered members of a CCI (see Fig. 2.1).

Statutory Membership Fee

CCI membership is required by law and is (usually) accompanied by a membership fee. This fee is based on the commercial income or profit arising from the commercial enterprise of member companies. The amount of this compulsory fee is determined by the General Assembly, the highest body of a CCI elected by the business community (see below). The fact that a membership fee is charged enables CCIs to carry out their tasks, in particular, those linked to the general representation of interests. Membership fees mean that the CCIs remain independent, both financially and with regards to the representation of interests. The average CCI membership fee is based on the paying member companies and averages EUR 303 per year. The majority of start-ups and low-income companies are exempt from any obligation to contribute. On balance, roughly 40 per cent of companies nationwide are exempted from paying the membership fee. The CCIs are mandated to utilise the membership fees paid both carefully and efficiently. In addition to the fee itself, other fees may be charged for public tasks delegated by the state, as well as fees for certain services (see Fig. 2.2).

Principle of Solidarity

The fees for the public tasks entrusted by the state serve to recover the costs associated with these tasks; services pertaining to the provision of information and initial consultation work are usually entirely cost-exempt. This means that CCIs always operate as mutually supportive groups: The membership fees—especially those paid by financially strong companies—benefit the entire commercial sector, and thus all existing members.

Source: Bavarian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, 2019

Fig. 2.2 Almost 90% of Bavarian companies with employees have less than 19 employees, 66% have no employees at all

Statutory Tasks

The essential tasks and statutory mandate of the CCIs have been set out in clause 1 of the CCI Act. This has resulted in four core tasks that underpin CCI work. In order to implement these tasks, the CCIs are bound by the rule of law, but may also establish their own rules and regulations. The statutory tasks in detail include (see Fig. 2.3):

- The general representation of interests in business and the economy:** The CCIs are committed to framework conditions that enable companies to grow sustainably. They represent the general interest of the commercial sector within legislative projects that impact on business and the economy, as well as within the scope of political decisions made anywhere from the municipal to the EU level. The general representation of interests is the key concept here: A CCI represents the so-called “one-man-band” as well as the corporation with several thousand employees—without making any distinction. Just because a company pays a higher membership fee or is more important to the region in question does not automatically impact on its position adopted by the CCI. In forming its opinion, the CCI is obligated to determine the positions and interests held by all its members, to weigh them up and to deliberate accordingly, before reaching a

Fig. 2.3 Four central orders by the legislator—the four core tasks of each CCI

Source: Bavarian Chambers of Commerce and Industry

decision in its elected parliament. Everyone is entitled to get involved, to engage in general assemblies and committees, and to form a cross-industry network. A CCI must take into account the entire range of opinions within its membership ranks and, where necessary, also acknowledge minority positions. Legislators can also be sure that economic circumstances are properly reflected in a real—that is representative—way, and that a consolidated and balanced understanding of the interests pursued by all commercial players is given. The Chambers are required to adopt the highest possible degree of objectivity when formulating their statements of opinion or positions and must refrain from polemically exaggerated or otherwise emotional statements of conflict.

- **Economic self-organisation:** Depending on the method of counting, the state has assigned some 78 public tasks to the CCIs, which—as organisations of entrepreneurship—are better acquainted with the needs of the economy, and can render said tasks more efficiently and in a more customer-oriented manner than state authorities. The state utilises this economic expertise concerning tasks that affect the economy itself. The CCIs thus form part of the state's structure and exercise executive power. Public tasks entrusted by the state include, e.g. the granting of commercial licenses, the registration of vocational training establishments, the issuance of training certificates, as well as operating an examination apparatus to meet vocational education and training needs. In doing so, the CCIs are subject to the statutory supervision of the ministries of economics within the federal states.
- **Supporting and promoting companies with service:** CCIs are also service providers for companies. They inform and advise (i.e. initial consultation work) their members on all economic topics such as vocational training and further education, securing skilled labour or expanding into new markets. In doing so, they connect companies with each other via a host of different platforms—be it events, webinars, workshops and so on—as well as with the relevant stakeholders, e.g. in politics. At the same time, both those public tasks assigned by the state and the promotion of business help to strengthen the representation of interests. By shouldering responsibility for the implementation of these public functions and services, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry also unearth what is going on in the commercial sector and, in turn, can introduce this to the political sphere as part of its general representation of interests—following a process of consultation and a resolution by the general assembly.
- **Furthering the cause of the honourable merchant:** The apparatus supporting all CCI work and the economic activity of Chamber members are aligned with the constant endeavour to further the cause of the honourable merchant. Furthering the cause of the honourable merchant is understood by the CCIs as a cross-sectional task that pervades all other core tasks. Economic action should, therefore, be economically, ecologically and socially sustainable: The CCIs are committed to the model of the honourable merchant and actively promote the concepts of fairness and sustainability within business life; they also make their own (and other statutory regulations) transparent and adopt a role model stance

in everything they do. This is also reflected in the new brand identity embraced by Germany's CCIs—"Together we take responsibility".

Principle of Regionality

A chamber of commerce and industry is subject to the principle of regionality and thus also reflects German federalism. The implementation of legal tasks and the representation of interests essentially relates to a specific region: the chamber district or "Kammerbezirk". The CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria comprises the state capital of Munich and the region of Upper Bavaria. But the Chambers also work together across the different districts. The chambers of commerce and industry at the state level are grouped together—this is known in Bavaria as the Association of Bavarian Chambers of Commerce and Industry—and at the national level, this is known as the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry. These associations fall under the scope of private law.

Principle of Subsidiarity

The principle of regionality is closely associated with the principle of subsidiarity. This principle, which is typical and time-tested for federations such as the Federal Republic of Germany, does not centralise state tasks but rather delegates them to lower state levels. In doing so, it is always the lowest level that solves a task first. This also happens when the state delegates tasks to the CCIs.

Economic Activity of the Chambers

The CCI Act allows chambers of commerce and industry to establish, maintain and assist institutions and facilities in the promotion of the commercial sector or specific branches of industry. A prerequisite is always a resolution by the general assembly.

Organisational Structure of the CCIs—Primary and Voluntary Offices

The statutory mandate entrusted to the CCIs is implemented by the so-called primary offices (in German: "IHK-Hauptamt")—consisting of employees—which work together with the voluntary offices (in German: "IHK-Ehrenamt")—who act as company representatives. In Munich and Upper Bavaria, more than 12,000 individuals from business are involved in (and for) the CCI—always acting on a voluntary basis, that is, without remuneration. They work as examiners in education and training or as assessors, for example, on the Arbitration Committee for

Competition Disputes, where they contribute to the success of the business region as a whole. Furthermore, these entrepreneurs share their insight on various CCI expert committees and represent the business community at the CCI general assembly and on its regional committees. Simultaneously, the CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria employs roughly 500 full-time staff and advisers in around 30 specialist departments, which fall under the direction of the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive, together with the elected, honorary President, represents the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in all legal and judicial capacities, as well as externally vis-a-vis the political sphere and administration. Using the example of the CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria, the organisational structure behind the CCI can be clarified as follows (see Fig. 2.4).

- **General assembly:** The general assembly (in German: “Vollversammlung”) is the highest decision-making body of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry and represents the businesses within the chamber district. It defines, among other things, the guidelines that steer all CCI work, it determines the budget and membership fees, it advises on (and reaches decisions concerning) its political positions and it appoints the Chief Executive. The near-90 members of the general assembly are elected every five years by CCI members in a democratic election, and ultimately mirror the economic structure in place in the chamber district.

Source: CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria

Fig. 2.4 How the CCIs are structured—the example of the CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria

- **Steering committees:** The general assembly elects one president and up to ten vice-presidents from among its members.
- **Regional committees:** Together with the general assembly, the regional committees are then elected. There are 19 regional committees in the CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria, which are largely identical to the districts of Upper Bavaria and manage the interests and needs of those companies located within these respective areas. The work is undertaken by the regional committees also feeds into the general assembly and work of the primary office.
- **Specialist committees and working groups:** In its work—and in particular with regard to its political positioning—the general assembly is currently advised by 13 specialist committees. In addition, there are working groups—such as the working group entitled “Women in Business”.
- **Primary office:** In Munich and Upper Bavaria, nearly 500 employees work under the aegis of a Chief Executive and a deputy at a so-called primary office (in German: “Hauptamt”). The Chief Executive is appointed by the general assembly. The primary office implements all state-mandated public functions and services and facilitates preparations relating to all political positioning. This takes place in detailed coordination with the honorary office.
- **Regional offices:** The chamber district of Munich and Upper Bavaria is very large; companies had to go to great lengths in order to take advantage of the services of the CCI in Munich. In light of this, five regional offices have been set up outside Munich since 2011. They render services and fulfil public tasks delegated by the state while also strengthening the representation of those interests of the regional committees in the political sphere.

Guidelines for Political Work

The general representation of interests is one of the central tasks undertaken by any CCI; above all, this legitimises the concepts of compulsory membership and payment of a membership fee. The representation of interests is value-oriented in nature and is based on the mission statement underpinning the notion of the honourable merchant. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry for Munich and Upper Bavaria has also drawn up economic policy guidelines to shape its political work, which is decided upon by each new general assembly following every election. They act as an important source of orientation when formulating positions. The current economic policy guidelines of the CCI Munich are as follows:

- **We are committed to free and fair competition**

Free and fair competition is the universal organising principle of the economy. European integration and its open internal markets are prerequisites for this. Competition increases the innovative power of the economy and ensures fair pricing. Conditions for a free and fair competition include freely electable pricing, free access to the market and transparency.

- **We embody the values of the honourable merchant**

We rely on the voluntary nature and the conviction of companies to align their entrepreneurial activities with the model of the honourable merchant. An integral part of this commitment is that companies assume social responsibility: opportunities to profit and bear risk go hand in hand.

- **We are committed to an efficient and effective state**

A functioning social market economy provides the best framework for the sustainable development of Upper Bavaria's economy. The regulatory task of the state is to establish a regulatory framework within which economic processes can take place efficiently. This regulatory framework should be based on the following characteristics: It should strengthen ownership and increase equity, strengthen the self-organising capacity of the economy, reduce over-regulation, embrace inter-generational equality and avoid distortions of competition attributable to state intervention.

Box: Compulsory Membership—A Contradiction of Entrepreneurial Freedom?

Compulsory membership and a membership fee—this may sound like a restriction of entrepreneurial freedom, even when considering everything that companies get back for it. And it has been interpreted as such on occasion. The Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe, the highest court in Germany, issued its judgement on the matter dated 12 July 2017: Forms of intervention in the freedom of action for businesses as a result of the obligation to be a member of (and pay a membership fee to) the Chamber of Commerce and Industry are proportionate—as judged by Germany's most senior members of the judiciary. For the following reasons, among others:

- Compulsory fees and compulsory membership are based on a legitimate purpose: The Chambers fulfil those public tasks, which are linked with an increased interest of the wider community.
- The articulation of those concerns and interests shared by the local economy—in particular in relation to politics and administration—is, at the very least, achieved more successfully if businesses and companies themselves perform this task autonomously and all members are involved. Only compulsory membership ensures that all those affected in the region bring their interests to bear and are represented with expert skill.... When confronting the issues of Europeanisation and globalisation, it can be particularly important to emphasise district perspectives.
- The value of the work undertaken by the Chambers is not only derived from its independence from the state, but also from the integrity of the information, which is accessible to the Chambers within the scope of those circumstances to be assessed. Voluntary membership does not achieve this.

Volunteering—Putting Yourself in the Service of the Economy

Engaging on a voluntary basis with the CCI is something many entrepreneurs see as a matter of course: They want to take responsibility, to shape the economy and society in a value-oriented way and form the backbone of the CCI for its full-time employees, as well as take up the role of sparring partner.

People work together to achieve goals that they see as valuable to everyone, while simultaneously subjugating their individual interests. They do so without compensation or the right to preferential treatment. They are all about the service underpinning the cause. This is how volunteering is defined in its best sense. Also, the CCIs thrive due to the honorary office and its members, who enthusiastically champion the cause of the economy without compensation, while applying an “outside of the box” mentality and not simply pursuing their own interests. Thus they shape the conditions for their region as well as further the values of the honourable merchant in the economy and society. In the Chamber of Commerce and Industry for Munich and Upper Bavaria alone, roughly 12,000 entrepreneurs embrace this mantra by acting as volunteers at general assemblies, in regional and specialist committees, working groups or as examiners during vocational training. In fact, their work is invaluable to the CCI. After all, who knows better about what matters in business and politics than those who bear responsibility in companies? On that basis—and only with the combined technical expertise and impulses offered by its volunteers—can a CCI

- address the concerns of its members in the realm of political discussion, communicate in the public sphere and therefore act as the authentic voice for the regional economy,
- fulfil those tasks assigned by the state—above all in vocational education and training,
- tailor its service offering to meet the challenges faced by companies, to advise them according to their needs and therefore act as service providers to the regional economy.

Simultaneously, the significant number of entrepreneurs involved in voluntary work for the CCI is also credible evidence that statutory membership is not understood as a burden—but rather as an invitation to cooperate and participate, to share knowledge and ideas and to work together in the advancement of shared interests.

Various Honorary Tasks

The foundations of volunteer work are always rooted in the mission statement of the honourable merchant. In doing so, the honorary office and the primary office are

assisted by an operative force. The honorary office and primary office are allies and sparring partners in equal measure. Specifically, there are the following possibilities when looking to volunteer at a CCI:

- **Honorary work in the CCI general assembly:** A member of the general assembly can directly influence the work of the CCI, be it by helping to establish CCI guidelines on key economic policy issues, or shaping decisions on the use of funds, or helping reach consensus on the needs of the regional economy as a whole (see also the “General assembly” article in this chapter).
- **Volunteering in a regional committee:** A member of a regional committee actively advises local and regional politics and administration on all economic issues in their district. The positions are prepared in advance at joint meetings of the committee. In doing so, this honorary office becomes the ears and voice of the regional economy and takes responsibility for the development of the respective region (see also “Regional committees” article in this chapter).
- **Voluntary work in a committee or working group:** The specialist committees and working groups fulfil an advisory function to the general assembly, the steering committee(s) and the full-time decision-makers. In the committee meetings, the fundamental positions for the general assembly are principally developed. Every volunteer committee member has the opportunity to engage in discussion and the decision-making process, thereby actively shaping the framework conditions of the respective industry sector (see also the “Committees and working groups” article, Chaps. 2 and 7).
- **Honorary role as an examiner, honorary judge or assessor:** And last but not least, CCI members or their employees can volunteer to undertake the practical work of the CCI. With regard to exam invigilator work alone, 10,000 volunteer examiners in Munich and Upper Bavaria manage over 33,000 exams every year. At the same time, volunteers can also step into the roles of a commercial or financial judge or assessor on arbitration boards, which are tasked with resolving competitor litigation issues.

Just why these individuals volunteer is a question that is answered in portrait interviews and statements by the following entrepreneurs. They dedicate a significant portion of their time and good name to doing the work of the CCI.

Portrait: Georg Dettendorfer, Dettendorfer Spedition Ferntrans GmbH & Co. KG—understanding volunteering as part of entrepreneurial work

Georg Dettendorfer, Photo Credit: CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria/Goran Gajanin_Das Kraftbild

“How do you find the time to do that, too?” This is a question from friends and colleagues that Georg Dettendorfer is confronted with again and again. What’s it all about? It is about his honorary involvement in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry for Munich and Upper Bavaria. Here, he is a member of the general assembly and serving Vice President. Both tasks cannot simply be done in passing, but rather are associated with a certain amount of effort. And the answer is always the same: “This is just as much a part of my job as entrepreneur as leading my company is”.

When measured in terms of a 40-hour week—something of an illusion for an entrepreneur either way—Dettendorfer modestly estimates the proportion of his volunteer work to be roughly five per cent. “That’s also the order of magnitude that I would recommend to others when they think about their personal volunteering efforts.” Ultimately, everyone must decide for themselves, depending on the possibilities afforded to them in their own company: “The work undertaken by the management board does not take care of itself. It requires acceptance by both colleagues and employees.”

Without placing any particular monetary value on the matter, the entrepreneur has found that the time invested in volunteering yields an excellent return—in the form of “credibility”. That is attributable “to the fact that those entrepreneurs who seek to advance a common cause without financial gain enjoy a great level of respect in politics and administration”, explains Dettendorfer. “The status is different compared to the work of paid lobbyists. Positions adopted by the CCI are awarded a higher priority, especially vis-a-vis individuals with policy-making responsibility, because we do not wish to assert (or lobby in favour of) any single interest.”

Another aspect that should not be underestimated, says the Managing Director of Johann Dettendorfer Spedition Ferntrans GmbH & Co. KG in Nussdorf am Inn, a family business with a long history, is the following: “With our face and our name, we promote the general interests of all companies in Upper Bavaria with absolute independence. This counts for plenty in our respective home region, but this also has a supra-regional effect.”

However, this is not automatically the case, but rather the result of ongoing development. Here, the parallels between Dettendorf’s company and the influence of his volunteer work are obvious.

Transport and logistics starts on a small scale, before sooner or later crossing borders and entering new markets. The family’s history can be traced back to 1166. Even then, their ancestors—mainly farmers, trans-alpine goods carriers known as “Samer” and inland mariners—were located in Nußdorf am Inn, where they managed transport operations to Vienna, Budapest and the Black Sea using inland vessels known as “Plätten”. Destinations that still form part of the company’s network (founded in 1825), albeit now with commercial goods vehicles.

In 2001, he was nominated as a candidate for the Chamber election, before being elected to the general assembly. From 2011 onwards—and meanwhile, in his second term—he has been a member of the CCI steering committee as its Vice President. He also contributes his industry expertise as Chairman of the transport committee of the CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria, as well as acting in the same capacity, since 2017, for the transport committee of the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry. In his roles on both committees, he is committed to advancing the causes of an efficient transport infrastructure—thereby representing not just the interests of the freight forwarding and logistics industry, but the economy as a whole, the performance of which is strongly influenced by such developments.

If you ask Dettendorfer about how voluntary work (and its underlying quality) in the chamber of commerce and industry has changed since he has been actively involved, he notes significant similarities with the development of society as a whole. Something that can be summarised by the term “progressive democratisation”. “There is more discussion on the expert panels and committees” he observes. “There is no longer a top-down approach, but rather a consistent and constructive way of discussing existing positions and objectives.” The growing number of external critics of the CCIs, for example, has been seen as an impulse to view its work from a more differentiated standpoint and to take a more assertive and professional approach to render the results of its work more visible in the public sphere. “Today, there is a much broader range of stakeholders who are interested in what we do and why we do it. We have recognised this and are responding to the demand with enhanced communication efforts.” Here, too, it is a big advantage that the CCI does not appear as an anonymous construct, but rather as a public-facing body with representatives from its primary office and its many volunteers, thereby giving a face to the information provided.

In addition to this expanded “output”, an awareness of valuable “input” from within its own ranks has also intensified. Dettendorfer refers to the CCI’s long tradition of securing a broad inflow of practical knowledge through its member companies. “Thanks to our broad range of volunteers, we have always managed to remain very close to the different topics that move the economy” says the entrepreneur. “This not only involves elected members of the assembly. This includes thousands of vocational training examiners who bring important insight into the latest technology and its application into everyday life at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Additionally, we have experts who enable us to represent ourselves vis-a-vis policy makers and administrators at any time and in any discipline of the economy with real competence.” Making this applied knowledge available to all members via the CCI—that is one of the biggest claims to success the organisation can indeed draw attention to. Especially given that, following on from his reference to the volunteer work of all those involved, this reduces the necessary effort to a minimum. Which, in turn “is then ideally suited to winning over new members for voluntary work”.

In his experience, the independence and neutrality of the CCI is one of the most valuable arguments to be presented to member companies: “On the one hand: A registered business with four employees counts just as much as the Public Corporation (AG) with 100,000 employees, and has access to exactly the same resources of the CCI. And on the other hand: “From the democratic structure of the General Assembly, we always make decisions for the benefit of the community of companies in Upper Bavaria, whereby cornerstones such as farsightedness and sustainability count for more than spectacular activism.” Qualities mean a great deal to Dettendorfer himself, which is why he invests his own energy in the work of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. “It is worthwhile for everyone to take time out of their work. All efforts are geared towards solving problems and finding solutions. And you share in the knowledge and experience of all the others. This is social engagement in the best sense of the word.”

Box: Dettendorfer Spedition Ferntrans GmbH & Co. KG

Since its founding in 1825, the Dettendorfer Group has developed into an innovative full-service provider for freight forwarding services far beyond the borders of Europe—from transport, warehousing & logistics to ancillary services dedicated to the maintenance, care and safety of vehicles. The owner-managed family business with roughly 590 employees offers its customers a comprehensive service in the areas of transport, logistics and merchandise management: “As a reliable problem solver and strong partner, we create added value for our customers. They benefit from the resulting flexibility, flat hierarchies and value awareness that come with a healthy, medium-sized company”.

In addition to Georg Dettendorfer, many other people are enthusiastically involved in the CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria. Here are a few more statements:

Over the course of time during which I have matured as an entrepreneur, the value of a chamber of commerce and industry and its work has become increasingly clear to me. Across all services and offers, this can best be summarised as “an expansive, well-founded source of information for everyday business life”. The consequence was logical: If this institution is so good, and it is at my side and is open to cooperating with entrepreneurs within a voluntary framework—then it is only right that I should also be involved. This means, among other things that you become aware of the quality and value of the primary office’s work. The support from the primary office is a strong motivation for volunteering in the first place. It is a motivation that goes beyond the understanding of the honourable merchant, who not only demands but also gives. In the sense of “asking what you can do for your country...”, volunteering at the CCI thus proves to be very political in the true meaning of the word—through citizens who actively participate in furthering the common good.

Dr. Eberhard Sasse, Dr. Sasse AG, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Munich and Upper Bavaria, President of the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry

Even as a successor of my parents’ company, I was aware that, as a manager, you are not only at the top of a company. You become part of a community of responsibility and you learn that networking without having the business in the back of your mind also plays a key role. Following on from this impulse, I co-founded the Junior Chamber in our region, the association of tomorrow’s managers, known worldwide as the “Jaycees”. This led to the development of partnerships and sometimes even friendships, which continues to have an effect today: for example, in our regional committee, where we work together on a voluntary basis to benefit both our location and our economic region. Part of the successful cooperation between full-time and honorary positions is that we entrepreneurs see ourselves as playing a supporting role for the full-time employees at the CCI. We also simply need to be available when we are required and when we recognise that it is important in order to fulfil a common task. This is also the right benchmark for the time and energy invested in voluntary work: Just enough to ensure that tasks are fulfilled properly.

Ingrid Obermeier-Osl, Franz Obermeier GmbH, Vice President of the CCI Munich and Upper Bavaria, Chairwoman of the CCI Regional Committee Altötting-Mühldorf, Chairwoman of the CCI Working Group “Women in Business”

I appreciate the fact that volunteer work in the CCI is not treated according to the rule book. A lot has happened, especially recently, which is also connected to the fact that more women are represented in the general assembly and the committees—

women who have children, for example. The former norm of holding evening meetings was suddenly called into question: Meetings are no longer scheduled for after work in the executive's office, but in such a way that they are compatible with family life. If more changes are made in this direction, voluntary work in the CCI will become even more attractive for women in the future and their share among the candidates up for election will continue to increase. It is not the quota that will ultimately be decisive, but the new normal. We still have to work on that!

Kathrin Wickenhäuser-Egger, Wickenhäuser & Egger AG, Vice President of the CCI Munich and Upper Bavaria, Chairwoman of the CCI Committee for Corporate Responsibility

As an entrepreneur, it is natural for me to assume responsibility—this also includes social responsibility. On the one hand, I can do this in the company. For example, we recently took the decision to employ refugees at our Bavarian Flower Centre. But I can also demonstrate this responsibility in my voluntary work for the chamber of commerce and industry. Any recognition for this work is based on credibility: I am respected by contacts in politics and administration because I am voluntarily and gratuitously committed to the goals of the economy through the CCI. For many people here in the district, I am the face of the CCI. The principle of my own attitude is simple: If you have time, you can share some of it with others. I am convinced that anyone can do the same. I, for one, do not want to live in a world where no one is willing to give something back to the society in which they live and feel well looked after. This is exactly why I was also active in the local council. As an entrepreneur, the model of the honourable merchant is the benchmark for me. I want to be able to look at myself in the mirror.

Sonja Zieglertrum-Teubner, Bayerische Blumen Zentrale GmbH, Member of the CCI General Assembly, Chairwoman of the Ebersberg Regional Committee

In their day-to-day work together, both the volunteers and the full-time employees of the CCI contribute specific personal qualities to the mix. When it comes to voluntary work, the abilities of each individual are what win me over, to look 'beyond the horizon' and to commit to social issues that go beyond the scope of business – such as the integration of those who have not yet, as a matter of course, found their way into the workplace: refugees, mothers, people with disabilities... In my full-time position, on the other hand, I appreciate the ability to be a professional sparring partner for volunteer work. These are encounters that take place on equal footing, and are marked by mutual appreciation. By bringing together the strengths of voluntary and full-time work in our daily activities, we multiply the forces with which the CCI works.

Michael Steinbauer, Deutsche DOKA Schalungstechnik GmbH, Member of the CCI General Assembly, Chairman of the Fürstenfeldbruck Regional Committee

The public image of the entrepreneur is often polarised. By helping to promote the location and the region in which we are at home through our voluntary work in the CCI, we make the responsibility we accept and to which we are committed much

more visible. We also see ourselves as role models: our country lives in prosperity and this gives us the opportunity to shape and further develop things. As entrepreneurs, we see it as our responsibility to pass on our knowledge and experience—and thus also to strengthen the feeling that: We *can* do something, so that's what we will do. In the spirit of the CCI, we think and act holistically, not simply pursuing individual interests. This neutrality, combined with a sober attitude based on facts, is what makes us credible. In this way, we provide a solid foundation, not least for the work of the full-time employees in the CCI—who in turn support us with everything we need for our work. This interplay of different forces makes the CCI strong.

Klaus Bauer, Bauer Unternehmensgruppe GmbH & Co. KG, Member of the CCI General Assembly, Chairman of the Weilheim-Schongau Regional Committee

“You are a member—make something of it”: under this principle, a voluntary commitment to the CCI is not a question. It is the entrepreneurial answer. For me, the topic of “Corporate Social Responsibility” is particularly important. It has always been rooted in the principle of the honourable merchant—and I was taught this by my parents as the successor to our company. I was invited to participate in the “Corporate Responsibility” working group—and as a “new generation of entrepreneurs” I regard it as my responsibility.

Dr. Laura Sasse, Dr. Sasse AG, Member of the CCI Committee for Corporate Responsibility.

General Assembly—Taking Responsibility Together

The general assembly of a chamber of commerce is also referred to as the parliament of the economy. This is because democratically elected members from various sectors of the economy meet and work there. The general assembly decides on the guidelines of the CCI work and on questions of fundamental importance for the economy.

What parliaments are for politics, the general assembly is for a chamber of commerce and industry: a democratically elected body, representatively composed of representatives from various economic sectors according to their economic importance for the CCI district. In larger CCI districts—such as Munich and Upper Bavaria—the chamber regions are also usually represented. Thus, the general assembly of a chamber of commerce and industry is both a parliament for (and mirror to) the economy itself. The example of the CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria shows exactly how it works.

From the Election Regulations

Elections for the general assembly take place every five years. In order to ensure broad and appropriate sectoral coverage, electoral groups are formed—currently 23—which comprehensively represent industry, trade and services (see box below). Those eligible for election are natural persons who are of full age on the day of the election and who are either members of the chamber of commerce and industry themselves as sole proprietors, or who are authorised to legally represent a member company—either alone or together with others. Others also eligible for election are authorised signatories of chamber members and specially appointed proxies entered in the commercial register.

Composition of the General Assembly

Only one candidate per CCI member may stand for election to the general assembly. A total of 90 seats are currently available. 71 seats will be allocated through the election in the 23 election groups. 19 seats are allocated via the regional subdivisions. Here, the elected chairpersons of the 19 regional committees each receive one seat. The general assembly and the regional committees are generally elected at the same time (see also the article on regional committees in this chapter). The members of the general assembly elect their steering committee from their ranks. This currently consists of a President and ten Vice-Presidents.

One Man, One Vote

The following principle applies to both the election to the general assembly and the decision-making process in the general assembly: “One man, one vote”: each member company has only one vote in the election for the general assembly, just as each member of the general assembly has only one vote in the decision-making process.

Tasks of the General Assembly

The general assembly determines the guidelines of the CCI work and decides on questions that are of fundamental importance for CCI-affiliated businesses or the work of the CCI in general. It appoints the Chief Executive, it elects the President and the members of the steering committee. Going into further detail:

- **Implementation of self-administration:** The general assembly establishes the self-organisation of the economy. It decides how the CCI uses its available resources efficiently and economically. The careful handling of membership fees is the responsibility of the legislator and is enshrined in CCI law. The budgetary

law of the general assembly also extends to fixing the respective membership fees as well as fees for public tasks assigned by the state.

- **Appointment of the Chief Executive:** The general assembly also appoints the Chief Executive.
- **Preparation and resolution of positions:** On the basis of the preparatory work undertaken by the regional and specialist committees or the working groups and the primary office, the members of the general assembly then discuss and decide on positions pertaining to current and fundamental economic policy issues, and thus establish these in a binding manner. In making its decisions, the general assembly also considers the social consequences of economic activity—in line with the concept of the honourable merchant. Only when these positions have been adopted by the general assembly and thus democratically legitimised, may they be communicated to the outside world.

Rotation of Meetings

The general assembly of the CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria usually meets three times a year. The steering committee and the primary office prepare the meeting together. The meetings and discussions of the general assembly are public and are transmitted online thanks to live streaming. The results of the meetings are also reported via other communication channels utilised by the CCI.

Box: From the Statutes of the CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria: Section 4 Composition and Tasks of the General Assembly

- (1) The general assembly consists of up to 90 members. The election of the members as well as the duration and premature termination of membership is governed by election regulations.
- (2) The general assembly determines the guidelines of the CCI's work and decides on issues that are of fundamental importance for CCI-affiliated businesses or the work of the CCI in general.

The general assembly reserves the right to make decisions, in particular on

- (a) the statutes (Section 4 S. 2 No. 1 CCIA),
- (b) the electoral, financial contribution, special contribution and fee regulations (Section 4 S. 2 No. 2 CCIA),
- (c) the economic statutes, in which economic planning is established and the benchmark for financial contributions and special contributions is set (4 S. 2 No. 3, 4 CCIA),
- (d) the election of the President and the steering committee (Section 6 Para. 1 CCIA),
- (e) the appointment of the Chief Executive (Section 7 Para. 1 CCIA),

- (f) the granting of discharge (Section 4 S. 2 No. 5 CCIA),
 - (g) the transfer of tasks to other chambers of commerce and industry, the assumption of these tasks, the formation of public-law associations and participation therein pursuant to Section 10 of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Act (CCIA) and participation in institutions pursuant to Section 1 Para. 3b of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Act (Section 4 S. 2 No. 6 CCIA)
 - (h) the manner of public announcements (Section 4 S. 2 No. 7 CCIA),
 - (i) the financial regulations (Section 4, S. 2, No. 8 of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Act CCIA)
 - (j) the fundamental principles of human resources management, in particular the general principles of salary determination,
 - (k) the appointment of auditors,
 - (l) the establishment of branches and field offices,
 - (m) the modification of the division of territory to create CCI regional committees as well as the establishment of other regional groupings,
 - (n) the formation of (and participation in) companies, the sale and transfer of shares in companies, and consent to the dissolution of companies
 - (o) the establishment of committees, with the exception of the vocational training committee,
 - (p) the proposal of the employers' representatives on the vocational training committee,
 - (q) the adoption of rules in the field of expert appraisal,
 - (r) the appointment of permanent members to fixed specialist bodies to verify specialist expertise in accordance with Sects. 36, 36a GewO,
 - (s) the establishment of the committee pursuant to Section 111, Para. 2 ArbGG
 - (t) the establishment of courts of honour and arbitration tribunals
 - (u) the appointment of the competition disputes settlement body
 - (v) the adoption of rules of procedure for the general assembly and model rules of procedure for the steering committee, the regional committees and their groupings and the committees, without prejudice to the provisions of the Vocational Training Act.
- (3) The vocational training committee shall decide on the legal provisions to be adopted by the chamber of commerce and industry under the Vocational Training Act for the implementation of vocational training. These decisions shall require the approval of the general assembly if the funds provided for vocational training in the current budget are not sufficient for their implementation, or if funds have to be made available in subsequent financial years that exceed the expenditure on vocational training in the current budget to a not insignificant extent.
 - (4) The members of the general assembly are representatives of the entire CCI-affiliated commercial economy within the CCI district. They always

make their decisions with a view to the needs of the economy as a whole, without being guided by the interests of individual persons or individual companies and branches of industry. They are not bound by orders and instructions. They carry out their tasks on an honorary basis. No expense allowances are paid nor are costs reimbursed.

- (5) The members of the general assembly shall maintain secrecy with regard to all communications, facts and negotiations that are by their nature confidential, or which are designated as confidential. By its nature, the term 'confidential' refers, in particular, to matters that are dealt within the closed session. The members of the general assembly are to be obligated to this and to an objective performance of their duties by the President before they take up any honorary activities.

Case Study: Notes from the General Assembly—Bringing Together the Opinions of Companies

A visit to the general assembly meeting in summer 2018, which focused on the appointment of the new Chief Executive of the CCI and a presentation by the then newly appointed Bavarian Prime Minister, Markus Söder. In addition, various papers on the positions of the CCI relating to current economic policy issues were adopted. In the notepad of a member of the general assembly, the following notes were found afterwards:

- **Guest speakers:** The tradition of top-class guest speakers continues. This time: Markus Söder, Minister-President of Bavaria, a few months after taking office. Visiting the general assembly for the first time in this capacity. Recognition for the efficiency of our economy: "Germany's economic heart" lies in the South. The success of the whole country is built on Bavarian companies. We warn against the dangers of protectionism all over the world. Dangerous for Bavaria as an exporting country, and particularly critical for the automotive industry. "Then the economic power in Bavaria will shake to its core." Söder announces a reform of corporate taxation to boost our international competitiveness.
- **New Chief Executive:** Manfred Göbl is appointed new Chief Executive: Successor to Peter Driessen—he leaves after 33!!! years in the service of the CCI. CCI President Eberhard Sasse about Göbl: "A real networking champion who fights for the cause of business and the economy." Göbl was responsible, among other things, for "central tasks and fundamental issues" in the CCI—good reputation among the members, important milestones set. Broad recognition at the general assembly.

- **Annual financial statement for 2017:** Submitted for approval. Everything as it should be. 388,551 members. 38.9% of which are exempt from paying contributions to the CCI (too little revenue/profit). Prospects for 2018 remain stable. The economy in Upper Bavaria in good condition. Contributions: Slight increase in the levy to 0.129% (federal average 0.150)
- **Position Paper: “Digital Taxes”:** Is urgently needed: Our CCI Finance and Taxation Committee has developed a position paper on the topic of “digital taxes”. The aim: to ensure that new digital business models are treated appropriately in terms of taxation, and to promote innovation and investment to ensure a successful transition to the digital world. At the same time, actively implementing digitisation, especially with regard to the relationship between the tax state and companies. Procedural rules must be designed in a modern and practical manner so that they are equally applicable to both sides. Important for competition between different locations. Keyword—e-Government: Considerable need for improvement in secure digital communication between companies and authorities. Digital innovations must not only benefit the financial administration on one side but must also bring advantages to companies, on the other. Otherwise, only costs and obligations will remain.
- **Discussion on property tax:** The assessment of property tax for real estate is unconstitutional. For more than 50 years the standard values for real estate have not been adjusted. This is completely outdated and leads to a serious imbalance in the treatment of property owners, says the Federal Constitutional Court. Fine. Communities need the money, including investments at the local level. But that is of little help if, at the same time, the costs for companies become a disadvantage. New regulations must be implemented quickly and reliably. The new position paper says it all on the reform of the property tax: Politics and local authorities should recognise how damaging unreasonable burdens and additional bureaucratic ballast are for the quality and performance of companies operating at the local level.
- **Position paper: “Strengthening women entrepreneurs”:** A seven-point plan by the chamber of commerce and industry to ensure the increase in women entrepreneurs in our region in the future (Share in Munich and Upper Bavaria now around 30%!)
 - Anchoring entrepreneurship in school curricula (and thereby dissolving outdated role models and making self-employment a tangible option)
 - Attracting more women entrepreneurs as role models
 - Needs-based start-up advice and support for women (especially financing! Crowdfunding!)
 - Increase the number of female investors and female business angels
 - Expand mentoring and coaching services
 - Facilitate networking between female start-up entrepreneurs
 - Make the balance between family and entrepreneurship easier to manage

- **Topic: “Springboard innovations”:** Not really everyone’s cup of tea. But Herbert Klein, Chairman of the committee and Manager of Agfa Healthcare Imaging in Peiting, as well as Chairman of the CCI Industry and Innovation Committee, explains the importance to us all: “Springboard innovations are more important than ever for Germany, especially in topics relating to digitisation. However, these cannot be invoked at all with today’s structures and processes upon which the promotion of technology and technology transfer hinge. We need new, suitable instruments for this. The uncompromising orientation towards the success of the US-American ARPA approaches is a good role model”.

ARPA is the Advanced Research Projects Agency of the USA. Convinced no doubt. In principle, we support the establishment of a national agency for springboard innovations. Important: Act autonomously and independently of politics (Editor’s note: This agency now exists)

- **Demands on broadband infrastructure:** Once again, we need to increase the pressure so that the state takes care of high-performance broadband infrastructure and a stable, fast mobile network that will establish us as one of the top locations for digital business. In actuality, the current figures from our chamber of commerce and industry should be a strong enough argument as it is: “For around 40% of companies, the current landline network and mobile communications infrastructure is not sufficient. If this shortage in our landline network continues for the next two years, 44% of companies will not be able to expand, 13% expect to have to turn down orders, and eight percent consider their current broadband access to be a threat to their existence and are considering relocation. We are adopting eleven demands, which in reality are already deemed to be concrete and well-founded instructions for action.”
- **Position paper: “Blockchain”:** Another important IT topic is “Blockchain”. This technology of the future was hardly ever mentioned in the digital lighthouse projects recently announced by the Bavarian State Government. Our IT experts in full-time and honorary positions consider this to be a dangerous gap that needs addressing. And yet our location, the number one in Europe for information and communication technology, is predestined to teach, research, experiment and develop within this field. We are adopting a position paper with specific demands. One of the key sentences: “Based on the commitment of local entrepreneurs and active blockchain players, there is a chance for Munich and Upper Bavaria to establish itself as a pioneer in this technology”.

CCI Regional Committees—Ensuring a Direct Link to Regional Activity

With the regional committees, the CCI has a direct line to the wishes, needs and ideas that arise at local level. The work of the committees also reflects the variety of challenges facing local companies—through which valuable impulses for the work of the entire CCI are created.

A chamber of commerce and industry stands for the bundled representation of economic interests in its region. It speaks with one voice for all companies. At the same time, however, a chamber of commerce and industry always wants to reflect the entire regional diversity and variety in its CCI district. This corresponds to its self-image and, with that, to the desire of the Federal Constitutional Court: “Especially... in dealing with Europeanisation and globalisation, it can be particularly important to bring district perspectives to bear.... This is based on the plausible assessment that, even in a frequently Europeanised and globalised economy, impulses for action can (and should) come from a local or regional level.”

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry for Munich and Upper Bavaria optimised its fundamental approach to the regional representation of interests a few years ago by comprehensively ‘regionalising’ its structure: since then, 19 regional committees have been in play, which are largely identical to the administrative districts of Upper Bavaria and which look after the interests and needs of those companies located in these respective areas.

Democratic Election Regulations

The democratic representation of the business community has always been a two-chamber system consisting of a general assembly and regional bodies. Thus, the regional committees and the general assembly have always been jointly elected every five years as part of a joint electoral act and in accordance with the principle of democratic representation.

Every entrepreneur residing in the territory of the respective regional committee can stand as a candidate. The members then decide on the appointments to a total of 329 seats in the regional committees. The approximately 260,000 Upper Bavarian companies with headquarters outside Munich are also entitled to vote. Each committee elects a chairperson from among its members.

Size of the Regional Committees

With regard to the size of each regional committee, there are three size categories of 15, 17 or 21 seats. These reflect the economic strength of each region. The basis for the calculation is a key comprising the number of companies, income and the

employees subject to social security contributions. This key is also used to calculate the seats in the CCI general assembly and is thus a reflection of the Upper Bavarian economy.

Representing Local Level Interests

The regional committees themselves determine the content of their work. As a rule, the focus is on the specific challenges at their respective locations. They obtain information and discuss, above all, the political and economic conditions at the local level, formulate common political positions and carry out model projects. For example, the Altötting-Mühldorf regional committee has launched the so-called “Education Express” (“Bildungsexpress”): Here, school leavers travel by train from Mühldorf to Salzburg. On the train, ride companies speak to them about various vocational training offers. Depending on the topic, the positions and suggestions of the regional committees also naturally flow into the CCI specialist committees and the general assembly, respectively the regional committees also take up topics from other committees: in principle, therefore, a genuine circular economy of knowledge, innovation and change—with added value due to the immediate proximity of the committee to the location—is achieved. At the same time, this ensures optimal networking and the representation of interests within the CCI. Speaking of networking: cooperation with political and official stakeholders at the local level is a major concern shared by the regional committees. Many committees arrange their meetings in such a way that the regional councils or members of the regional parliament can also participate.

Reasons for Reform

To strengthen the representation of interests at a regional level in the long term and to bring it more in line with the political structure of Upper Bavaria—this was the objective that the responsible regional committees themselves finally succeeded in initiating. The committee members wanted a more differentiated structure, preferably with one committee per district. The background to all this: Before the reform, the chamber of commerce and industry had 14 regional committees, which were, however, more expansive in their reach and which crossed district boundaries. In some cases, there were duplicate bodies that combined two regions. However, these sometimes lacked a direct link to certain topics of the other region, and the perception of “the voice of business” vis-à-vis politics was, therefore, weaker than could have otherwise been possible. On the other hand, however, some locations were so closely interwoven that it made sense to merge them. Thus, at the beginning of the restructuring, the question was posed: Where should unbundling take place and where should things be left as they are? In fact, unbundling was not carried out in three cases: in the city and rural district of Rosenheim because of the close interlinking of issues and administration; in the Erding and Freising districts

because of the common denominator Munich Airport; and in the Altötting-Mühldorf alliance because the structure developed over many years was optimally suited to their needs. At the same time, the administrative district of Munich—Germany's strongest economic area—was given its own regional committee.

Strengthening the Regions—Including in the General Assembly

As the number of committees grew, so did the influence of the sub-regions in the general assembly. This is because the chairmen of the regional committees are also members of the general assembly. Given that five additional chairmen now have a say in the assembly, the importance of the regions for the work of the chamber of commerce and industry is now even better reflected throughout Upper Bavaria.

Inter-administrative District Cooperation Through Additional CCI Forums

Previous forms of cooperation between regional CCI committees across district borders were not, however, prevented by the reorganisation. By setting up CCI forums, strong, inter-administrative district platforms dedicated to mutual issues and activities were created. These forums meet at least once a year in order to address inter-district issues. Accordingly, the CCI Forum Oberland, for example, takes up topics that affect the districts of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Weilheim, Bad Tölz and Miesbach. The bundling is predominantly based on the existing regional office structure of the CCI. This also ensures efficient cooperation between the honorary office and primary office. Thus, the regional committees also facilitate the transfer of knowledge from regional circles of experts as well as from specialists to the primary of the CCI and vice versa.

Case Study: Insight Into the Work of the Regional Committees—Working Together to Advance the Regional Economy

What does the work of the regional committees look like in practice? Three reports from committee meetings offer an impression.

Altötting-Mühldorf Regional Committee

The CCI regional committee for Altötting-Mühldorf demanded that the landline Internet be expanded rapidly, that only fibre optic projects be promoted and that

alternative cable laying methods be considered in addition to the acceleration of civil engineering processes. The Office for Digitisation, Broadband and Surveying (“Amt für Digitalisierung, Breitband und Vermessung”) was also tasked with offering assistance specifically for companies (for example, by means of a “broadband hotline for companies”) as well as acting as an intermediary between the provider, the municipality and the company. Given the unsatisfactory level of mobile communications coverage at present, it is important both to improve the availability and stability of existing networks (for example, by enabling national roaming) and to press ahead with the introduction of 5G.

Starnberg Regional Committee

The Starnberg business community unanimously demands the construction of the B2 tunnel. The CCI regional committee initiated a joint meeting with the district trademen’s association, UWS (Unternehmerverband Wirtschaftsförderung im Landkreis Starnberg e.V.) and the City Initiative Starnberg, to which all city councils were also invited. After detailed discussions with experts from the Supreme Building Authority (“Oberste Baubehörde”) and the State Building Authority Weilheim (“Staatliches Bauamt Weilheim”), and after weighing up all the arguments, the representatives of the business community adopted a position paper. In it, the city council is called upon to make the necessary decisions on the construction of the tunnel without delay and to work towards its timely completion.

Erding-Freising Regional Committee

In its meeting at the TU Munich in Weihenstephan, the CCI regional committee for Erding-Freising unanimously called for the full-scale expansion of the state road Airport Tangent East (FTO). The current infrastructure has long since reached its limits. By 2035, however, population growth of around 44,000 people is expected in the districts of Erding and Ebersberg. This will have noticeable consequences for local mobility. At the same time, as passenger numbers grow, Munich Airport needs a high-capacity transport connection to the south-east Bavarian region. According to the chamber of commerce and industry, air freight growth at the airport (plus 5.2% in 2015/2016) and the associated delivery traffic will also have an impact on the regional road network. The FTO is one of the most heavily used state roads in Bavaria. At present, a three- to four-lane expansion in four sections between the A92 and Neufinsing is envisaged, and in some cases, the planning permission procedure is already underway. However, the chamber of commerce and industry is demanding that planning for the demand-oriented expansion of the southern section between the A94 and Neufinsing be started without undue delay.

CCI Specialist Committees and Working Groups—Tasked with Co-formulating the Content-Related Goals of CCI Work

In order to represent the overall interests in discussions with politicians and authorities, the CCIs need well-founded positions and proposed solutions. These are prepared, among other things, in the specialist committees and working groups.

The CCI specialist committees and working groups do special honour to the title of this book “Practical Wisdom”. For therein the practical wisdom—that is, the collective intelligence of the CCI members—is gathered in an outstanding way. They are also the nucleus of those represented interests. The committee and working group participants deal with special technical questions and exchange information. The aim is to identify developments, define relevance and formulate recommendations for action to ultimately assist policy makers. The committees are established by the general assembly and fulfil an advisory function for them. The general assembly appoints the members of the committees for a term of office. The members are recruited from the general assembly itself, but are supplemented by other interested entrepreneurs, company representatives and experts—including persons who are not eligible for election to the general assembly. The working groups have in effect the same tasks but do not have to be set up by the general assembly.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry for Munich and Upper Bavaria currently has 12 specialist committees and eight working groups, as well as the vocational training committee. A brief overview:

- **The Finance and Taxation Committee** deals with tax and financial policy at the federal and state level. It discusses plans and develops policy positions of the business community. The Finance and Taxation Committee’s expertise is also used to formulate statements and letters to politicians.
- **The Legal Affairs Committee** deals with all areas of law that affect the economy. This includes copyright law or the field of digitisation among many others. The Legal Affairs Committee defines topics that are relevant to companies and works to ensure that laws are designed in a practical manner.
- **The Trade Committee** deals with trade-specific topics from the fields of wholesale, retail and trade brokering at federal, state and local level. It represents a cross-section of trading companies of all sizes, as well as different industries, cities and regions.
- **The Tourism Committee** consists of various stakeholders in the Upper Bavarian tourism industry and deals with various topics relating to tourism. These range from the promotion of the tourism infrastructure to digitalisation and climate change. Together, the committee members develop positions and represent them vis-à-vis the political sphere.
- **The Service Committee** deals with political issues that affect the service industry and develops statements and positions at the federal and state level. The focus is on the practical design of laws. In addition, the expertise of the Service

Committee is used for CCI statements, letters to politicians and discussions with the political sphere, parties, administration and universities.

- **The CCI Committee for the Real Estate Industry** is composed of high-ranking representatives of the Upper Bavarian real estate industry. Its main focus is expanding the supply of affordable housing and commercial space in Upper Bavaria. Its expertise is also incorporated into position papers, statements, policy discussions, etc.
- **The Environment and Energy Committee** deals with the environmental and energy policy framework conditions at state, federal and EU level across all sectors. The focus is on ensuring the economically compatible design of today's energy transition and climate protection and the contribution of companies to greater resource efficiency.
- **The Foreign Trade Committee** advises the CCI steering committee and general assembly on foreign trade law and policy issues, it seeks to establish a specialist dialogue with politics, administration and science and helps other member companies and newcomers to prepare their foreign business dealings. It is a source of inspiration for new topics that are taken up in the services offered by the CCI's foreign trade division. In discussions with political decision-makers, it utilises every opportunity to point out the need for correction in foreign trade law and to make suggestions for improvement.
- **The Industry and Innovation Committee** sets the course for a modern industrial policy. Its topics include technological developments to which business must respond, as well as tax or financing issues for start-ups and research and development.
- **The Transport Committee** deals with all questions of mobility in both freight and passenger transport. On the one hand, it is concerned with efficient transport routes to sales markets and suppliers, so that commuters can get to their place of work and goods reach their destination "just in time". On the other hand, it focuses on questions concerning the choice of transport and type of drive, in order to be both efficient and sustainable when on the move. The aim is to keep companies' locations easily and reliably accessible.
- **The Committee for Corporate Responsibility** aims to strengthen sustainability as a model of future-oriented development, contribute to the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region and give the responsible business a voice in the political and social debate.
- **The Committee of Experts** is responsible for advising the chamber of commerce and industry and for providing expert opinions when specialists are appointed, either for the first time or on a repeat basis. It supports the CCI with complaints management in the expert division. Further tasks: The promotion of the Institute of Public Appointment as well as acquisition and motivation of new applicants.
- In contrast to the other expert committees of a chamber of commerce and industry, the **Vocational Training Committee** is a body prescribed by the

Vocational Training Act. It must be informed and consulted on all important matters of vocational education and training. In particular, the committee must work towards the steady development of the quality of vocational education and training within the scope of its tasks. For every six representatives, the committee consists of representatives from the employers—that is CCI members—as well as from the employees and teachers at vocational schools; the teachers have an advisory vote (cf. also Chap. 4, Articles on vocational training). The vocational training committee is not established by the general assembly, however, the general assembly does propose the employers' representatives of the committee.

In addition, there are also the following eight working groups. A working group can, in principle, be upgraded to a committee by the general assembly:

- **Credit industry:** The credit industry working group brings together high-ranking representatives from the financial sector to discuss the conditions for corporate and start-up financing. The members work out proposals for improving the statutory framework conditions of the industry and the Upper Bavarian financial centre and invite state, federal and European politicians to participate in a direct exchange.
- **ITC and digitisation:** This working group is made up of various company representatives from the information and communication industry (ITC) as well as digital managers from all other industries. As a broad reflection of Upper Bavaria as a location for ITC and digitisation, the working group is an important body for addressing the needs and issues of local companies and discussing political positions relevant to the economy as a location for digitisation and digital policy, such as Blockchain, Artificial Intelligence (AI), IT security and ICT infrastructure. In addition, the working group also serves as a platform for exchanging experiences and networking.
- **Women in business:** This working group promotes the special importance of female entrepreneurs for Munich and Upper Bavaria as a business location, makes them visible through numerous measures, connects them and encourages ever more female entrepreneurs, founders and successors.
- **Food industry:** The working group was founded in October 1982 to improve the cooperation between food control and food industry. The working group sees itself as a platform for an open exchange of ideas between the representatives of the food industry, the authorities and specialist legal representatives. It primarily represents the interests of the Bavarian food industry and involves it in the current legislative processes.

- **Media:** As its thematic focus, the Media working group accompanies training in the media professions, advises on and evaluates trends in the media industry as part of the Bavarian cultural and creative industries scene, and brings the view of Upper Bavarian media entrepreneurs into the “Media Network of Bavaria”. Network maintenance and the political representation of interests for the industry in the robust media location of Munich and Upper Bavaria are also handled by the Free State’s new Medien.Bayern GmbH.
- **Healthcare industry:** This working group represents the entire diversity of the healthcare industry. Its members include Board members, Managing Directors and owners of health insurance companies, as well as clinics, retirement homes, medical technology and pharmaceutical companies, experts, companies offering digital solutions and pharmacies. The members hold discussions with politicians, primarily at the state and federal level, on topics such as securing skilled workers, digitalisation and future innovations, reducing bureaucracy, rural care, financing and preventative healthcare.
- **Personnel:** In the Personnel working group, Managing Directors and HR Managers from Upper Bavarian companies discuss current issues shaping HR policy and thus support the CCI Munich in its positioning vis-à-vis politics.
- **Start-ups:** Start-ups and young companies are often confronted with an abundance of regulations that present hurdles in the process of founding a company and which are often a great burden in the years that follow. The working group issues demands regarding these topics and discusses these regularly with political representatives. The aim is to support attractive framework conditions for founders and thus strengthen the location.

Interview: CCI Brand Identity Across Germany—Placing the Honourable Merchant at Its Centre

Since 2018, the model of the honourable merchant has also been the basis for the new brand identity of the German CCI organisation. An interview with: Gerti Oswald, Managing Director of the Association of Bavarian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) officer of the CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria.

Gerti Oswald, Photo Credit: CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria/Goran Gajanin_Das Kraftbild

“Together we take responsibility”—this is the new guiding principle of the CCI organisation. On the initiative of the Association of Bavarian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the General Assembly of the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry further refined the “CCI” brand and adopted this guiding principle as the brand identity. All 79 German CCIs have adopted it. Why did they choose precisely this message?

The brand identity serves as a framework for the continuous development of the CCIs and promotes a joint understanding and image based on the model of the honourable merchant. “Together we take responsibility” is ideally suited to this cause. With this new guiding principle, the historical model of the honourable merchant can also be translated perfectly into modern times.

Could You Briefly Explain the Model of the Honourable Merchant?

The chamber of commerce and industry movement is based on the image and understanding of the honourable merchant. The model serves as a starting point and still shapes our work today. The honourable merchant began as (and remains to this day) the—unwritten—agreement among businessmen to deal honestly and reliably with each other, with employees and society as a whole. Translated into today’s world, this means that the honourable merchant acts sustainably and responsibly regarding economic, social and ecological dimensions. He wants his company to grow—but not at the expense of others, his employees or partners, society or the environment. At the same time, he acknowledges that this type of ethical behaviour also represents an entrepreneurial opportunity to strengthen his company’s competitiveness, innovation and sustainability. The management approach that characterises the honourable merchant with particular accuracy is called Corporate Social Responsibility—CSR.

Why is it necessary for the CCIs to become a brand? Does this also make their range of services more visible?

Correct. We want to ensure that the CCI organisation is no longer perceived as a burdensome entity with compulsory membership and mandatory contributions and at the same time, we want to make our services more visible. Implicitly, we have always been a brand with the promise of benefits and values. This promise lies in our own understanding of CCI and our legal mandate—the public tasks assigned by the state, the overall representation of interests and the promotion of business, and as the basis of our work, the very model of the honourable merchant. With our guiding principle “Together we take responsibility”, which is based on the principle of the honourable merchant, we are now explicitly making the CCI visible as a brand—a truly nationwide undertaking. We present a united and unified image to the outside world, we gain a clearer profile and thus greater clout, and also provide a pioneering response to the challenges of the present (see Fig. 2.5).

A modern approach—a brand makes an organisation distinctive, and this is how the CCIs stand out more clearly from the crowd of other business organisations.

Source: CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria

Fig. 2.5 The CCI brand core—compact and clear

That's right, there is a lot of talk about the so-called "attention economy". Attention really is a scarce commodity these days. Having a brand helps us place our messages and emphasise our unique selling points. This is what makes the CCI distinctive. For the business community itself, politics and civic society, the abbreviation CCI should be linked to positive associations such as values, competence and commitment to the interests of the economy and for the benefit of both present and future generations.

The brand promise and its individual aspects promise society a responsible economy and guarantee companies that they can jointly shape framework conditions for responsible economic growth with the help of the CCIs. So you have two target groups?

Yes, and we are also concerned with both target groups. On behalf of the companies, the guiding principle promises society that we will do business sustainably and responsibly, thinking not only of today's generations but also of future generations. In this way, we can also strengthen the entrepreneurial image in the public eye.

But the brand promise is also directed at the companies, the members themselves. What does it promise them?

It promises our members that with the CCI as part of a comprehensive, even worldwide network, you can bear responsibility and shape the economy autonomously. The CCI supports you in this venture by promoting you, advising you and representing your interests. This should and will, in turn, increase the members' loyalty to their CCI and show them that the CCI is indeed more than a compulsory organisation.

The words of the guiding principle "Together we take responsibility" are, indeed, well put. What exactly is the message you are looking to purvey?

Essentially, each word has its own meaning. For example, the word "Together" stands for the honorary and primary office, for the active and the (as yet) inactive members. Only when everyone networks and collaborates can "we" fulfil our task as a chamber of commerce and industry. In concrete terms, this means that by working for (and with) the companies we shape and work for the economy, exerting our influence in the region, but also nationwide and, through our network of foreign chambers of commerce, worldwide. Thus, companies can operate responsibly and under the best possible conditions. The members—the companies as part of this "we"—naturally play a special role in this, as they are both the driving force and the goal itself.

In the guiding principle, in German the word for "take" is replaced by the word "enterprise"...

... and consciously so. This is a play on words in German, which is difficult to translate one to one into English. Basically, we want to express the entrepreneurial spirit that characterises our organisation and our understanding of what we do. In this sense, we are a long-standing citizens' initiative in which entrepreneurs, as part of society, take their affairs into their own hands, while helping to shape them and thus, also take responsibility.

So the term “responsibility” in the guiding principle even goes beyond responsible, sustainable business?

Yes. The term is very complex and also reflects our own role as a chamber of commerce and industry. We are a legally mandated institution, we stand for the self-governance of the economy, for freedom from the state and hence for the embodiment of personal responsibility. Responsibility, therefore, means implementing sovereign tasks in a business-oriented manner, supporting our members comprehensively regarding all manner of challenges—from Work 4.0 to questions concerning customs law—but also helping them with regards to sustainable business. It means the representation of interests, i.e. the representation of the overall interest and not the individual interests of singular companies or sectors. CCI positions are based on the weighing up and balancing of different economic interests. With a perspective on both the economy and companies, when establishing a position, the region, social needs and the requirements of the future are always taken into account, too. As a community of solidarity under public law, we are also tasked with a public welfare mission. All this is part of the term responsibility.

Despite all this commitment, business is, more often than not, perceived for its misconduct rather than the responsibility it assumes. Does this not bother you?

Very much so. This is one of the reasons why we have formulated the guiding principle in this manner. It is also precisely why we want to use this branding process to build up a new perception of the CCI. Every day, companies take responsibility for their employees, the region, society, the environment and thus, also for the future of us all. Of course, we cannot deny misconduct. The guiding principle is therefore a confession, a form of stocktaking and an appeal all in one. It emphasizes that the business community acknowledges its responsibility and embodies it. At the same time, however, the guiding principle also appeals to companies not to slacken their efforts to shoulder greater responsibility and pursue increased sustainability, or to tackle these points if they have not already done so.

And last but not least, does the new brand identity also have an internal effect? Does this also mean that the primary office of each of the 79 CCIs is aligned with the brand identity?

Correct. Of course, the model of the honourable merchant must also apply to the CCIs internally. How could it be otherwise? Honorary office, members and the primary office act as one unit, and the values and attitude apply both externally and internally. Only if we also embrace the brand identity within the organisation will we remain credible externally—and really live up to our brand claim.

Ms. Oswald, thank you for the interview.

Excursus: The Practical Wisdom of the Honourable Merchant

A merchant, unlike a military commander or official, does not have the power of coercion. He or she cannot force anyone to sell them goods or for that matter buy goods from them; this person is dependent on voluntary action alone. The strength of the concept behind *practical wisdom* as a guiding category of business ethics now lies in the fact that it has not only normative but also positive references. It is therefore less about pointing the moral index finger and setting standards than about acting in a certain way and managing relationships. In other words: only those who systematically take into account the legitimate expectations of their stakeholders can hope for lasting business success. For this reason, a wise businessman will, for example, respect the property rights of his business partners unconditionally, even without being forced to do so by a functioning judicial system. This is because if he does not, others will lose confidence in him or her—which in turn threatens the very basis of his or her business. The respectability of the merchant also takes into account his or her legal status as a private entrepreneur. The respectability of the merchant is therefore not only an expression of his or her firm moral convictions but also of the need for good stakeholder relations—that is practical wisdom.

Incidentally, in a similar vein, social psychologists have shown that socially weaker groups—such as women or people from poorer social strata—generally make wiser and more prudent decisions. This is due to the fact that they are more dependent on the goodwill of those with greater power—often rich men—to achieve their goals and take to corresponding heuristics. Of course, these are only averages used to characterise mass behaviour and do not necessarily say anything about individuals. However, such findings also suggest that medium-sized family entrepreneurs, for example, tend to make wiser decisions than the managers of large companies, who are used to having all key partners—including politicians—dancing to their tune.

Historical Review—How the Chambers Arose and Developed

Over the centuries, chambers of commerce and industry have proven themselves as an example of best practice concerning the exchange of information and the division of labour between the state and business, as well as regarding the participation of business in the political decision-making and shaping process. Compulsory membership is an irreplaceable ingredient for the successful execution of such a programme.

Chambers of commerce and industry have deep roots that stretch back to the Middle Ages and early modern times. For example, an association of Nuremberg merchants is mentioned in a document dating back to 1163. Moreover, the “Assembly of an Honourable Merchant in Hamburg” has existed in the city since

1517. Similar organisations were also a prominent feature in almost all important trade and business centres. The following article, however, is dedicated to the history of the chambers of commerce and industry (CCIs) in modern times: in the period spanning the turn of the 18th century to the dawn of the 19th century, the chamber system gradually took on its modern form, due to the fact that the state and its increasingly industrialising economy had to re-examine their roles and forms of cooperation.

The governmental interest in CCIs has always been, from the very beginning and up to the present day, focussed on obtaining information about economic processes that it cannot procure itself, or at least without a degree of unreasonable cost. At the same time, it delegates tasks to the CCIs with a view to reducing its own administrative cost burden. In return, the government provides the Chambers with the opportunity to position their interests and ideas at the forefront of political decision-making.

From the outset, the instrumental core of the system underpinning the German Chambers of Commerce and Industry has been compulsory membership secured in the form of corresponding financial contributions. In particular, it was the only way the state could access all companies and ensure the full transparency of the information received—with membership being a necessary prerequisite, however. What seems to be a matter of fact and is only questioned by a few critics today has, in actual fact been accompanied by many discussions and variant manifestations in a period spanning 200 + years of historical development. Essentially, during this period the Chamber system—based on compulsory membership—has historically evolved into what today is considered best practice. Finally, the laws governing the CCI apparatus put an end to this evolutionary process in December 1956 by enshrining compulsory membership in law. Hence, the discussion regarding compulsory membership therefore also forms the core of the following historical overview.

Chambers at the Turn of the 19th Century

Back to the roots: We find ourselves in the period spanning the turn of the 18th century to the dawn of the 19th century. The exchange of information between the state and the local economy had to be organised under evolving conditions—given that the French Revolution and reforms in Prussia were paving the way towards a modern concept of government and industrialisation had begun to take hold. In that context, the chambers of commerce and industry seemed to be a tried and tested means for this purpose. During the French occupation at the time, the Chambers were initially set up in western Germany in adherence to the French model. Companies were therefore required to become members bound by obligation: this was prescribed. The aim for the Chambers was to keep the state abreast of economic developments in a fashion that was as undistorted as possible, while at the same time taking the interests of all companies in the district into account in their reports and the self-administrative tasks they bore. The (French) state initially

attempted to monopolise this exchange process by dictating its tasks to the regional merchant team and allowing them to articulate their own interests only with explicit approval. However, given that merchants saw membership as a constraint, coupled with the fact that they could only represent and shape their own interests to a limited extent, they lacked the incentive to provide the state with the desired information. Rather, in the heyday of liberalism, they wished to free themselves from the enveloping cloak of state paternalism. Therefore, it became clear that the state could not achieve the desired result by coercion alone. In any case, the formal transfer of self-administering powers and a largely voluntary contribution by the chambers of commerce to the state's goals seemed to be the more sensible alternative.

Initial Definition Criteria for Compulsory Membership Under Prussian Rule

Among other things, this dispute led to the introduction of the Prussian-German type of chamber (first included in the Statutes of the Chamber of Commerce for Elberfeld and Barmen) in 1830, which established objective criteria for joining the Chamber of Commerce: All trade taxpayers who initially paid at least 12 Talers in tax were entitled to vote. More precisely, they were allowed to elect general assemblies as representatives of trade and industry—but without the trades and crafts, and agriculture for which separate Chambers were later established. Of course, the right to vote was not a gift, but rather entailed an obligation to finance the running costs of the Chamber's organisation. In this respect, membership and contributions had been compulsory since 1830. The other German states followed this Prussian model in the further course of the 19th century. Only Baden abolished the obligation to pay contributions in 1862 because that did not seem compatible with its prevailing liberal principles. However, even here the problem of drumming up contributions soon became apparent, as many companies withdrew from the Chambers or did not become members in the first place. Subsequently, Baden went on to reintroduce compulsory membership in 1878.

The Unglamorous Nazi Period

Despite increasing legal harmonisation following the foundation of the German Reich and, thereafter, the Weimar Republic, chamber legislation remained a matter for the individual German states (or 'Länder') until well into the 20th century. These had been independent individual German states for centuries, which retained a large proportion of their powers even after the birth of the German Reich in 1871, including those for the chamber system. This did not change until the dawn of the Nazi era. The Hitler regime brought the chambers into line in 1933/34—as was the case with all areas of public administration. More specifically, this meant that the Chambers were no longer self-governing, but rather were organised according to the 'Führer principle' and subject to the supervision of the Reich Economic

Minister. Consequently, the latter also appointed the presidents of the CCIs. Accordingly, the plenary assemblies were no longer elected by the member entrepreneurs but were instead replaced by an advisory council. Finally, the CCIs were also involved in the process of ‘aryanising’ the economy. In 1942, in the midst of the Second World War, the NS regime then transferred all 111 Chambers of Commerce and Industry along with the Chambers of Trades and Crafts to the ‘Gauwirtschaftskammern’ (regional chambers of commerce and industry) and used these to perpetuate the war economy. Consequently, these constructs were considered National Socialist organisations by the occupying powers and found themselves dissolved only three years later. More precisely, they were replaced by chambers of commerce and industry on the basis of the old state laws stemming from the Weimar period. Nevertheless, their future remained uncertain. Rather during the post-war period, any self-governing body under public law that prescribed both compulsory membership and fee-based contributions was often a target of attack. Although nobody seriously questioned their existence, many did, however, question their organisational form and tasks.

A New Beginning in the Post-war Period—New Role Definition for the Chambers

In the immediate post-war period, planning considerations played a major role; more precisely, the idea materialised to transform chambers of commerce and industry into the institutional foundation of an administrative planning economy; this was also due to the fact that, in contrast to other public organisations, the chambers were able to function immediately after the end of the war. Moreover, it was obvious that reconstruction required local expertise, the skilled handling of transport issues and contacts in other economic regions—and the Chambers were able to offer all of this in one. This prominent role in reconstruction plans reaching back as early as 1945/46, however, was rather dangerous for the traditional form of economic self-governance associated with the Chambers. For it seemed to strengthen precisely those (socialist) forces that considered comprehensive economic planning (in the sense of 5-years-plans) to be desirable. Consequently, the aim was to design the Chambers as executive organs of an administered economy as well as instruments of economic planning and control. With the establishment of governmental economic offices and the rapid success of the social market economy following 1948, however, these voices soon fell silent. Nevertheless, the discussion as such demonstrated quite successfully just how uncertain the future of the Chambers remained at that point in time.

Different Approaches by the Occupying Powers, as Well as in German Politics and the Economy

The occupying powers from the US, Russia, the UK and France contributed substantially to this uncertainty because, as in many other respects, they pursued different approaches. At this time, too, the primary point of contention was compulsory membership.

- Only in the French-occupied zone was compulsory membership never seriously at issue, given that the Chambers of Commerce and Industry were, in principle, originally French institutions.
- On the contrary, the British were in favour of a voluntary association; they acted pragmatically, however, and in November 1946 allowed the return to CCIs under public law with compulsory membership—but without obligatory financial contributions. This implied, that the Chambers were allowed to levy contributions from all companies subject to compulsory membership, but were not allowed to collect them by force.
- The Americans, like the British, were only familiar with chambers of commerce and industry in their country as organisations characterised by voluntary membership. They therefore categorically rejected any state coercion for their occupied zone—both in terms of their status as organisations under public law and the notion of compulsory membership underpinned by the obligation to pay contributions—and instead allowed the Chambers to operate solely on a private-law basis.

Moreover, German support for private chambers was notable at the time, first and foremost from Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard himself. He pleaded for the clear separation of state and economy and therefore preferred chambers organised under private law without compulsory membership. Even some trade associations themselves questioned the traditional system, meaning that—even within their own ranks—the chamber model was considered controversial. In particular, some of the Bavarian Chambers (finding themselves under American administration) seemed to have resigned themselves to their private-law status and wished to retain it. Consequently, they did not consider compulsory membership to be a necessity either.

Of course, demands for a private chamber of commerce and industry were largely tactical in nature. In fact, they served the goal of warding off the conversion of chambers into organisations with equal representation by employers and employees—a postulate of leftist political thinking by those figures who strove to strengthen the organisational position of employees. Such a transformation would have indeed substantially undermined the traditional self-governance of the business sector via the Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Demand for a Nationwide CCI Law

Simultaneously, however, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry also had to work out a negotiating position within their own camp—and more precisely with their member—entrepreneurs. Among them, the traditional chamber system premised on compulsory membership and contributions not only found supporters. On the one hand, it was necessary for the employers to stand united against the trade union demands co-determination, while on the other hand, it was in the organisational interest of the Chambers to maintain their previous functions. Accordingly, relations in the business faction (and especially between the DIHT as an umbrella organisation and its individual members) remained conflict-laden during the summer of 1950. Therefore, the future of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry was an integral consideration during the mass political manoeuvring that resulted from the co-determination discussion between leftist and liberal parties during the early 1950s. Finally, a Works Constitution Act (*‘Betriebsverfassungsgesetz’*) was decreed in parliament, which would go on to implement co-determination mechanisms within a company, but no longer at the inter-company-level (1952). This implied that equal representation of employers and employees within the Chamber was no longer an issue: It no longer made sense to bring about the comprehensive change in nature of the Chambers for that purpose.

Conclusion of the Discussion with CCI Law

Since 1952, therefore, the uniform federal regulation of chamber law has established a front-and-centre position for itself. Despite the reservations of the Bavarian Chambers, the plenary assembly of the DIHT had opted in favour of designing future federal provisions on the model of the old Prussian Chamber of Commerce Act, that is, to organise them as self-governing bodies under public law with compulsory membership. Moreover, after 1952 the opponents of compulsory membership gradually found upon less sympathy, because co-determination had already been implemented at the company level; in the meantime, even the DIHT had unanimously awarded its support to the traditional organisational model. In that situation, the majority of political parties did not want to establish any policy against a clear vote by the Chamber organisations; even the prominent minister Ludwig Erhard no longer opposed it. In 1955, the CDU/CSU parliamentary group finally submitted a draft for a chamber law that essentially corresponded to the ideas of the DIHT and was no longer subject to any significant resistance. Nevertheless, even if it had lost its importance, the co-determination debate still influenced the terminology in use: the law of December 1956 was termed the *‘law on the provisional regulation of chambers of commerce and industry’*. Contrary to its name, however, the law proved to be rather permanent in character. Consequently, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry returned to their traditional development as public self-governing bodies with compulsory membership and contributions. Since

then, they have formed what has become a hugely uncontroversial institutional cornerstone of the German post World War Two ‘social market economy’.

Box: We Thank Prof. Dr. Boris Gehlen, University Stuttgart, for this Contribution

He researches and teaches economic and social history of the 19th and 20th centuries, entrepreneurial and corporate history, banking, stock exchange and financial market history as well as the history of economic order, regulation and (corporate) governance.

Prof. Dr. Boris Gehlen, Photo Credit: private

Interview: Leap into the modern age—looking back on 175 years of CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria in the anniversary year 2018

One thing always remains the same in the history of the CCI: It helps the economy and, ultimately, the state to successfully meet the challenges of change. Dr. Eva Moser is keen to emphasise this. She is head of the Bavarian Economic Archive in Munich. In an interview she explains the history of the CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria, which celebrated its 175th anniversary in 2018.

Dr. Eva Moser, Photo Credit: CCI for Munich and Upper Bavaria/Goran Gajanin_Das Kraftbild

Dr. Moser, in April 1843, King Ludwig I approved the establishment of a Chamber of Commerce in Munich and appointed 12 representatives from the local trade, manufacturing and industrial sectors as its members. The CCI was born. What was the King thinking?

In the middle of the 19th century, the economy underwent a major change, and industrialisation took off. The king recognised this change and wanted his country to cope with it, while also making the leap into modernity. To do this, he needed the expertise of the economy. He founded the Chamber of Commerce as an advisory body to his government.

But the advisory task did not stop there?

Correct. Ludwig II finally made the Chamber of Commerce a permanent institution in 1868. The business representatives were no longer appointed but elected by the business community itself into a general assembly and a steering committee. At the same time, the forerunner of today's primary office was created: There was now an "expertly trained secretary"—today's Chief Executive. In addition, the necessary "auxiliary staff" were to be recruited. This expansion made sense because the foundation of the German Reich in 1871, which Bavaria had joined, had created many new tasks that also affected the economy: the unification of currency, legal norms and even weights and measures. Here, the state needed the support of the economy. The chambers of commerce were also involved.

Were the pillars of CCI work already apparent at that time? Representation of interests, service and sovereign tasks?

In a certain sense, yes. The chamber of commerce provided information to the business community, advised the government and also represented the interests of the business community, and it participated in important governmental tasks—such as the introduction of telephony.

Let us take a leap back to the time of National Socialism.

That was, of course, a very difficult and terrible time. The chamber of commerce and industry was brought into line, the general assembly and the steering committee were reappointed and no longer elected. The CCI was also involved, for example, in the so-called "Aryanisation" of the economy, i.e. the suppression of Jewish tradesmen.

And after the Second World War?

The CCI was one of the first institutions to re-commence its work. This enabled it to play a significant role in the reconstruction of the country. Initially on the basis of voluntary membership: The Americans, who were the occupying power in Bavaria, prohibited compulsory membership. Then, in 1956, the CCI Act came into force, which established the work of the CCIs to this day, by defining their tasks, making the model of the honourable merchant the standard of conduct and establishing compulsory membership.

The fact that Germany in general and Bavaria, in particular, are so economically successful—is this also due to the CCIs?

Absolutely. The self-governance of the economy, the representation of interests, the exchange between entrepreneurs via the CCI and the support of the primary office—all this enables the economy and makes it successful.

Even today, the economy and the state are again facing many challenges...

... and once again the CCIs will contribute when it comes to mastering them.

Bavarian Business Archive—preserving the past for the present

History never dies. But their testimonies are sometimes threatened by loss and decay. When companies want to rummage through their past, fill in any gaps or turn assumptions into facts—whether for a commemorative publication to mark an anniversary or to clarify old rights—then the doors of the Bavarian Economic Archives (BWA) are open to them, in addition to their own archives. This is because the joint institution of the Bavarian Chambers of Commerce and Industry contains records and documents from companies and business organisations which go all the way back to the beginning of the 18th century.

The “IHK-Wirtschaftsarchiv für München und Oberbayern” has been in existence since 1986 and, since 1994, it has been operated under the name “Bayerisches Wirtschaftsarchiv” by all Bavarian Chambers of Commerce and Industry jointly as a collective source of historical economic memory for the whole of Bavaria. The Bavarian Chambers of Commerce and Industry finance the work of the archive from their own funds, along with the support of a non-profit support group. Organised as a department of the CCI in Munich and accompanied in specialist technical matters by a scientific advisory board, the archive—with its 5.7 kilometres of shelving—is located in Orleansstraße in Munich.

The BWA is stocked with the archive holdings of the Bavarian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, as well as of those associations or federations of the Bavarian economy and traditional companies in the sectors of industry, trade and services. The collection comprises a wide range of corporate publications—from commemorative publications to annual reports, from general books and master craftsmen’s letters to films and portraits, from advertising material and catalogues to photos and posters. One particular treasure is business correspondence, from which

valuable conclusions can sometimes be drawn about data and business relationships. A highlight is the famous “Licence No.1”, with which the American military administration permitted the publication of the “Süddeutsche Zeitung” by politically untainted publishers on 6 October 1945.

The BWA serves several purposes:

- **Document collection:** For research and science, a comprehensive collection of visual, written and audio documents of Bavarian economic history is brought together in one place. This facilitates access and provides a comparative or complementary overview from which valuable insight can be gained.
- **Usable for all interested parties:** Companies, organisations, locations or even individuals can access documents from times gone by, including those concerning companies that have long since left the market or have been dissolved. The same applies to the reassessment of events in a current context, for example, when historical buildings and facilities are reused or rebuilt.
- **Transfer of old company documents:** If a lack of space, changes in ownership or company dissolutions call into question the retention of old documents, these can—instead of being destroyed—be transferred to the archive as documents of economic history and thus preserved for later use. BWA staff then sift through the documents handed over, ensure that they are properly stored in the archive’s climate-controlled warehouses and integrate the documents into a database.
- **Open to the general public:** The contents and of the archive are made accessible to the broader public through guided tours and lectures. For example, the Bavarian Business Archive also take part in the “Long Night of the Munich Museum”—an annual cultural event of the state capital Munich. In this way, it opens up broader perspectives and a new understanding of economic issues for all interested parties.

Time and again, research at the BWA helps when data and facts pertaining to the past of a company or organisation need to be clarified—or when social change forces a new evaluation of facts. On the occasion of its 150th anniversary in 2016, for example, TÜV SÜD once again looked through the 44 metres of shelved documents archived at the BWA from the perspective of the role of women in their own organisation—a topic that is interesting today but did not play a role in earlier commemorative publications.

Or there is material from the BWA that is used in history books to help put the role of the economy in perspective and acknowledge it. Examples of this are included in the chapter on the Rhine-Main-Danube Canal in the work entitled “100 mal Bayern—eine unterhaltsame Zeitreise vom Archaeopteryx bis zum Gogomobil” or the book “Ein Bier wie Bayern” on the history of the world-famous Munich Löwenbrauerei, published to mark the anniversary year of the Bavarian Purity Law. Even international publications now appreciate the archive treasures from Bavaria: For example, the special-interest model-making magazine “Nuts & Bolts” recently used a specialist article from the BWA to illustrate a rare picture motif.

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