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German builders head towards UK
After decades of sending builders and bricklayers to work in mainland Europe, the UK is now attracting craftsmen from Germany to its construction industry.

In the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, German builders are being advised how to "attack" the UK market.

The construction industry is stagnating in Germany, but up to 30,000 new homes a year have been earmarked for building in the UK over the next two decades.



German bricklayers will be offered English lessons

The 2012 Olympics in London is another attraction for overseas builders.

Many UK tradesmen travelled to mainland Europe, including Germany, to look for work in the 1980s and 1990s, as recession hit many industrial parts of the UK, but now it is the German workforce on the move.

Bilingual flyers

It comes as a building revival driven by World Cup 2006 construction projects comes to an end in Germany.

Bettina Hansmeier, a spokeswoman for a lobby representing craftsmen in North Rhine-Westphalia, said a number of websites now gave advice to German builders looking to make inroads into the UK.

She said builders were advised how to "attack" the market, and how to get contracts, as well as overcoming hurdles such as customs, taxes, registration, and even cultural barriers.

Ms Hansmeier said bilingual flyers had been printed and English lessons are being offered to builders by the craftsmen group.

She added German craftsmen had a sound level of training, with a Meistertitel, or master certificate - a designation which does not exist in the UK.

Later this month, the German Master Craftsmen will exhibit at the trade fair Interbuild in Birmingham, under the title: "Together, We're Stronger".

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