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GERMAN ECONOMY STRONG BUT WORRIES REMAIN

While much of Europe languishes in recession, Germany has managed to weather the economic crisis. But Europe's largest economy is nonetheless beginning to suffer a slowdown. Duration: 01:23

'Germany is one of the few Western countries not due to suffer recession or stagnation next year, but that's not to say its economy is without weaknesses.

Its main trading partners are in the eurozone, but with the ongoing debt crisis, Spain, Italy, France, and even non-euro member Britain, are buying fewer German goods. As a result, exports have fallen by more than 9 percent in one year.

In order to keep its economic motor humming, Germany is turning ever more decisively towards Asia, particularly China.

Nonetheless, growth forecasts for 2013 have been revised downwards, from 1.6 percent to just 1 percent. That figure is still noticeably healthier than many of Germany's European neighbours. France is predicting growth next year of a mere 0.3 percent.

Unemployment in Germany remains low, at just 6.5 percent, partly because of flexible working conditions and efforts to avoid the wage inflation seen in other eurozone members throughout the past decade.

One worry for German leaders is the high level of national debt. It stands at more than 2 trillion euros, or 80 percent of GDP. Not as big as Italy's, perhaps, but still one of the highest in the EU, and not helpful when Germany seeks to give lessons to others on budgetary discipline.