

## **The Rhine-Neckar Metropolitan Region...**

The Rhine-Neckar Metropolitan Region is in south-west Germany at the point where the three federal states of Baden-Wuerttemberg, Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate meet. This conurbation is home to 2.4 million people and is characterised not only by its cities and towns such as Mannheim, Ludwigshafen, Heidelberg, Worms, Speyer, Heppenheim and Mosbach, but also by the natural beauty of the Odenwald forest and the Palatinate.

Industry, science, politics and government work hand in hand across state borders. This is seen as one of the decisive factors behind the success in the Rhine-Neckar Region and beyond.

Along with its neighbouring regions – Frankfurt/Rhine Main to the north and Karlsruhe/Stuttgart to the south – the Rhine-Neckar Metropolitan Region forms one of Europe's powerhouses.

After its classification as a European Metropolitan Region, and the signing of a second interstate treaty between Baden-Wuerttemberg, Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate, the close collaboration between the public sector, industry and science was institutionalised in 2006 as public private partnership model that is one of a kind in Germany. Since then, the associations Metropolregion Rhein-Neckar GmbH, Verband Region Rhein-Neckar and Zukunft Metropolregion Rhein-Neckar e.V. have stood for targeted, harmonised regional development work.

### **...progressive**

The Rhine-Neckar Region is one of Germany's economic engines, home to global players such as BASF, SAP, Daimler, Roche, Freudenberg, Bilfinger, Heidelberger Druckmaschinen, KSB and Fuchs Petrolub. Moreover, it is also home to many SMEs and renowned brands including Betty Barclay, Birkel, Capri Sun, Hornbach, Isover, Lamy, Nolte Moebel, Trekstor, Vileda and Zewa.

In 2016, the region's GDP totalled €95.3 billion. More than 60% of the goods produced locally are exported. Key industries include automotive, mechanical and plant engineering, chemicals, IT, biotech and life sciences, energy and environment, as well as a vibrant cultural and creative sector. Indeed, Rhine-Neckar is among the top ranked regions both nationally and internationally for many of these industries.

In addition, its 22 universities combine with a range of renowned research institutions such as the European Molecular Biology Laboratory and the German Cancer Research Center offer an ideal environment for creative and innovative technologies. The Mannheim-Heidelberg-Ludwigshafen conurbation provides a workplace to twice as many experts work in research than the German average. Moreover, both universities and non-university R&D institutes maintain a lively exchange of ideas with industry, ensuring that a fruitful transfer of knowledge from theory to practice.

Striving for scientific knowledge has a longer tradition in Rhine-Neckar than almost any other region. Germany's first university was founded in Heidelberg in 1386. Today, more than 88,000 students are enrolled at the region's institutes of higher education, roughly one in ten of whom are international students.

### **...livable**

The Rhine-Neckar Region offers everything that makes life worth living and enjoyable. More than 110 theatres and cabaret venues, in excess of 230 museums and galleries, and numerous festivals set the stage for a diverse cultural scene. Both Heidelberg (City of Literature) and Mannheim City of Music) form part of the UNESCO Creative Cities. The landscape is bejewelled with three World Cultural Heritage sites (Lorsch Monastery, Limes and Speyer Cathedral) and more than 120 palaces, cathedrals and castles, including world-famous historical sites such as the palaces and castles of Heidelberg, Schwetzingen and Hambach.

Away from the hustle and bustle of the city, nature-lovers can find peace and relaxation in the forests of the three natural parks (Palatinate Forest, Neckartal-Odenwald, Geo-Naturepark Bergstraße-Odenwald). Meanwhile, connoisseurs and food lovers delight in diverse regional cuisine served in top-class kitchens and prize-winning wines from four areas (Baden, Hessische Bergstraße, Palatinate, Rheinhessen).

The region also enjoys first-class sporting events, from the ice-hockey champions at Adler Mannheim and handballers of Rhein-Neckar Löwen and TSG Ludwigshafen-Friesenheim, to the football stars of 1899 Hoffenheim and the golfers at St. Leon-Rot, not to mention exciting motorsports at the Hockenheimring circuit. Top Olympic athletes are catered for by the Rhine-Neckar Metropolitan Region Olympic Centre. Meanwhile, recreational sportsmen and women have access to an almost inexhaustible range of options. More than 2,700 sports clubs from get the region moving.

### **...committed**

The percentage of people who volunteer in the Rhine-Neckar Region is above the national average. Almost one resident in two gives up some free time to get involved in sport, the church or the environment. The average for Germany as a whole is just one in three. The many leisure activities on offer for children, young people and adults are an expression of this active civic society. There are also many opportunities for people who need help at various stages of life. The extent to which people are prepared to lend a hand to help their neighbours is especially evident on the region's volunteering day. Held for the sixth time in 2018, this day saw some 7,500 citizens volunteering to help out at non-profit organisations such as nurseries, schools and retirement homes, once again breaking the German record.

In addition, the numerous foundations, companies, communities and other institutions also make a valuable contribution to social cohesion when it comes to achieving a work-life balance. Both in corporate HR policy and in city and town council family policy, ensuring the compatibility of work and home life is a top priority. Whether support for childcare or carers, the Rhine-Neckar Region has seen the introduction of many initiatives to make families feel welcome and their lives easier.

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