


# Mayors Dialogue on Growth and Solidarity

## City profile: Mannheim, Germany



**Population:** 321,261 (2019)

**GDP per capita:** \$50,794 (2018)

**Major industries:** services, engineering, construction

**Percentage of migrants:** 25.8% (2019)

**Mayor's name:** Peter Kurz | **Next election date:** 2024

### Socioeconomic profile

Mannheim is located in south-west Germany in the state of Baden Württemberg. The city sits between two rivers, the Rhine and the Neckar, with the Rhine separating Mannheim from the city of Ludwigshafen. The population is 321,261 (Stadt Mannheim, 2019a). The city is the economic and cultural centre of the wider Rhine-Neckar metropolitan region, which has around 2.4 million inhabitants (Mannheim City Council, n.d.). A youthful, multicultural city, it is known as the City of Squares – it is laid out in a ‘chessboard’ pattern – and is Germany’s most compact metropolitan region. It is the seventh-largest metropolitan area in the country.

Mannheim is a cosmopolitan city with a vibrant workforce drawn from over 173 countries, mainly due to the presence of large companies in the region such as IBM, Unilever, Siemens, Caterpillar, BASF, Bombardier and Roche. Per capita GDP is \$50,794.<sup>1</sup> The city has excellent connectivity within Germany and with the rest of Europe, and boasts the second-largest inland port in the country. The majority of Mannheim’s workforce (approximately 72%) are employed in the service sector (Stadt Mannheim, 2019b). The city thrives on the major sectors of engineering and construction, alongside trade, retail, logistics, information and communication technology, and skilled trades and crafts (Stadt Mannheim, 2019c). As per the latest statistics (2019), 5.8% of the working age population is unemployed (Stadt Mannheim, 2019d). The economic success of the city is also a story of overcoming structural weaknesses at the turn of the millennium, when it grappled with massive job losses and high unemployment. Since 2000, EU funding has helped Mannheim overcome these challenges, mainly by repurposing wastelands and building start-up centres, enabling the city to become a supra-regional

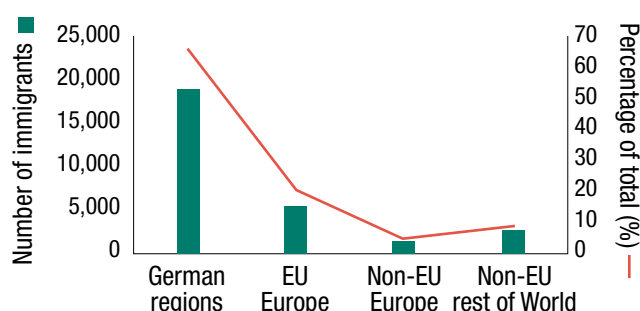
hub for modern services, including the music industry and medical technologies (InvestEU, n.d.).

### Migration profile

In 2019, 25.8% of residents in the city had a foreign nationality (Stadt Mannheim, 2019d). However, this statistic refers only to those without German citizenship. If German citizens with a migration background are considered, a much larger 45% of the city’s population is recorded as foreign born (Stadt Mannheim, 2019a). This is far above the national average, which in 2020 stood at 12.6% (Statistisches Bundesamt, n.d.). The majority of foreign nationals in the city are Turkish (19.4%), followed by Italian (9.9%), Polish (8.2%), Bulgarian (8%) and Romanian (6.7%) (Stadt Mannheim, 2019a).

In 2019, more than 65% of those moving to Mannheim were from other German regions (see chart) and 35% from outside Germany. The remaining 35% of migrants who have settled in Mannheim include a significant number from EU member states (19% of total immigrants to the city) as well as immigrants from

### Source areas of immigration in Mannheim, 2019



Source: Stadt Mannheim (2019a)

<sup>1</sup> This figure is provided in nominal US\$ and is not comparable with other cities profiled. See OECD Stats (2018). Information is extracted in US\$, constant prices, constant PPP, converted into local currency using OECD PPP-local currency conversion rate, then converted into nominal US\$ using OECD’s local currency to US\$ conversion rate. Note this is the combined GDP per capita figure for Mannheim-Ludwigshafen.

other regions of the world. Mannheim has also played a pivotal role in the reception of refugees in Germany, with more than 80,000 arriving on special trains via the Balkans since 2015 (Oltermann, 2016). Although most did not stay in Mannheim, more than 12,000 refugees were sheltered in the vacant former US army barracks that make up a fifth of Mannheim's city area (Nettelbladt and Boana, 2019).

## Governance structure

The city council has 48 seats, elected every five years. At the 2019 election the Green Party received the most votes for the first time. The council has drafted a mission statement based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It has developed a model of Mannheim 2030 on this basis, and aims to localise the SDGs and build a city-level programme around them. With an overall aim to reach an exemplary standard of urban living, the plan focuses on well-being, education, housing, health, employment, inclusive mobility, and social and cultural integration.

Mannheim has introduced a 12-point programme for housing construction – with a proportion of subsidised housing wherein 30% of new living spaces from 10 housing units will be offered for €7.50/m<sup>2</sup> (Mannheim City Council, 2019). The council aims to build 10,000 new living spaces by 2025 and is keen to make housing affordable (ibid.). Mannheim is also at the forefront of developing sustainable urban development models with migrants in a project called *Willkommene Perspektiven – Migrants4Cities* (Welcome Perspectives – Migrants4Cities), funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. They use the methodologies of urban design thinking (creative citizen–migrant workshops) and urban labs (with residents and stakeholders) to develop ideas on increased sustainability, improved social balance, a flourishing economy and cultural diversity. Mannheim has also developed a strategy for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the city by 40% by 2030, and is working on climate change adaptation measures, including programmes for the greening of homes.

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