The Hannover Region

The Hannover Region is a model for implementing local government duties that is unique in Germany. Starting in 2001 from the merger of the Hannover Administrative District and the Regional Administrative District of Greater Hannover, the regional authority today consolidates the main public services for 1.1 million inhabitants in 21 cities and communes – including Hannover, the capital of the federal state of Lower Saxony.

The Hannover Region is amongst other things responsible for local public transport and waste disposal, as well as local social services, vocational colleges, and municipal hospitals. The tasks also include the environment, regional planning, local recreation facilities, and business and employment promotion. More than 2,000 employees work in the administration to assist in maintaining and shaping the environment, the people of the Hannover Region are living and working in.

Geography of the Hannover Region

Situated in the centre of Europe, the Hannover Region covers nearly 2,300 square kilometres. It is characterised by a varied countryside ranging from the wooded ridge of the Deister mountains in the south-west, the Steinhuder Meer lake in the north-west, and the water meadows of the Burgdorfer Aue to the east. Around half of the area has a protected status to preserve its landscape and natural habitat. Being located at the busy intersection of the A2 and A7 motorways, at the hub of major north-south and east-west long distance railway lines, and by the Midland Canal, the Hannover Region is an important site for logistics and distribution companies. Beyond this its exhibition centre and the Hannover Airport are of major international importance.

With more than 515,000 inhabitants, Hannover is by far the largest of the 21 cities and communes forming the Hannover Region, followed by Garbsen and Langenhagen, both situated in the north of the region. Neustadt am Rübenberge spreads over 357 square kilometres and is one of the most extensive cities in Germany. The smallest commune with around 14,000 inhabitants is Pattensen.

Political structure of the Hannover Region

The head of the Hannover Region administration is the Region President. He is also the public representative of the region. Every eight years the Region President is chosen by direct election. Mr. Hauke Jagau of the Social Democratic Party has been Region President since 1 November 2006.

The Regional Assembly is the Hannover Region’s most important political committee. On behalf of the voters, 85 politicians – including the Region President – reach decisions that affect the future of the Hannover Region. The Regional Assembly is elected every five years. Since the 1 November 2006 six parties and one independent politician are part of the assembly: SPD (33 seats), CDU (30), Bündnis90/Die Grünen (9), FDP (6), Die Linke (3) and the Bürgerforum (2). The political decisions are prepared by committees. The meetings of these committees and of the Regional Assembly are all open to the public.

The business-side of the Hannover Region

The majority of the tasks of the Hannover Region is implemented by subsidiaries employing around 16,000 people. The largest company is the Klinikum Hannover Region which operates hospitals with over 3,400 beds and around 8,400 employees. This limited company was formed in 2005 by a merger of the district hospitals and the municipal hospitals in the city of Hannover.

The public transport system is operated by üstra and Regiobus. With their modern trams and busses they ensure mobility for everyone. The waste management company aha is responsible for waste disposal services in the region. And the Hannover Region is the owner of what is considered to be the most attractive zoological garden in Germany – the Hannover Adventure Zoo. The Hannover Holding is the umbrella organisation for a number of enterprises including the business promotion company hannoverimpuls, and the tourism promotion company Hannover Marketing und Tourismus Gesellschaft.