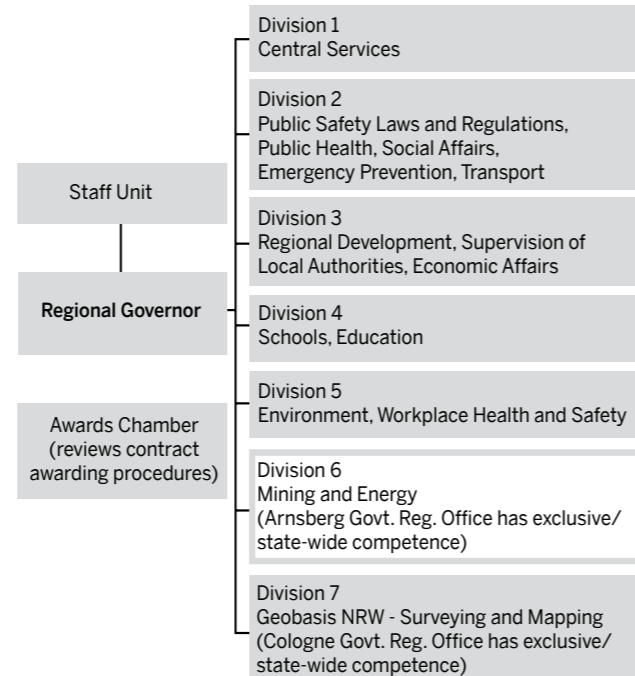


## The Cologne regional government district

The Cologne regional government district covers a surface area of 7,365 sq km and is home to some 4.4 million people who live in 1 metropolitan region, 7 counties, 95 municipalities and 4 unincorporated cities. The Cologne regional government district is Germany's second largest district, and the southernmost of the five regional government districts in North Rhine-Westphalia, the most populous state of the Federal Republic of Germany. Its location in the heart of Europe, its dynamic potential for development and the outstanding importance of its three centres, Aachen, Bonn and Cologne with their urban hinterland, turn the Cologne regional government district into a particularly favourable location when it comes to winning and keeping a competitive edge in Europe. To the south, the district borders on the German State of Rhineland-Palatinate, and its western neighbours include the Netherlands and Belgium. The Cologne Government Regional Office therefore plays a key role in cross-border cooperation in the EUREGIO Maas-Rhine. This cooperation between European regions especially benefits the people who live in the EUREGIO Maas-Rhine and who, thanks to that cross-border cooperation, can increasingly realise their aspirations to equivalent standards of living in a Europe of the Regions. Those transboundary activities are based on the conviction that dialogue between neighbouring regions which, although separated by borders, are confronted with the same problems can contribute much towards European cooperation and cohesion.



## Organisational chart of all Government Regional Offices in North Rhine-Westphalia



Population in North Rhine-Westfalia  
approx. 18,02 Mio.

Population in the Cologne  
regional government district  
approx. 4,36 Mio.

Population in the  
EUREGIO Maas-Rhine  
approx. 3,9 Mio.

## We are there to help you

The Cologne Government Regional Office with its staff of some 1,700 is headed by the Regional Administrator. The agency has offices in three cities and has been cooperating for many years with its Belgian and Netherlands partners in the EUREGIO Maas-Rhine.

Are you interested to learn more about the work of the Cologne Government Regional Office? We will be happy to send you more detailed information – just give us a call or email us:

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## Thinking Regional. Taking Practical Decisions. Role and Functions of the Government Regional Office



## The Government Regional Office – Mid-level agency in North Rhine-Westphalia's system of government

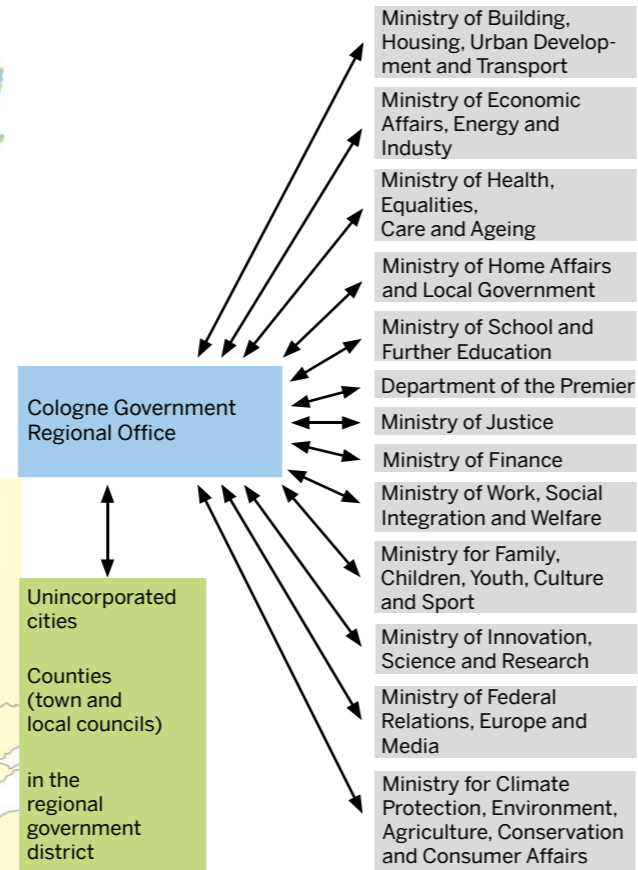
The German State of North Rhine-Westphalia is subdivided into five regional government districts: Arnsberg, Cologne, Detmold, Düsseldorf and Münster. They all report to the North Rhine-Westphalia Ministry of Home Affairs and Local Government..

The Government Regional Offices are intermediate-level agencies within the state's three-tier system of government.



## The Government Regional Office – Interface in the state's administrative structure

Each of the five Government Regional Offices serves as a focal point where the whole range of administrative tasks that come under the portfolios of the Ministries of the North Rhine-Westphalia government including the Premier's Department are concentrated in one organisation. That concentration of functions and the integration of a most widely varying range of technical expertise make the Government Regional Office a highly efficient services centre in the region. The Government Regional Office acts as a single contact point for obtaining decisions and hence serves as a reliable port of call for citizens, industry and local councils.



Current to : July 2012

## The Government Regional Office – Advocate of differing interests

Local government bodies often hold different views and positions depending on their tasks, and it is the Government Regional Office's responsibility to address and properly weigh those differing interests against each other and to develop novel approaches and work out compromises.

For instance, when deciding on the location of a chemical plant or waste management facility, a wide range of factors need to be taken into consideration including building laws and regulations, issues of road traffic, water management, environmental protection, agriculture and forestry, and the interests of both the investors and the citizens. Rather than granting a host of individual permits and licences, the Government Regional Office takes only one single decision. With a view to arriving at that decision, the Government Regional Office first consults local councils and citizens, and evaluates, weighs and – as far as possible - reconciles the various interests of all those involved.

Furthermore, the Government Regional Office represents the interests of the local councils vis-à-vis the state government. In that context it grants permits in relevant areas. It sponsors private and public sector projects, supervises schools and local authorities, and performs a number of emergency prevention and response functions. In a nutshell, the Government Regional Office acts as a link between local government and the North Rhine-Westphalia Administration.



## The Government Regional Office – Administrative services provider in the region

The history of the Government Regional Offices dates back to the time immediately after the Congress of Vienna (1814 – 1815). Altogether, 28 regional government districts were established in the context of the administrative reorganisation of Prussia. In those days already, it was considered important to have government authorities at the regional level. The Government Regional Office for the Cologne district was set up in 1816. Friedrich Ludwig Christian Graf zu Solms-Laubach (\* 29 August 1769 at Büdingen, + 24 February 1822 in Cologne) was the first President of the Office. There is a monument to him in front of the main building of the Government Regional Office. The organisation and the terms of reference of this regional authority continue to be adapted to the changing administrative and political situations. For instance, in 1972, the Aachen and Cologne regional government districts were integrated into one district. Under the most recent reform of the state's administrative structure the Government Regional Offices were again reshuffled, with another seven special-purpose authorities – some of them with state-wide competence - being integrated into the Cologne Government Regional Office. The Cologne Government Regional Office now has six divisions with 34 sections and its office premises include several buildings in Cologne plus branch offices in Aachen and Bonn.

