

# Press release

## of the Municipality of Hanau

### Hanau – home of the Brothers Grimm

**Municipality of Hanau:** Hanau is a growing, flourishing town with about 100,000 inhabitants in the eastern part of the Frankfurt Rhine-Main Metropolitan Region, where it has evolved into a key economic, administration, and supply centre. Featuring several clinics and similar facilities, it is also a central health site. And its shopping centres, its large number of business, and its weekly market, the largest in Hesse, make Hanau an important supply centre. Hanau is the largest municipality in the Main-Kinzig District and is working towards its independence by 1 January 2021. The town council is a majority coalition formed by the SPD, the Green Party, the FDP, and “Bürger für Hanau”. The mayor is Claus Kaminsky of the SPD, who has held this office since 2003.

**Population/migration:** At present, Hanau is home to people from 140 nations. About 26 per cent of the population hold a foreign passport, and many citizens holding a German passport have families with a migration background. Hanau can look back on a centuries-old tradition of taking in immigrants and refugees and peaceful coexistence with peoples of the most diverse origins. About 400 years ago, the town took in French, Flemish, Wallonian, and Dutch refugees from religious persecution. They have had a lasting effect on the history of the town and shaped its growth, its culture, and its economic upswing. Following World War II, tens of thousands of war refugees from the east were taken in and integrated. At the end of the war, the garrison town of Hanau provided barracks for up to 35,000 soldiers of the US forces, becoming the largest in Europe. These soldiers had a crucial shaping influence on the town, and when the US army withdrew in 2009, this influence continued. The sixties and seventies witnessed an ingress of thousands of people from Southern Europe, who found work in the Hanau production plants. In 2015, Hanau became a key initial reception



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centre above all for people fleeing the war in the Middle East. At times, the town provided accommodation for more than 3,000 refugees.

**Coexistence:** Owing to its history, Hanau has had centuries of experience in integrating and taking in immigrants. Many Hanau people with immigration backgrounds are dedicated members of associations, organisations, and municipal initiatives as well as on the political committees of the town council. A great many initiatives and the foreigners' advisory council ensure that foreign citizens can play their part in the life of their town. While taking in refugees from the Middle East in 2015, thousands of Hanau residents proved exemplary in their commitment and dedication to assistance initiatives. To date, neither immigration problems nor radical tendencies have played any decisive role in Hanau. Following the night of terror on 19 February, many people with a migration background have stressed the encouraging coexistence in the city. On behalf of the town, Mayor Claus Kaminsky expressed the opinion of the town community in the one sentence: "The victims were not foreigners, they were Hanauers." A sentence that found further strength in the citizenship at numerous vigil and memorial events at which tens of thousands attended.

**Culture:** Hanau is the birthplace of the Brothers Grimm, who are world famous as philologists and above all as collectors and narrators of folk tales. The Brothers Grimm and their folk tales are a ubiquitous hallmark of town life. Last year, the palace Schloss Philippsruhe hosted the inauguration of "GrimmsMärchenReich", the first Brothers Grimm museum that children can actively take part in. The summer highlight is the Brüder Grimm Festspiele's open air performances in the palace amphitheatre, where folk tales reinterpreted attract 80,000 spectators every year. The Brüder-Grimm-Nationaldenkmal, a national monument to the German people on the marketplace, is at the head of the German Fairy Tale Route.



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Hosting over 1,000 events each year, Hanau has evolved into a cultural centre of the Frankfurt Rhine-Main Metropolitan Region. Its culture agenda extends from school theatre days and small art events to concerts by international stars like Lang Lang and Chris de Burgh.

**Economy / urban development:** Hanau is home to a great many international conglomerates, particularly in the sectors of precious metalworking and speciality chemicals, such as Evonik, Heraeus, and Umicore. These are joined by many small and medium-sized enterprises that are world leaders in their respective fields. At the same time, Hanau is a key research location, particularly in materials management, at both production companies and the recently occupied Fraunhofer Institute. Very many patents, including a process for melting platinum, originated in Hanau. And with its vocational school “Zeichenakademie”, Hanau has been a key training centre for gold- and silversmiths. The town provides about 47,000 jobs in total.

In recent years, the former barracks grounds have witnessed a great many new residential and industrial areas. At present, the Pioneer premises are being redeveloped for a new, ultramodern residential area for about 5,000 people. Hanau was the first municipality in Germany to successfully employ “competitive dialogue”, the new legal instrument, in the radical restructuring of its town centre. These urban development measures have led to an increase of more than 11,000 citizens in the town’s population over the last ten years.

**History:** For centuries, Hanau had been the residence of counts whose domains extended over large tracts of Hesse and today’s Alsace in France. This influence can still be found today in a great many palaces and representative buildings, e.g. Schloss Philippsruhe, Rumpenheim Schloss, the Strasbourg/Alsace town hall. Thanks to its central location and strategic position at the head of the Kinzig Valley, Hanau for centuries had been a key military site with a great many barracks.



