



Schleswig-Holstein
Germany's True North

For visionary entrepreneurs

The business location Schleswig-Holstein



Schleswig-Holstein. Germany's True North.

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Investment location Schleswig-Holstein



Perfect location for business

The northernmost federal state in Germany lies in the centre of Europe, directly on the main north-south transportation axis with Scandinavia. With its direct access to the North Sea and the Baltic Sea, Schleswig-Holstein is an important transport hub for northern and eastern Europe and the Baltic region. The close proximity to Hamburg also enables fast access to German and world-wide markets via all transport routes.

- In 2021 goods to the value of 22.8 billion Euros were exported abroad from Schleswig-Holstein.
- Lübeck (Germany's second-largest Baltic Sea port) alone handled a transshipment volume of 17.1 million tonnes.
- There were 922,000 passengers at the cruise and ferry port of Kiel in 2021.
- On the Kiel Canal, over 25,240 ships transported a total of 73.8 million tonnes of cargo.

Thriving SMEs

Schleswig-Holstein is a state of the SMEs - 99 percent of the companies are small or medium sized enterprises.

Schleswig-Holstein in figures

Surface area: 15,800 square kilometres
Population: approximately 2.9 million
Employed persons: approx. 1.44 million
Gross domestic product: 104.5 billion €
Change in GDP in 2021,
price adjusted: 2.2 % compared to the previous year
Tourism: around 30.25 million overnight stays
Students: approx. 66,800
Students at vocational schools: approx. 88,000

Source: Statistical Office of Northern Germany, as of 2022

Many companies in the true north are highly specialised, internationally successful, and often world market leaders. In particular, important future industries are highly-represented:

- food industry
- renewable energies
- healthcare industry
- information and communication technology
- logistics
- maritime economy
- mechanical engineering
- medical technology
- tourism
- e-mobility
- artificial intelligence
- hydrogen economics

Superb climate for companies

Schleswig-Holstein offers companies a very business-friendly climate:

- high availability of qualified personnel
- low wage costs
- low local business taxes
- targeted transfer of technology and knowledge in businesses
- moderate property and land prices
- modern financial assistance programmes and expert advice
- support from networks and clusters
- comprehensive support services for start-ups
- fast Internet thanks to fibre optics and therefore unique across Germany

This creates the basis for very positive developments: Schleswig-Holstein is characterized by many business start-ups, and a rate of high self-employment.

In addition, many companies from Germany and abroad are drawn to the true north. So, for example, in 2021 a total of 119 new companies settled in Schleswig-Holstein, and thereby created 2,063 jobs.

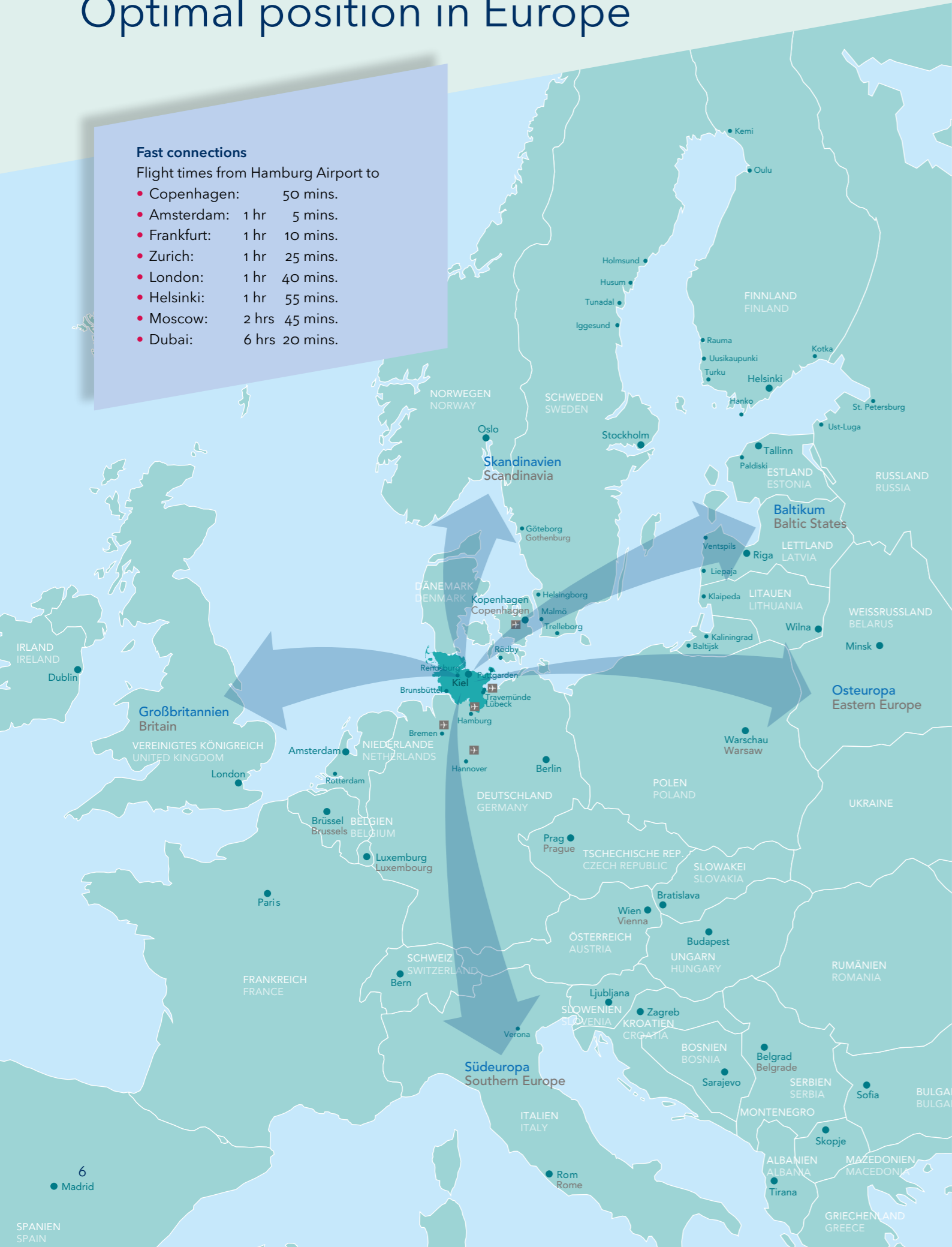
Schleswig-Holstein is also seen as an attractive location internationally. In 2021, there were new arrivals from China, Denmark, Estonia, France, Great Britain, the United States, and Switzerland.

Optimal position in Europe

Fast connections

Flight times from Hamburg Airport to

- Copenhagen: 50 mins.
- Amsterdam: 1 hr 5 mins.
- Frankfurt: 1 hr 10 mins.
- Zurich: 1 hr 25 mins.
- London: 1 hr 40 mins.
- Helsinki: 1 hr 55 mins.
- Moscow: 2 hrs 45 mins.
- Dubai: 6 hrs 20 mins.



Great location for global business

Short distances

Travel time by car from Kiel to

- Neumünster: 31 mins.
- Flensburg: 1 hr 5 mins.
- Lübeck: 1 hr 11 mins.
- Hamburg: 1 hr 20 mins.

The most important roadwork projects

- further construction of the A20
- B404 to be upgraded to motorway between the A1 and A24 (per BVWP 2030)
- gaps to be closed in the A23, and expansion of the B5
- 4-lane expansion of the B207
- Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link

- Motorway
- Port
- Airport



Leading industries

Industries with a future

The economy of Schleswig-Holstein is strongly represented in the sectors with above-average growth potential.



Logistics

Number of companies: 4,000
Number of employees: 116,000
Annual sales: 18 billion €



Hydrogen economics

Schleswig-Holstein has excellent prerequisites for the development of a green hydrogen economy. The region is a pioneer nationwide and has unique locational advantages for the generation of renewable energies. In 2020, the share of green electricity generated from renewables corresponded to approximately 63 % of total electricity production. More than 50 organizations are engaged in the production and commercial use of green hydrogen in collaboration with partners from industry, science, associations and politics.

Renewable energy

Schleswig-Holstein is an export state for clean energy. More than 3,470 wind turbines with a total output of more than 8,600 megawatts are in operation here. Already today, around 55 percent more electricity is generated in Schleswig-Holstein from wind energy alone than is consumed in the entire state.



Wind energy

Number of companies: 200
Number of employees: 12,000
Annual sales: 1.34 billion €



Maritime economy

Number of companies: 2,100
Number of employees: 40,000
Annual sales: 8.5 billion €



e-mobility

With a share of approx. 20 percent electric cars in new passenger car registrations, Schleswig-Holstein is the leader in Germany. The number of pure e-vehicles (BEV) has more than quadrupled within 2 years from 6,848 (04/2020) to 29,200 (04/2022). Numerous players in Schleswig-Holstein are working on this growth market, especially in power electronics, battery technology and the development of charging solutions.



Leading industries

Healthcare industry

Number of companies: 260
Number of employees: 110,000
Annual sales: 12.6 billion €



The digital economy

The nearly 20,000 companies in the sector are of great importance to the regional economy. The digital economy provides important impulses and offers the necessary competencies for the digital transformation of the economy, administration and society. Thanks to the dynamics of the digital economy, Schleswig-Holstein has made a name for itself across borders; as a location for artificial intelligence and as the strongest German state for start-ups.



Food industry

Number of companies: 262
Number of employees: 22,500
Annual sales: 7 billion €



Mechanical engineering

Number of companies: 170
Number of employees: 23,000
Annual sales: 31.3 billion €

Artificial intelligence

After Schleswig-Holstein became the first federal state to present its own AI strategy in 2019, around 45 million euros were made available to promote AI projects. In order to network companies with each other and with science, and to achieve the greatest possible added value, the AI Transfer Hub SH 2020, which is located at WTSH, among others, commenced its work.



Tourism industry

As the outstanding economic factor, tourism shapes every form of life and work in Schleswig-Holstein.
Number of employees: 144,000
Annual sales: 7 billion €



Specialists



Education and research

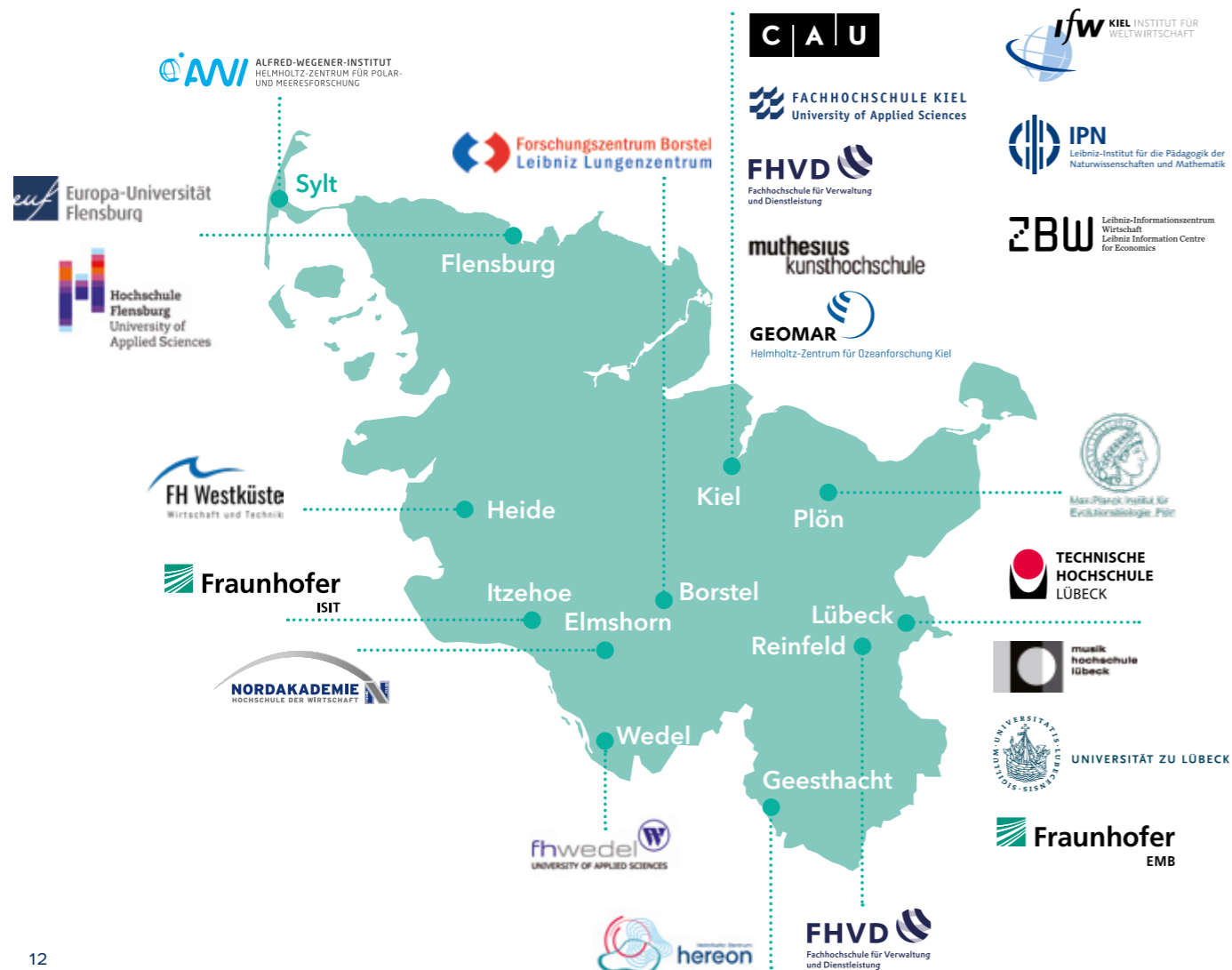
Training university graduates is one of Schleswig-Holstein's strengths. Companies benefit from this, and also from the high-quality research landscape, in which knowledge transfer and teaching are practised at the highest level.

The universities

66,805 students are currently taking advantage of the diverse range of degree programmes offered by Schleswig-Holstein's educational institutions, of which around 39,900 are studying at universities, and the rest at universities of applied sciences and the arts and music colleges.

Research institutions

The university landscape is supplemented by highly-successful, internationally-recognized, non-university research institutions. They cover the whole spectrum, from fundamental research and applications, through to knowledge and technology transfer.



Potential subsidies in Schleswig-Holstein



WTSH supports companies on their way to finding the appropriate subsidy programme.

We answer questions on

- projects eligible for subsidies,
- selecting the correct subsidy programme,
- requirements for obtaining a subsidy,
- making an application,
- alternative financing options.

Investment support

Operational investment support

Individual investment support is offered as part of the state economic programme. WTSH is happy to make contact with the service provider engaged by the state, the Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein, and work with companies throughout the process.

The objective of this funding support is to improve the regional economic structure in combination with the procurement or securing of permanent jobs that are subject to social insurance contributions.

Investment projects can attract a subsidy of up to 20 % of the total investment sum. The actual amount of funding depends on the following factors, among others:

- the precise location of the business within Schleswig-Holstein,
- the size of the company,
- the type of investment,
- the number of planned new permanent positions.

The funds are provided as a non-repayable grant.

Subsidy-qualifying investments include:

- Projects of expansion or establishment of a business,
- Investments for the acquisition of a business threatened with closure or already closed due to economic difficulties.

Subsidies are available for:

- Small and medium-sized commercial enterprises with supra-regional sales.

Subsidies are available for these areas:

- The County of Dithmarschen, the Cities of Flensburg and Neumünster, the Island of Helgoland.
- The Counties of Nordfriesland, Ostholstein, Rendsburg-Eckernförde, Schleswig-Flensburg, Steinburg, the Cities of Kiel and Lübeck.

Details of all of the support programs can be obtained from the IB.SH and the WTSH.

Entry and residence



Visa

EU citizens

Citizens of the EU and the EEA member states of Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland also citizens of Switzerland may live and work for an unlimited period of time in Germany. They don't need a visa or any special permit.

Visa-exempt states

Nationals of certain countries can enter Germany for short visits of up to 90 days without a Schengen visa. These include, amongst others, nationals from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Israel, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Canada, South Korea, USA, Singapore and Hong Kong.

If the stay is longer than 90 days, or employment is to be carried out in Germany, then a national visa is required for entry. Exceptions apply here too for nationals from Australia, Israel, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea, who may enter for up to 3 months even without a national visa.

Detailed information is available at the federal Foreign Office.

→ www.auswaertiges-amt.de

Non-EU citizens

Nationals of non-EU countries require a visa to enter Germany. A distinction is made between:

- Schengen visa and a national visa
- residence and permanent residence permits

The type of residence permit required depends on the applicant's country of origin, the duration of the stay and the proposed activity in Germany.

Schengen visa

For short stays in Germany of up to 90 days, non-EU citizens require a Schengen travel visa or business visa. Normally, with this visa, all the necessary steps for setting up a business in Germany can be carried out.

A Schengen visa is usually issued by the respective German embassy or consulate in the applicant's country of origin.

National visa

For stays in Germany of more than 90 days, a national visa is required for entry. This is issued by the respective German embassy or consulate.

For a longer stay, a residence or permanent residence permit is required.

Residence and permanent residence permits

The path to running your own business

Entrepreneurs from non-EU states who operate their business locally in Germany as self-employed persons, need a residence permit for exercising self-employed activity.

Exception: if the self-employed activity is not carried out for longer than three months, a Schengen visa may be sufficient.

Self-employed entrepreneurs generally receive a residence permit if the following criteria are met:

- There is an economic and/or regional interest.
- The investment project is expected to have a positive impact on the economy.
- The financing is secured.

The local immigration authority checks each investment project individually to determine whether these conditions are met. In particular, they evaluate

- the viability of the business idea,
- the business experience of the investor,
- the capital to be invested,
- the effect of the investment project on the (regional) employment and training situation,
- the expected contribution to innovation, research and development in Germany.

The residence permit for self-employed persons is limited to a fixed term, mostly for up to three years. If the investment project is successful, and if the success and livelihood seem to continue to be secured, permanent residence may be applied for after three years.

The path for employees

Workers from non-EU countries need a residence permit to work as employees in Germany.

This is issued for a fixed term, usually for up to three years. An extension is possible. In general, a permanent residence permit can be issued after five years.

In principle, the immigration authorities will only issue a residence permit for employees in certain professional groups (e.g. academics, IT professionals, senior executives and specialists, staff exchanges) and even then, only if

- a specific offer of employment can be presented, and
- the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) has given its approval.

Exceptions: employing senior managers, amongst others, does not need to be approved by the Federal Employment Agency.

"EU Blue Card" for highly-qualified individuals

The "EU Blue Card" makes it easier for highly-qualified workers from non-EU states to get a job in Germany. The requirements for applying for the EU Blue Card are:

- a German university degree or a proven comparable qualification, and
- an employment contract with a gross annual salary of at least 56.400 Euros (2022).

If they can provide evidence of their German language skills, EU Blue Card holders can obtain a permanent residence permit after just 21 months, otherwise after 33 months.

Founding a company in Germany

For foreign investors, starting a business in Germany is straightforward. There is full access to all forms of company. Two models are presented below.



Founding a subsidiary

In Germany, foreign companies have the option of founding a **subsidiary company**, and can select various legal forms. The most popular form of corporation in Germany is the limited liability company, or Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung (**GmbH**).

- The minimum share capital amounts to €25.000, which can also be in the form of contributions in kind. For entry in the commercial register, proving that half the capital has been contributed is sufficient.
- The liability of the shareholders towards creditors is limited to the share capital.

The GmbH has two necessary organs: one or more managing directors, and the annual general meeting.

- Managing directors manage and represent the company to the outside world.
- Managing directors are subject to the instructions of the shareholders and are bound by their decisions.
- Nationality and residency of the managing director are irrelevant.

The entrepreneurial company (limited liability), or **UG**/Unternehmergeellschaft (haftungsbeschränkt), is a special form and entry-level variant of the GmbH.

- The minimum share capital amounts to €1.
- The UG must build up share capital and provide for a reserve every year: at least a quarter of the annual net profit.
- As soon as the minimum share capital (€25.000) required to form a GmbH has been accrued, the UG can be transformed into a GmbH.

Steps for setting up a GmbH or UG

Preparing the articles of association

Certification by a notary

Opening a bank account and payment of the capital

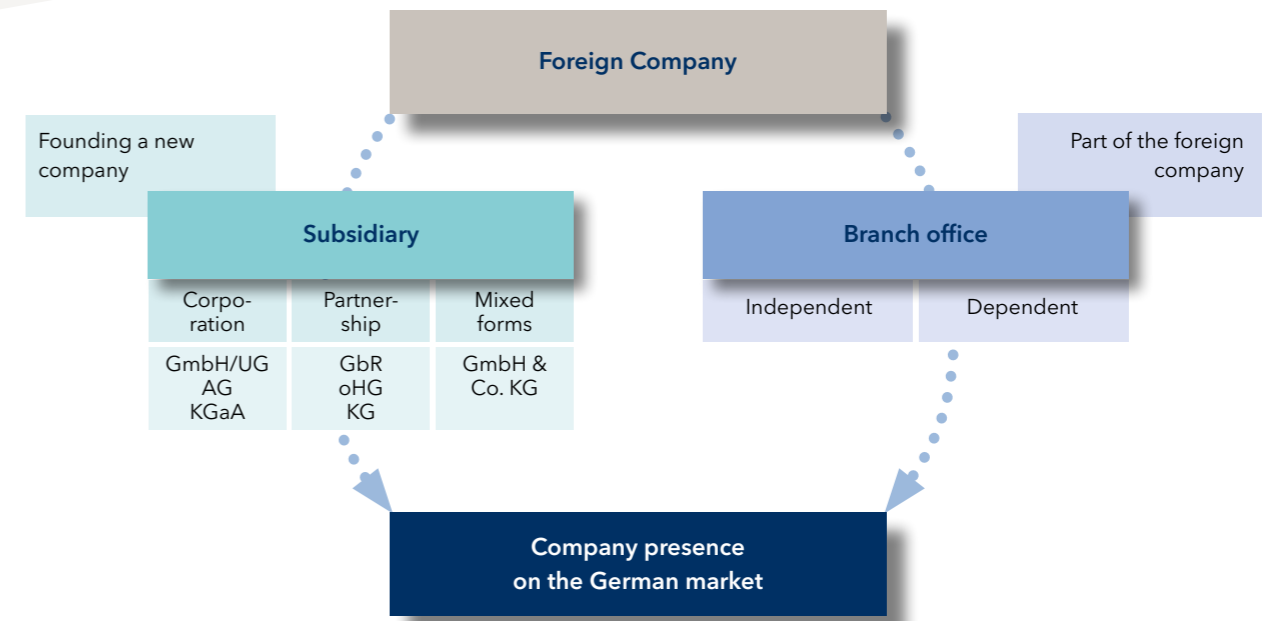
Entry into the commercial register through the notary

Registration as a business, any additional permits/registrations where applicable

Set-up time: about 1-2 weeks
Founding costs: GmbH approx. €800, UG approx. €300

Advantages

- + Shareholders are entitled to issue binding instructions to the managing director(s)
- + Liability of the parent company is limited to the share capital
- + Parent company can be shareholder
- + Managing director(s) do not have to be resident in Germany



Founding a branch office

Foreign companies can also found a **branch office** in Germany. It is - unlike a subsidiary - legally part of the head office company, and has no separate legal persona.

- Independent branches have a certain degree of organisational autonomy in relation to their head office:
 - own management with authority to act and power to conclude agreements
 - own business assets
 - own bank account
 - independent bookkeeping
- The branch can add its own name suffix to the name of the main company headquarters.
- A minimum capital is not required.
- The foreign headquarters are responsible for the branch's liabilities, to the full extent of their assets.
- Dependent branches are
 - subordinate departments of the main company
 - dependent on the main company
- Correspondence and invoices are issued in the name of the headquarters
- Entry into the commercial register is not required, only business registration with the local trade office.

Steps for founding an independent branch office

Decision-making by the foreign company on the establishment of a branch office

Entry into the commercial register through the notary

Registration as a business, any additional permits/registrations where applicable

Registration costs: approx. €300

Advantages

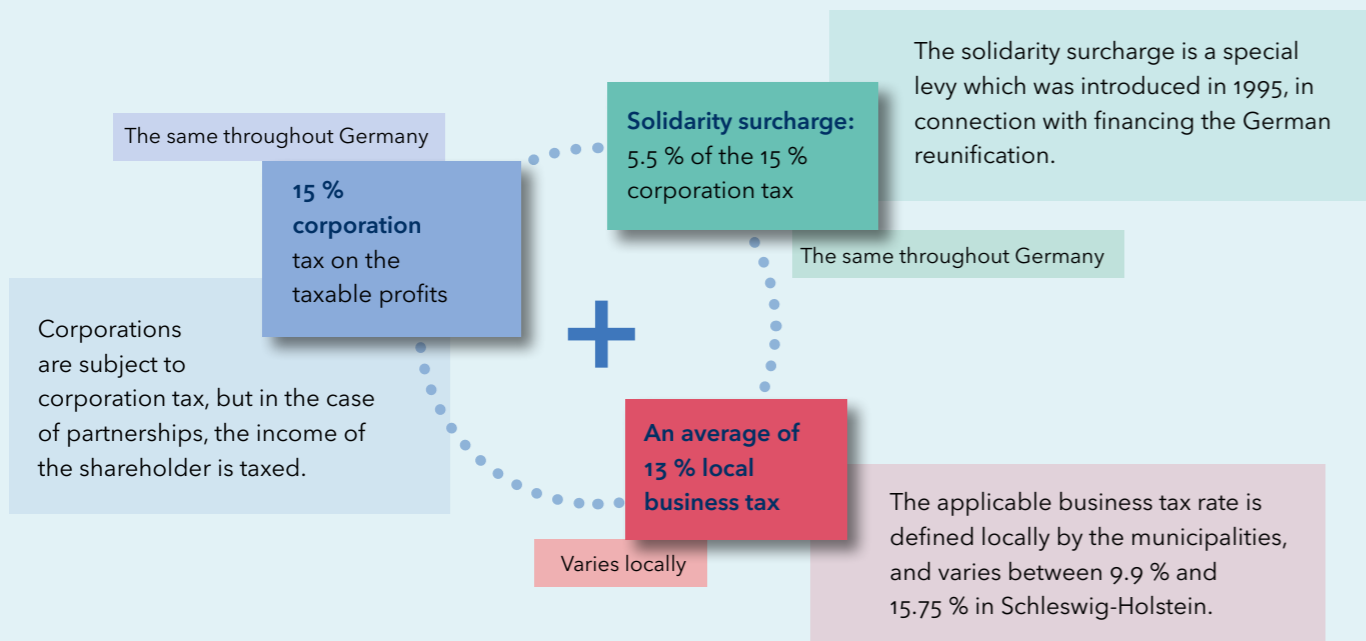
- + Branch offices are legally part of the headquarters
- + Enables quick entry into the German market

Disadvantages

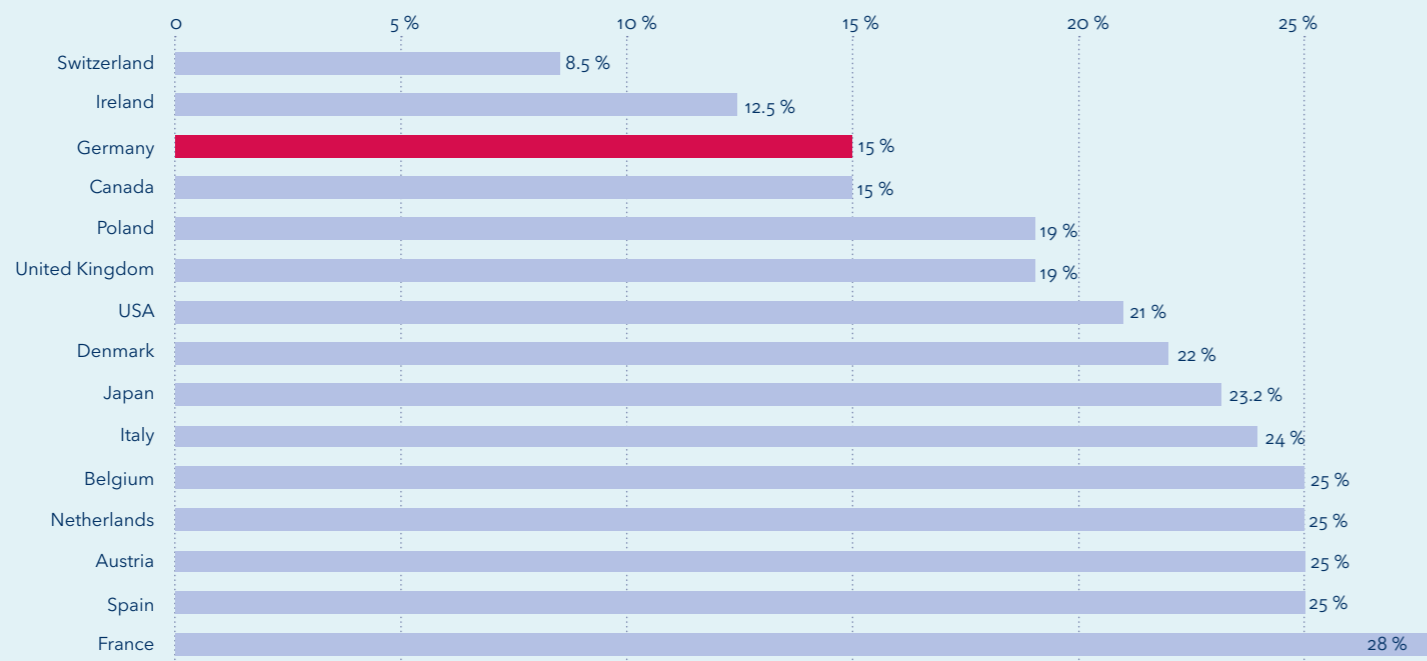
- Full liability by the headquarters

Company taxation

Income taxation of a corporation



International comparison of corporate tax rates



VAT

Value-added tax is payable on the sale of goods and services. Companies are obliged to add VAT to their prices for deliveries or services, and charge this sales tax to their customers.

The general VAT rate in Germany is 19 %, which is below the European average. For basic items and everyday services, such as food, newspapers or public transport, a

reduced VAT rate of 7 % applies. A sales tax exemption exists for certain services, such as banking and health services or non-profit work.

Companies that pay VAT on goods and services can offset these amounts against the VAT collected on invoices. As such, the actual VAT burden lies solely with private consumers.

Business tax

Business tax is an income tax on the profits of businesses.

The respective business tax rate is made up of two components:

- the tax base rate (3.5 % nationwide)
- and the trade tax rate (varies locally).

The trade tax rate is determined individually by the separate municipalities. In Schleswig-Holstein, the trade tax rate is between 285 % and 450 %. The rate tends to be higher in urban areas than in rural regions.

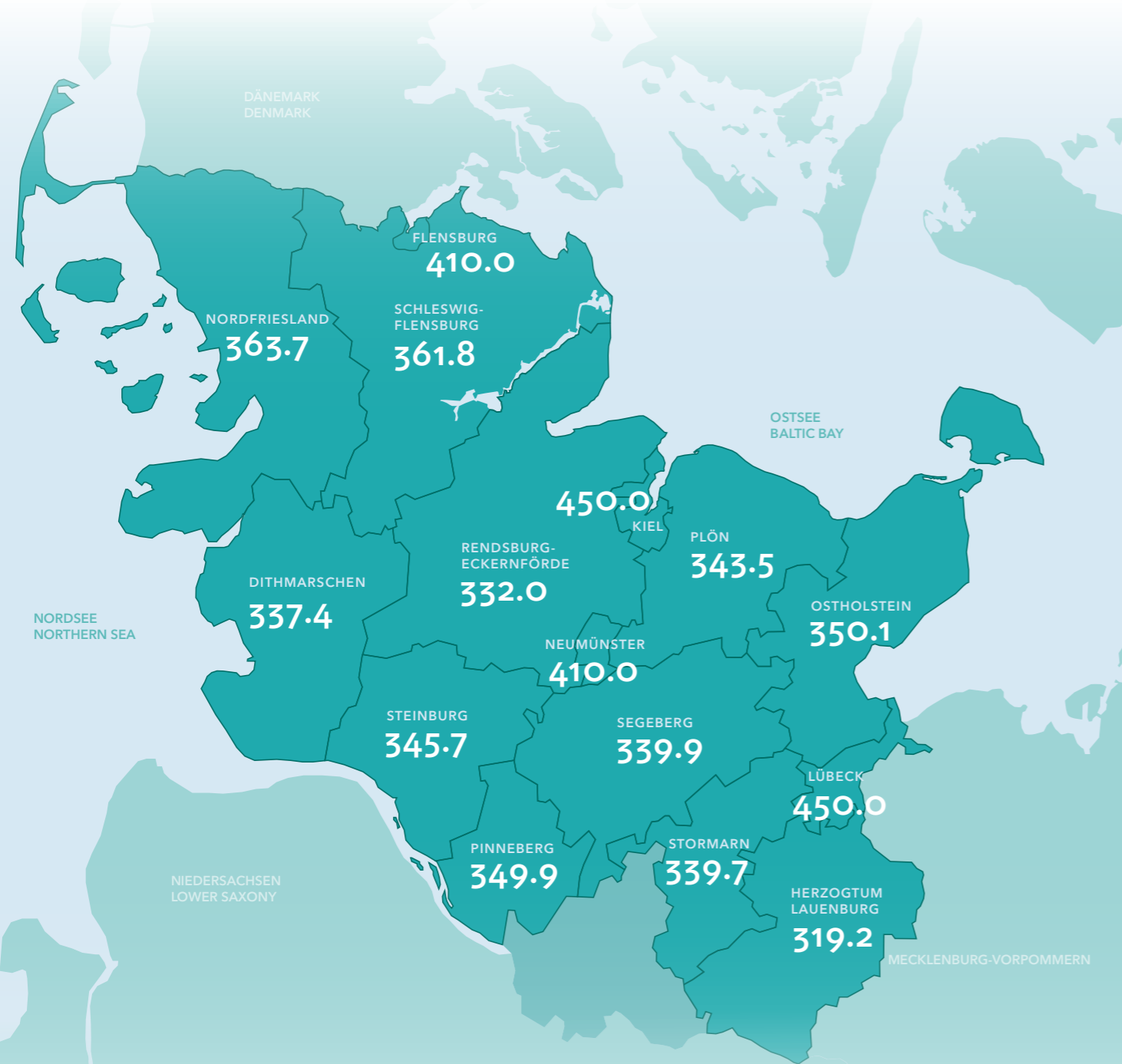
There is no solidarity surcharge on business tax.

Base value for tax purposes = taxable income of the company x tax base rate (3.5 %)

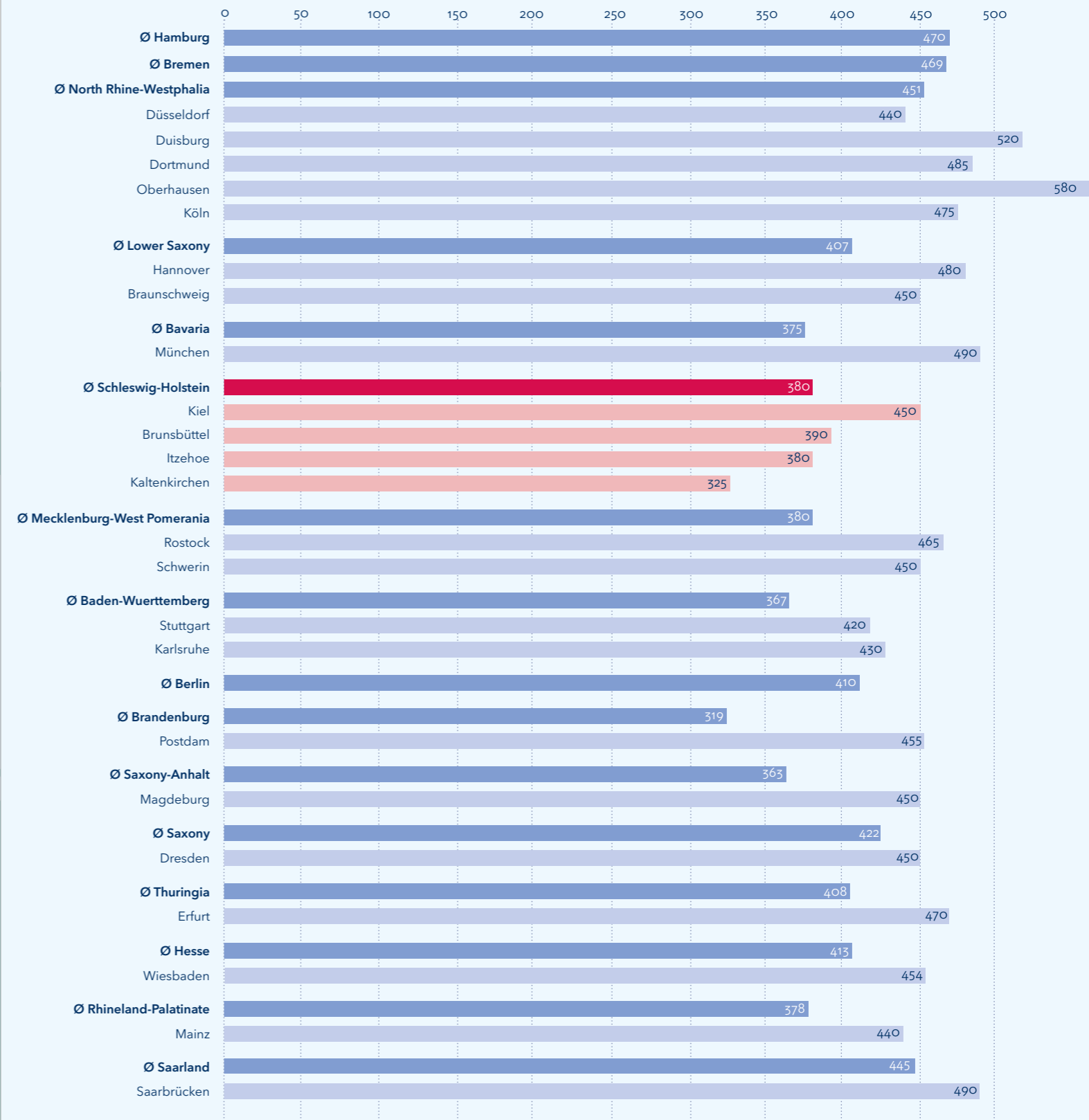
Base value for tax purposes x local trade tax rate = business tax due

Company taxation

Average trade tax rates in percent for all counties and independent cities in Schleswig-Holstein



Trade tax rates - for select cities and states in Germany



High quality of life

Schleswig-Holstein is convincing as a business location. It's great to work here, and also great to live here! The state between the seas is unusually diverse, with its very different regions and rich cultural treasures. At the North Sea, dykes and the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage Site characterise the landscape, while the shores of the Baltic Sea have fascinating steep coastlines and white sandy beaches. Inland there are romantic lakes, gently rolling hills and many natural parks. The cities of Schleswig-Holstein impress with their maritime character and historical buildings, such as Lübeck with its medieval old town, which is part of the UNESCO world heritage. In addition, there is a multitude of museums, unlimited shopping possibilities and impressive cultural highlights.

The people of Schleswig Holstein: true and honest

The clear, healthy air, the often harsh wind, the vastness, the austere natural charm - all of this also affects the people. The people of Schleswig Holstein like things real, honest and clear. Germany's happiest people live in Schleswig-Holstein. This was confirmed once again with the Glücksatlas (happiness survey) by the Deutsche Post. Newcomers quickly feel right at home due to the calm and welcoming nature of the people in the true north.



The picturesque Hanseatic city of Lübeck, located directly on the River Trave

Nature: endless diversity

Two seas with countless beaches, the mudflat landscapes, many lakes, and an infinitely beautiful coastal landscape make Schleswig-Holstein a real paradise for water sports. Here, in their free time and after work, people can go swimming, sailing, surfing, kitesurfing, diving, rowing and fishing. A pleasant work-life balance also includes sports such as horse riding, golf, cycling and hiking.

And Schleswig-Holstein has much more to offer nature-lovers: many nature reserves, conservation areas and natural parks characterize the diverse flora and fauna. The Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park is the most outstanding of these: Germany's largest national park is part of the largest continuous tidal flats in the world, and was declared a World Natural Heritage Site in 2009. The natural park is considered the area in Europe which has the richest diversity of birds: in the spring and summer alone, more than 2 million tidal flat and water birds roost here.

Wadden Sea near St. Peter-Ording



Endless sand dunes by the North Sea

Sport: active and successful

In Schleswig-Holstein, top-level sports on a world-class level can be admired: recognized by the sailing competitions of the Olympic Summer Games, Kiel is regarded as one of the world sailing metropolises, and is the venue for the annual Kieler Woche, the largest sailing event in the world, and the biggest summer festival in northern Europe. Together with Travemünde Woche, the state proudly hosts two of the world's biggest and most traditional sailing competitions.

Fehmarn and Sylt are very popular with surfers. Westerland is the venue for the Surf World Cup, the largest international windsurfing event in the world. Kitesurfing has established itself on the west coast and the east coast for some years now. Numerous kitesurfing competitions take place in St. Peter-Ording, for example, and Fehmarn hosts the Kitesurf World Cup.

Rowing also plays an important role in the true north. The Ruderakademie Ratzeburg (Ratzeburg Rowing Academy) in Schleswig-Holstein is a world-famous training and high-performance centre of the Deutscher Ruderverband e.V. (German Rowing Association).

Wacken Open Air: one of the world's biggest heavy metal festivals



In addition to water sports, handball in Schleswig-Holstein is world-famous. Not only one, but two teams - THW Kiel and SG Flensburg-Handewitt - are placed regularly at the top of the Bundesliga, and hold leading positions in the European league.

Culture: ambitious and colourful

Schleswig-Holstein's multi-cultural landscape also has a lot to offer. The musical summer highlights include the open-air opera at the Eutiner Festspiele, and of course the Jazz Baltica and the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival. Here, the public can enjoy concerts, music festivals in the countryside and children's music festivals with great international musicians. Castles, manor houses, barns, churches, but also shipyards and old industrial halls provide an atmospheric backdrop for the performances. At the legendary Wacken Open Air - the biggest heavy metal festival in the world - tens of thousands of hard rock and metal fans party together every year.

A wide variety of museums, internationally renowned theatres and opera houses provide a great cultural offering, as do aspirational film festivals, or NordArt in Büdelsdorf, the largest art fair in northern Europe.



Water polo on the Kiel Fjord



Dune coast in Scharbeutz



Cuisine: excellent and regional

10 star chefs in total – two alone on the island of Sylt – along with high-quality, often regional products, ensure an excellent culture of culinary delights in the true north.

The association FEINHEIMISCH – fine food from Schleswig-Holstein, the state-wide network of agricultural producers and manufacturers, chefs and restaurants – functions as preserver and promoter of a food culture in Schleswig-Holstein that is pleasurable, sustainable and regional. A special highlight is the annual Schleswig-Holstein Gourmet Festival. Here, renowned chefs from all over Europe spoil their guests.

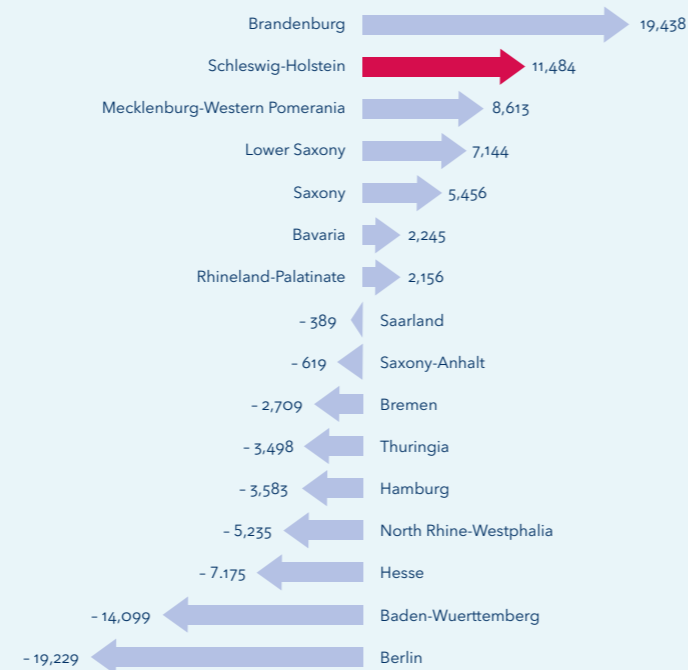
Home: unique and comfortable

You will find your very special home in Schleswig-Holstein. The range and the selection of affordable real estate is large, and even the most exceptional locations can be found here. There are visionary new construction projects, or re-purposed, historic buildings in the best positions on the waterfront.

Homeland: where you want to stay.

Schleswig-Holstein is one of the few regions in western Europe whose population is growing steadily. As such, the proportion of young people is well above the German average.

Intra-German migration: Net population growth for each of the federal states



Source: Federal Statistical Office, as of 2022

Strong companies from Schleswig-Holstein

Companies shown on the map include: Danfoss, Frøde LAURSEN, FLENSBURGER BRAUEREI, FFG, MAC, Queisser PHARMA, WEIHE, GERMAN NAVAL YARDS KIEL, PAY/ONE, Raytheon Anschutz, WALTER, vosslöh Locomotives, KRISTRONICS, punker, stryker, VITEC, Vestas, mobilcom debitel, ACO, NOBISKRUG, RAFFINERIE HEIDE, VISHAY, Pohl Boskamp, ingenico, KENDRION, Vestas, SCHWARTAU, Brüggen, COHERENT, Dräger, MANKENBERG, All4Labels, FETTE COMPACTING, WITTE, YAMAHA, PETER KÖLLN, WISKA, EVAC, CASIO, condair systems, Johnson & Johnson, sysmex, tesa, flexi, NORD DRIVESYSTEMS, BASLER, edding, JOO, LONGSHINE, acer, and SLM SOLUTIONS.



The City of Kiel



Comprehensive service from WTSH

Schleswig-Holstein is the right location for investments. And the WTSH (Business Development and Technology Transfer Corporation of Schleswig-Holstein) provides the service required for founding, expanding or relocating businesses. WTSH is a competent partner for all aspects and all phases of the process - offering customised and targeted expertise.

Site location assistance

- We provide you with information about the Schleswig-Holstein economic region and the infrastructure available,
- search for suitable areas and real estate for your investments,
- develop individual site solutions for your company,
- provide the opportunity to conduct your own research in our commercial real estate database.

Schleswig-Holstein has interesting commercial areas with excellent infrastructure connections, such as at growth axes like the Fehmarn Belt corridor or along the A7 route. And for high-yield tourism projects, whether in hotels or resorts, there are building sites in booming tourist regions with unique waterfront locations.

Financing and subsidies

There may potentially be subsidies available for companies investing in Schleswig-Holstein. Funds can be granted for relocating operations to Schleswig-Holstein, creating a subsidiary, and establishing or taking over another company in Schleswig-Holstein.

- We point out potential subsidies,
- guide you directly to the state's financing and funding agencies,
- provide support with arranging the financing.

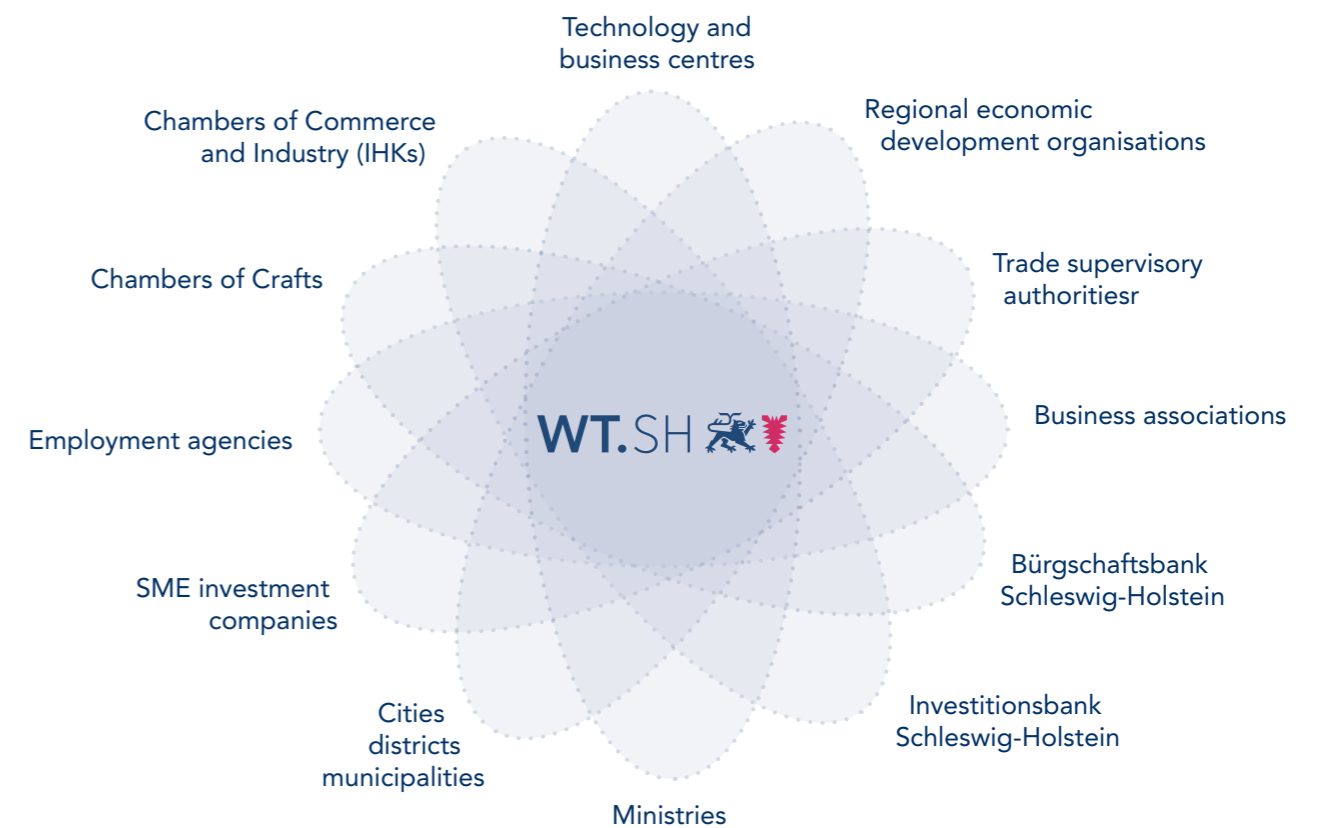
Implementation

- We are an application and approval institution in Schleswig-Holstein for innovation support, the promotion of renewable energies as well as for the internationalisation support programme,
- we assist with negotiations with the authorities,
- make a network available to get in contact with public and private institutions in the state,
- provide support with applications and approval processes.

Business development

- We support technology projects, research and development activities,
- evaluate and optimise corporate innovation potential,
- research and advise on patents and industrial property rights,
- assist with entering foreign markets,
- organise joint stands at trade fairs and establish contacts,
- develop and manage clusters for key sectors, and
- support start-ups from universities and research institutes.

WTSH networks Involvement of stakeholders and partners



WT.SH

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