



Federal Foreign Office

Bonn: competence center for  
international cooperation and  
sustainable development



*“The United Nations has been based in Bonn for 20 years and its presence here is continuing to grow. Bonn has become the global capital for sustainability and climate protection – for tasks now facing humanity more urgently than ever before.”*

Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier,  
Federal Foreign Minister.  
Bonn, March 3, 2016





The city of Bonn

## Bonn: global player for sustainable development

*“In Bonn, climate and sustainability policies are being made for the global level and implemented at the local level.” (Dr. Gerd Müller, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development)*

In little more than two decades, Bonn has grown into a center where global challenges of the future are addressed, into a *“powerhouse”* of sustainability, centered on the UN. The UN Campus in the former parliamentary quarter on the banks of the Rhine is a visible symbol of this growth. The UN organizations working here are embedded in a network of federal ministries, intergovernmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations, scientific institutions and businesses. In line with the motto of the United Nations in Bonn – *“shaping a sustainable future”* – they all join forces in a unique culture of creativity and cooperation.



*UN Campus – seat of UNFCCC*

In addition to the day-to-day work of the United Nations and its partners, Bonn's role as a location for meetings and conventions also makes the city an important player on the international sustainability scene. This is where the world community gathers for conferences addressing the key challenges of the future, such as biodiversity, climate protection or renewable energy.

Bonn plays an active role in sustainable cities networks and also benefits from a major university and an outstanding local science and research community. The city has adopted the tagline "*Sustainable Bonn*" and makes a point of involving its inhabitants in numerous initiatives aimed at the business community and society at large. Notable examples are the Bonn Climate Ambassadors or the local network for sustainable business *Ökoprofit-Club*. In 2010 Bonn was declared a FairTrade Town and became a part of the global movement of the same name. In May 2016 Bonn became one of four so-called Sustainability Hubs ("*Netzstelle Nachhaltigkeit*") nationwide. In cooperation with countries of the global south, Bonn also engages in global project partnerships for municipal development cooperation.





UN Campus with Post Tower

## Federal City: synergies for our global future

Bonn looks back on five decades as the seat of the parliament and government of the Federal Republic of Germany. Since 1994 it enjoys the status of Federal City, making it the country's second political center.

*“Bonn is the main centre of excellence for climate action and sustainable development. The new UN Campus provides a basis on which we can build further. For the challenges being tackled in Bonn are the defining issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”,* notes Dr. Barbara Hendricks, Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety.

The primary seats of six federal ministries, including the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), are still located in Bonn, while other federal ministries have a second base in the city. Part of the Bonn base of the Federal Foreign Office

is also a liaison office acting as the focal point for international organizations in Germany, thus underscoring the importance the Federal Government attaches to Bonn as Germany's UN city. The liaison office deals with the political coordination of all matters related to the UN Campus and with all questions in connection with the establishment and status of international organizations in Germany. It also serves as a contact point for the staff members of those organizations and their families.

In addition to the federal ministries, numerous other federal government offices – such as the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), the Federal Office for Food and Agriculture and the Bundesrechnungshof (Federal court of Auditors) – are located in Bonn. The German Commission for UNESCO has its head office in Bonn, and Bonn is one of two seats of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), which provides international cooperation services for sustainable development. Moreover, the Federal City of Bonn still hosts a number of diplomatic and consular missions. Following the relocation of the German government and parliament to Berlin, Bonn has developed a unique profile

*Konrad Adenauer-Brücke – one of three bridges crossing the Rhine in Bonn*



as a competence center for international cooperation and sustainable development. Nearly 1,000 staff members of around 20 UN agencies work at the UN Campus, located adjacent to the river promenade and with a view of the Siebengebirge nature conservation area. They are closely connected to numerous players in the sustainability sector, including international organizations such as the Crop Trust, the IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre (IITC) and the IUCN Environmental Law Centre (IUCN-ELC), and 150 national and international non-governmental organizations. Scientific institutes and innovative businesses add to the city's international reach.

Another asset for the UN and other Bonn-based international organizations: Bonn also plays an important role in the context of today's globalized media. Germany's international broadcaster Deutsche Welle has its head office in the immediate vicinity of the UN Campus and sustainability-related topics are one of its focus areas. Deutsche Welle produces TV programs and disseminates online information in 30 languages and reaches 118 million people around the globe. The public service channels Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR) and Phoenix, a Bonn-based current affairs and documentation channel, regularly report on UN activities.

[www.bonn-international.org](http://www.bonn-international.org)

[www.unbonn.org](http://www.unbonn.org)

[www.dw.com](http://www.dw.com)

[www.phoenix.de](http://www.phoenix.de)

[www.wdr.de](http://www.wdr.de)





## International conference location: focus on sustainability

The city of Bonn is one of Germany's top-ranked conference cities. Since its inauguration by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in June 2015, the World Conference Center Bonn (WorldCCBonn), one of the most modern congress centers in Europe, has increasingly attracted conferences and meetings of all kinds. The conference space as a whole is equipped for meetings with up to 7,000 participants.

And sustainability is what many of these meetings are about. Among the conferences held in Bonn are two World Climate Summits, the International Conference on Freshwater, the 2009 UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, the 9th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the 2012 United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI)/NGO meeting, which contributed to defining the Sustainable Development Goals, and the 39th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. Key preparatory meetings for the Paris Agreement on climate change also took place in Bonn.

Several thousand delegates take part in the meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which are held annually in Bonn. In 2014, the first United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Partnerships Forum took place at the WorldCCBonn and the second meeting of this kind is scheduled for October 2016. Organizations such as ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, a global network of cities of which Bonn is a member and which established the “Resilient Cities” conference series, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) or the Biodiversity Network Bonn (BION) make use of the conference facilities as well. The federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia also stages international meetings in Bonn and the annual Global Media Forum hosted by Deutsche Welle attracts media professionals from the four corners of the earth.



*Conference venue of sustainability – the World Conference Center Bonn*

And sustainability is not just the subject of conferences taking place in Bonn. The concept is also embraced by conference organizers throughout the city. Since 2006 numerous hotels, caterers and event venues have joined the network “*Sustainable Bonn – Konferenzort der Nachhaltigkeit*” and continually review the sustainability of their activities.

[www.bonn-international.org/conferencesevents.html](http://www.bonn-international.org/conferencesevents.html)

[www.worldccbonn.com](http://www.worldccbonn.com)

[www.bonn-region.de](http://www.bonn-region.de)





## Science and research: Europe's number one

No other part of Europe offers as dense a concentration of research institutions and technology companies as the region of North Rhine-Westphalia comprising the cities of Aachen, Bonn and Cologne, all of which boast outstanding universities. Bonn, where the primary seat of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research is located, is an international science and research hub that contributes to promoting sustainable development the world over. The Bonn-based scientific institutions, international organizations and the University of Bonn, which was founded in 1818 and has 34,000 students from 138 countries, cooperate in numerous ways to address future-oriented issues such as human security, climate and water research, biodiversity or food security. In May 2014 the City of Bonn and the University of Bonn signed a memorandum of cooperation. It aims to better showcase Bonn's unique selling point (a strong UN presence complemented by a sustainability cluster)



*Fraunhofer Institute for high frequency physics and radar techniques FHR  
in Wachtberg near Bonn*

by establishing and enhancing strategic partnerships between scientific and non-scientific actors and presenting them in innovative event formats.

The University of Bonn, not least its traditionally strong faculty of agriculture, its noted institute of geography, its renowned botanical gardens and the Zoological Research Museum Alexander Koenig, are conducting sustainability-related research in a variety of disciplines. A joint MSc program entitled *“Geography of Environmental Risk and Human Security”* has been successfully launched by the University of Bonn and the United Nations University (UNU). It offers the first Master’s degree to be jointly conferred by UNU and another university. *“By promoting UNU we are underscoring our commitment to Bonn as an international center of science and research”*, notes Dr. Georg Schütte, State Secretary at BMBF.





Bonn's already vibrant scientific landscape received further stimulus through the relocation of the first UN Secretariats to the city, which also added an international perspective. Thus, in 1997, one year after the first UN agencies relocated to Bonn, the University of Bonn launched its Center for Development Research (ZEF). Sustainability is one of the thematic focus areas of the Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg, University of Applied Sciences (H-BRS), which offers a CSR and NGO program. And the German Development Institute (DIE) has become one of the world's leading think tanks.

The Biodiversity Network Bonn (BION) is another successful example of targeted cooperation by a broad range of actors. It now counts nearly 60 member institutions and works to establish links between various scientific disciplines and renowned international, national and regional institutions. The German national aeronautics and space research center, DLR, which contributes among other things to the work of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)



*Caesar – center of advanced european studies and research in Bonn*

and of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER), is also based in Bonn. Moreover, Bonn is home to 6 Fraunhofer Institutes and to the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC).

[www.wissenschaftsregion-bonn.de](http://www.wissenschaftsregion-bonn.de)

[www.uni-bonn.de/internationales](http://www.uni-bonn.de/internationales)

## In the heart of Europe: city of short distances

Bonn is located in the heart of Europe, within easy reach of European metropolises such as Brussels, London or Paris. And mobility is an important location factor for Bonn as a UN city. Three international airports (Cologne/Bonn, Düsseldorf and Frankfurt) connect Bonn to the rest of the world. Cologne/Bonn airport is only 22 kilometers from the city center and reachable in less than half an hour by public transport. Berlin, Brussels or Paris are accessible by high-speed trains such as the ICE or the Thalys. Bonn is also linked to a dense highway network, which makes the major European cities easy to reach.

The city of Bonn itself offers a well-connected public transport system comprising streetcars, subways, commuter trains, buses and several ferries across the Rhine. The UN Campus is easily accessible by public transport within Bonn, service frequency is high. A railroad station within walking distance of the UN Campus is under construction.

A dense system of bike paths makes biking a popular way to reach the office in Bonn. After all, Bonn is a city of short distances and you are never more than about twenty minutes away from any given point in the city. This contributes to the high quality of life in Bonn.

[www.koeln-bonn-airport.de](http://www.koeln-bonn-airport.de)

[www.dus.com](http://www.dus.com)

[www.frankfurt-airport.com](http://www.frankfurt-airport.com)

[www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de)

[www.vrsinfo.de](http://www.vrsinfo.de)

[www.radstation-bonn.de](http://www.radstation-bonn.de)

[www.carsharing-news.de/carsharing-bonn](http://www.carsharing-news.de/carsharing-bonn)





## Lovable green city: a great place to live

Bonn – a city with a distinctly European flavor in the south of the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia – is very densely populated: 320,000 people live in an area of 141 square kilometers. Nevertheless, Bonn is very green, with a high proportion of forests and nature and landscape protection areas. A modern city of manageable proportions and with a strong urban character, Bonn is among the cities with the highest quality of life in Germany. The liberal Rhenish way of life, outstanding infrastructure and a broad offer of cultural and leisure activities as well as high environmental standards all combine to make Bonn a great place to live.

Due to these qualities, Bonn attracts a highly qualified workforce, service providers and young college graduates. In fact, Bonn is the German city with the highest proportion of university graduates. The cost of living is moderate compared to other cities worldwide, all types of services and shopping facilities are readily available, including those catering to environment-minded consumers. In Bonn you will find low-priced everyday goods, luxury items and products from all parts of the world.

The Bonn real estate market offers high-quality housing at relatively affordable prices. Offers range from the sophisticated Wilhelminian style buildings in Bonn's Südstadt district to single-family homes in leafy suburban neighborhoods. In the residential areas, yet close to nature, safe playgrounds, sports facilities and public swimming pools, as well as numerous cultural opportunities geared to the needs of families create a family-friendly environment.

Bonn is a multicultural city with an international feel where people from around the world are welcome and quickly feel at home, surrounded by a multitude of languages and cultures.









The population of Bonn is traditionally multicultural and cosmopolitan. Some 25 percent of the 165,000 people gainfully employed in Bonn hold a university degree. People from 175 nations live together peacefully in Bonn, making the city highly diverse in cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic terms. 7 percent of its inhabitants have a non-German passport. And Bonn, Beethoven's birthplace, the venue of world famous musical events such as the annual Beethoven Festival and the Schumann Festival as well as the location of the attractive "*Museum Mile*" and numerous other museums, is also a tourist magnet, with 1.5 million overnight stays per year.

The city is also an international leader in health care and modern medicine. The city's medical facilities include over 20 hospitals, specialized outpatient services, daycare hospitals and the Bonn University Hospital, which has 30 clinical departments and 20 research departments. Some 2,700 doctors representing 40 medical fields work in doctor's offices and hospitals across Bonn. 24,700 people in Bonn are employed in the healthcare sector.

[www.beethovenfest.de](http://www.beethovenfest.de)

[www.bthvn2020.de](http://www.bthvn2020.de)

*Cherry blossoms in Bonn's historic old town  
Schloss Drachenburg near Bonn*

*The Beethoven Orchester Bonn*





*Bonn International School*

## City of learning: international and multicultural

Bonn is a city of learning that offers a wide variety of schools and other educational institutions. In Germany's UN city several international schools, such as the Bonn International School (BIS) and the Independent Bonn International School (IBIS), international bilingual schools and kindergartens look back on a long tradition and cater to the educational needs of expat children. Tuition fees are low compared to other cities worldwide. There are 50 all-day schools and 100 general or vocational secondary schools. Municipal and private kindergartens are available for the very young. In the immediate vicinity of the UN Campus there is an international daycare center for children of UN staff members that admits children from the age of 4 months up to school age.

Starting in elementary school, a number of options for native-language instruction are available in Bonn. In addition to the German high school diploma (Abitur), students in Bonn can obtain the international baccalaureate (IB) or the French "Bac". The city also offers second chance education and special multicultural educational profiles. Schools in Bonn engage in constructive cooperation with the University of Bonn and offer ample opportunity to spark children's fascination for science.





*Different nations celebrate UN Day in front of the Old Town House*

[www.bonn.de](http://www.bonn.de)

[www.bonn.de/familie\\_gesellschaft\\_bildung\\_soziales/index.html](http://www.bonn.de/familie_gesellschaft_bildung_soziales/index.html)

[www.bonn-is.de](http://www.bonn-is.de)

[www.ibis-school.com](http://www.ibis-school.com)

[www.awo-bonn-rhein-sieg.de/angebote/kitas/einrichtungen/kitas/internationale-kita-bonn.html](http://www.awo-bonn-rhein-sieg.de/angebote/kitas/einrichtungen/kitas/internationale-kita-bonn.html)





## UN-Organizations in Bonn

United Nations Organizations in Bonn

[www.unbonn.org](http://www.unbonn.org)

Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on  
Climate Change

[www.unfccc.int](http://www.unfccc.int)

Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat  
Desertification

[www.unccd.int](http://www.unccd.int)

United Nations Volunteers programme

[www.unv.org](http://www.unv.org)



*Bonn Rheinaue Park*

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Action Campaign

[www.sdgactioncampaign.org](http://www.sdgactioncampaign.org)

Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

[www.cms.int](http://www.cms.int)

Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds

[www.unep-aewa.org](http://www.unep-aewa.org)

Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North-East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas

[www.ascobans.org](http://www.ascobans.org)

Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats

[www.eurobats.org](http://www.eurobats.org)

Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

[www.ipbes.net](http://www.ipbes.net)

UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training

[www.unevoc.unesco.org](http://www.unevoc.unesco.org)

United Nations University Vice Rectorate in Europe

[www.vie.unu.edu](http://www.vie.unu.edu)

United Nations University, Vice-Rectorate in Europe, Operating Unit SCYCLE

[www.scycle.vie.unu.edu](http://www.scycle.vie.unu.edu)

United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security

[www.ehs.unu.edu](http://www.ehs.unu.edu)

United Nations System Staff College, Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Development

[www.unssc.org](http://www.unssc.org)

World Health Organisation – Regional Office for Europe, European Centre for Environment and Health

[www.euro.who.int/envhealth](http://www.euro.who.int/envhealth)

United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction – Bonn Office

[www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org)

United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response

[www.un-spider.org](http://www.un-spider.org)

United Nations World Tourism Organisation, Consulting Unit  
on Tourism and Biodiversity

<http://biodiv.unwto.org>

United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western  
Europe – German Liaison Office

[www.unric.org/en](http://www.unric.org/en)

Other Bonn-based international organizations include:  
Crop Trust

[www.croptrust.org](http://www.croptrust.org)

IRENA Innovation and Technology Centre

[www.irena.org](http://www.irena.org)

IUCN Environmental Law Centre (ELC)

[www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)





## The United Nations in Bonn: a brief chronology

- 1951** The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) establishes a liaison office in Bonn.
- 1979** The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), also known as the Bonn Convention, is adopted and opened for signature in Bonn.
- 1984** The UNEP/CMS Secretariat is established in Bonn.
- 1990** Following German unification and the decision of the German Parliament to relocate parts of the Federal Government and parliament to Berlin, the Federal Government, the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia and the City of Bonn step up their joint efforts to establish and develop Bonn as a UN city.





**1994** The Act for the implementation of the enactment of the German Bundestag of 20 June 1991 for the completion of the German unity (Berlin-Bonn Act) enters into force. It enshrines Bonn's role as a center of development policy and as a host city for national, international und supranational institutions.

**1996** The UN flag is hoisted outside of Haus Carstanjen. UNV, UNFCCC, UNIC (now UNRIC) are the first UN agencies to move into the historic buildings, followed by CMS and Eurobats.

**1998 to 2000** ASCOBANS, UNCCD and AEWA move into Haus Carstanjen.

**2001** The European Centre for Environment and Health (WHO-ECEH) of the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe is set up at Langer Eugen (named after Eugen Gerstenmeier, a former president of the German Bundestag).

**2002** The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training opens at Langer Eugen.

**2003** The Federal Government, in agreement with the City of Bonn, decides to make former buildings of the Bundestag and a large lot in the former parliamentary quarter available to the UN. Construction of the UN Campus commences.

The Institute for Environment and Human Security of the United Nations University (UNU-EHS) opens in Bonn.

**2004** UN/ISDR, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction – Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning, is set up in Bonn. A liaison office of the Brussels-based United Nations Regional Information Center (UNRIC) opens in Bonn (and replaces UNIC).

**2006** Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel hands over the new UN premises, situated on historic ground, to then-Secretary General Kofi Annan. From now on, the UN flag flies in front of the “Langer Eugen” office tower on the banks of the Rhine.

The UNWTO Consulting Unit on Biodiversity and Tourism for Tsunami-affected countries is set up at the UN Campus.

**2007** The International Human Dimension Programme on Global Environmental Change (UNU-IHDP), the Vice Rectorate in Europe of the United Nations University (UNU-ViE), the UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNW-DPC) and the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER) open their offices at the UN Campus.

**2010** UNU-ISP moves to the UN Campus.

**2013** The UN move into a further building on the UN Campus, the so-called “Altes Abgeordnetenhochhaus“, which houses parts of UNFCCC. On the initiative of the Federal Government the building was refurbished and expanded so as to meet exemplary ecological standards.

**2014** The Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) opens its office at Langer Eugen.

**2015** The new conference space of the WorldCCBonn is inaugurated in the presence of Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. The Federal Government, the City of Bonn and the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia invested considerable sums into the building.

**2016** The UNSSC Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Development and the UN Sustainable Development Goals Action Campaign move into Haus Carstanjen.

The cornerstone of a new building for the UN Campus is laid. The office tower, which will be certified in accordance with the most stringent ecological standards, will comprise an additional 330 offices.

## Outlook to 2020

The Federal Government, the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia and the City of Bonn work towards the further growth of Bonn as a UN city. Related activities include the establishment of further UN agencies in Bonn, support for UN conferences, support for individual UN projects and a further enlargement of the Bonn International School (BIS).

# Links

[www.diplo.de/un-in-deutschland](http://www.diplo.de/un-in-deutschland)

[www.unbonn.org](http://www.unbonn.org)

[www.unric.org](http://www.unric.org)

[www.bonn.de/@uno-stadt](http://www.bonn.de/@uno-stadt)

[www.bonn-international.org](http://www.bonn-international.org)

[www.unv.org](http://www.unv.org)

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