



A red eagle on a white and red background: The flag of the federal state of Brandenburg

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# FACETS GALORE. BRANDEN BURG.





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*Dear friends of Brandenburg*

Brandenburg is a young state. Its territory as it is today was defined in autumn 1990 following the peaceful revolution in the GDR (East Germany). At the same time Brandenburg harks back to long bygone times and, more than most other regions, it abounds in German history with its highs and lows. While history since 1990 may be a distant past for some, it is defining for me and many others living in this state. The fall of the Berlin Wall changed almost everything. Years of awakening and change ensued, yet for many people this period also entailed extreme uncertainty and oppressive unemployment.

Brandenburg has been experiencing an upswing for a good while now. Unemployment has reached a record low. In terms of economic growth, Brandenburg by now occupies a top rank in Germany. Expansive natural spaces, rivers and lakes are our trademark. Dotted in between are charming villages and towns, old fieldstone churches and venerable castles. Notionally, the region of course also includes Berlin, the German capital in our very midst: a federal state in its own right, but embedded in Brandenburg. We like and need each other: the European metropolis and Germany's fifth-largest federal state, or *Land*.

Brandenburg's success is largely owed to its people, who have created many new things in their old native land. They are rooted to their native soil and open for new things at the same time. Yet this also includes the many new Brandenburgians who have joined us from elsewhere. They have contributed to the prosperity of their adopted homeland with inventiveness, courage and zest. Whilst this coming together of different realms of experience may not always have been easy initially, something shared has developed that truly benefits Brandenburg. This community spirit and solidarity are near and dear to me.

With this brochure we hope to convey an understanding of our region between Elbe and Oder to you. We wish to tell you about Brandenburg's history and peculiarities. About where we came from and where we are heading. See it for yourself. I am looking forward to it.

*Yours sincerely  
Dietmar Woidke*

Dr Dietmar Woidke, Minister President of Brandenburg



# OPPORTUNITIES GALORE BRANDENBURG



*The city of Brandenburg an der Havel  
is the historical cradle of the March*



*Entrance to the region: the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin*



*The perfect place for getting away from it all – whether by bicycle ...*



*... or by canoe*





“Brandenburg?  
Can’t complain!”

Axel Schulz (\*1968)

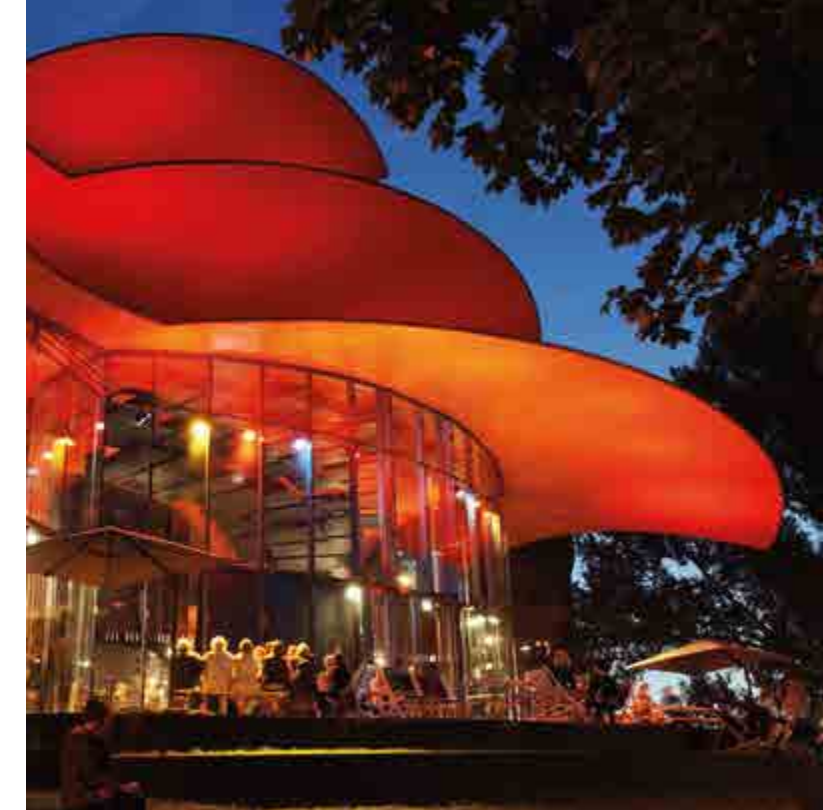
Heavyweight boxer who competed in world championship title challenges against George Foreman, Francois Botha and others. The fact that he did not win never detracted from his humour.



ArcelorMittal steelworks in Eisenhüttenstadt



Tree-lined avenues, a typical feature of Brandenburg



Modern architecture: Hans-Otto-Theatre Potsdam

Brandenburg is the emergent federal state in East Germany and in Central Europe. And in the middle of Brandenburg: Germany’s capital Berlin, drawing in people from all over the world. Those who have discovered the many charms of the German capital city region in their totality will no longer want to live without the vast openness of Brandenburg. Brandenburg always means both: fast access to the booming metropolis of Berlin and at the same time the comprehensive quality of life in the Brandenburg landscapes, towns and villages. People cherishing one as much as the other are spot on in Brandenburg.

#### Freedom with prospects

This is a region of wide open spaces. With its surface area of about 11,583 square miles (30,000 km<sup>2</sup>), Brandenburg is the fifth-largest German federal state and almost as large as Belgium. Yet while Belgium is crowded with a population of 11 million, the roughly 2.5 million inhabitants of Brandenburg have ample space available for movement and development.

About 190 miles (300 km) from north to south and 160 miles (250 km) from west to east: Brandenburg is large enough for all those already living here. But also for all those who come and visit the state. And last but not least for all those people who choose to settle here and make Brandenburg their new home. They all find excellent economic prospects and a well-

developed infrastructure here, in addition to a climate of pronounced family friendliness, dedicated neighbourhoods, superb opportunities for leisure activities, plenty of culture and history and an abundance of unspoiled nature.

#### Germany’s most water-rich federal state

Extensive forests, over 3,000 lakes – more than in any other federal state – and 20,505 miles (33,000 km) of rivers and streams offer fantastic conditions for relaxation and sport. Seemingly endless tree-lined avenues and a dense network of well-developed cycle and trekking trails allow for exhaustive tours. Germany’s longest long-distance cycle route, the ‘Tour Brandenburg’, fully circumnavigates the state and passes through it, measuring over 684 miles (1,100 km). The recultivation and flooding of former lignite opencast mines in south Brandenburg gives birth to an entirely new recreational region: the ‘Lusatian Lake District’, Europe’s largest man-made chain of lakes.

#### A success story that grew out of turmoil

Brandenburg’s early development years after the end of the GDR and the state’s re-establishment in 1990 were a difficult time for many people in the state. The unemployment rate was at about 20 per cent; many businesses had to close; many things were changing and much had to be newly learned. But

after development years with both ups and downs Brandenburg has developed into a dynamic and successful region. It has been enjoying a sustained upward trend over many years, economically, culturally and socially. The number of people in employment has been continuously rising year after year, whereas unemployment has significantly decreased.

#### A leading science region

If nothing else, the economy in Brandenburg profits from the excellent qualification of graduates from the region’s universities and research institutions. Across Europe, Berlin and Brandenburg are one of the regions with the highest density of universities, universities of applied sciences, research institutes as well as technology and start-up centres.

Brandenburg’s strength and quality of life have always had their roots in the special esteem accorded to solidarity, social cohesion and social balance. Economic success and a modern, active welfare state are not regarded as contrary to each other in Brandenburg, but are mutually dependent in a productive manner, which is why they are regarded as two sides of the same coin. This is why educational and career prospects in Brandenburg in principle ought to be accessible for all children and youths regardless of their family or geographic background. Because the basis for opportunities in life and solidarity is established at a very young age, Brandenburgians are

particularly proud of their comprehensive and well-developed system of early child education. More than half of all children under the age of three and almost all three- to six-year-olds attend child care facilities in Brandenburg – trend increasing.

#### “Those who love Brandenburg get more out of life”

It is said of the people in the region between the rivers Elbe and Oder that they are down-to-earth, solution-oriented, hands-on and reliable. “The people here do not wallow in self-pity – they are Brandenburgians”, says Swiss television presenter Max Moor, who has found his second home here. Indeed, Brandenburg is a state where the phrase “Can’t complain” is regarded as an expression of the highest possible appreciation.

People coming here for the first time may initially perceive this restrained mentality as slightly surprising. But those who stay for a little longer will soon understand what Brandenburg’s former head of government Matthias Platzeck means when he says: “Those who love Brandenburg get more out of life.”



# NEIGHBOURS GALORE BRANDENBURG



Closely connected: Berlin and Brandenburg



**“Berlin is lucky – it is surrounded by Brandenburg.”**

Andreas Dresen (\*1963)

*The multi-award winning director (Grill Point, Cloud 9, Stopped on Track and other films) was honoured with the Order of Merit of Brandenburg in 2012. He serves as a volunteer judge at Brandenburg’s Constitutional Court.*

Together with Berlin, Brandenburg is located in the heart of the new Europe and advocates a Europe without borders. This, too, is why the following unequivocally applies in Brandenburg: open-mindedness, tolerance and a clear rejection of any form of extremism. These are the basic requirements for good neighbourly relations.

## A hub between East and West

The significance of the German capital city region as a hub between East and West has been steadily increasing since Poland and other central European countries joined the EU.

Already, the two states of Berlin and Brandenburg constitute one of the most dynamic regions of economic, cultural and social progress in Europe. The geographical location in the heart of Europe is ideal for the development of Brandenburg, as this is where important trans-European transport corridors from north to south and east to west meet. Well-developed motorways, modern high-speed trains, many waterways and numerous airlines connect the German capital region with other European economic areas and with metropolises around the world.

Brandenburg has about 497 miles (800 km) of motorways. The comprehensively modernised rail network has a length of about

1,988 miles (3,200 km). All regions are connected to Berlin via rail. Further expansion of the network is planned as more and more traffic is to be transferred from road to rail.

Whether by road or by rail: businesses can access over 200 million consumers across Europe within 24 hours. Via waterways, the region is also connected to sea ports such as Hamburg and Rostock. The airport Berlin-Schönefeld is being expanded into the Airport Berlin Brandenburg. It has become an important motor for the region’s further economic development well before opening.

## Former enemies have become friends

“We want to be a people of good neighbours” – when the then West German chancellor Willy Brandt uttered this sentence in his government policy statement in 1969, he certainly had the German-Polish relationship in mind. At the time, a mere quarter of a century had passed since World War II and reconciliation

between the former enemies had barely begun. Nowadays, the Federal State of Brandenburg makes a particularly important contribution to Germany’s fulfilling of Brandt’s aspiration. This is why Brandenburg develops increasingly close ties especially with its eastern neighbours in Poland: in the field of civil society and culture, economically and politically Brandenburg shares an almost 170 mile (267 km) long border with Poland – by now a border that brings together rather than separates Germans and Poles.

## Close ties across two border rivers

Over the past years, both sides have created an increasingly dense network of close, amicable ties across the rivers Oder and Neisse. This historical development is so deeply embedded that even occasional political disagreements cannot overthrow it any more. The people of Brandenburg will continue to be in the vanguard with regard to further intensifying integration and friendship between Germans and Poles.





Once a dividing border, now a close link between Germany and Poland: binational police patrol near Frankfurt (Oder)

Brandenburg maintains particularly close relations with the immediately neighbouring German federal states: with Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, yet naturally predominantly with Berlin. Although Berlin and Brandenburg are politically and constitutionally separate states, together they have been forming a joint economic region of international importance on the level of practical communal life and business for a long time now.

The German capital city region is closely connected in many future-oriented fields, such as science and cutting-edge technology, the film and media industry and the health sector. The two federal *Länder* (federal states) Berlin and Brandenburg work together on a daily basis in the field of economic development and many other administrative areas.

Joint authorities and institutions, such as the linked transport system, joint specialised high courts, the Flughafen Berlin Brandenburg, the Berlin-Brandenburg public broadcasting corporation, the Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation Berlin-Brandenburg, the Statistical Office Berlin-Brandenburg and the Joint Regional Planning Department, are evidence of this development. Some 30 treaties and numerous administrative agreements regulate joint interests in a wide range of fields.

The number of topics affected by such cooperation is constantly growing.

Overall, this gave rise to the fast-growing knowledge and economic region Berlin-Brandenburg that offers the citizens of Brandenburg in all parts of the state an improved quality of life and good future prospects. No wonder that the population increases especially in the municipalities around Berlin; however, the dynamic of the capital city also resonates much further afield.

The parliament of Brandenburg: Landtag in Potsdam



Neuzelle Cistercian Monastery: a baroque miracle

The historic centre of Peitz



Riding out in Neustadt/Dosse



Neuhardenberg Palace







Boating in the Spreewald



A giant bustard in the Havelland



Grape harvest in Werder (Havel)



“The development achievements of the people of Brandenburg and the preservation of the wonderful landscapes have made my homeland near the metropolis of Berlin unique.”

Anja Kling (\*1970)

The Potsdam native is a renowned actor and dubber. She has been awarded important national prizes such as the Golden Camera or the German Television Award.

Each region in Brandenburg has its own stories, typical traditions, economic strengths, beautiful landscapes and special appeal. A journey of exploration is always well worth it.

In the Prignitz region in the northeast of Brandenburg the river Elbe is of great importance – much to the chagrin of the residents also because of several floods. Yet over the past years several hundred million euros were invested in flood defence here as well as at the Oder in eastern Brandenburg and the river was given more space. The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Elbtalaue offers peaceful silence. In Rühstädt, Germany’s No. 1 stork village, however, loud clattering dominates. Wittenberge has brick and art nouveau to offer. From here it is not far to Neuruppin, the birthplace of the great poet Theodor Fontane. In the hilly Uckermark with towns such as Templin and Fürstenberg/Havel, one lake follows after the other. The Uckermärkische Seen Nature Park and the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Schorfheide-Chorin attract nature lovers.

High towers greet visitors from afar: those of the stalwart Marienkirche church in Prenzlau as well as those of the PCK

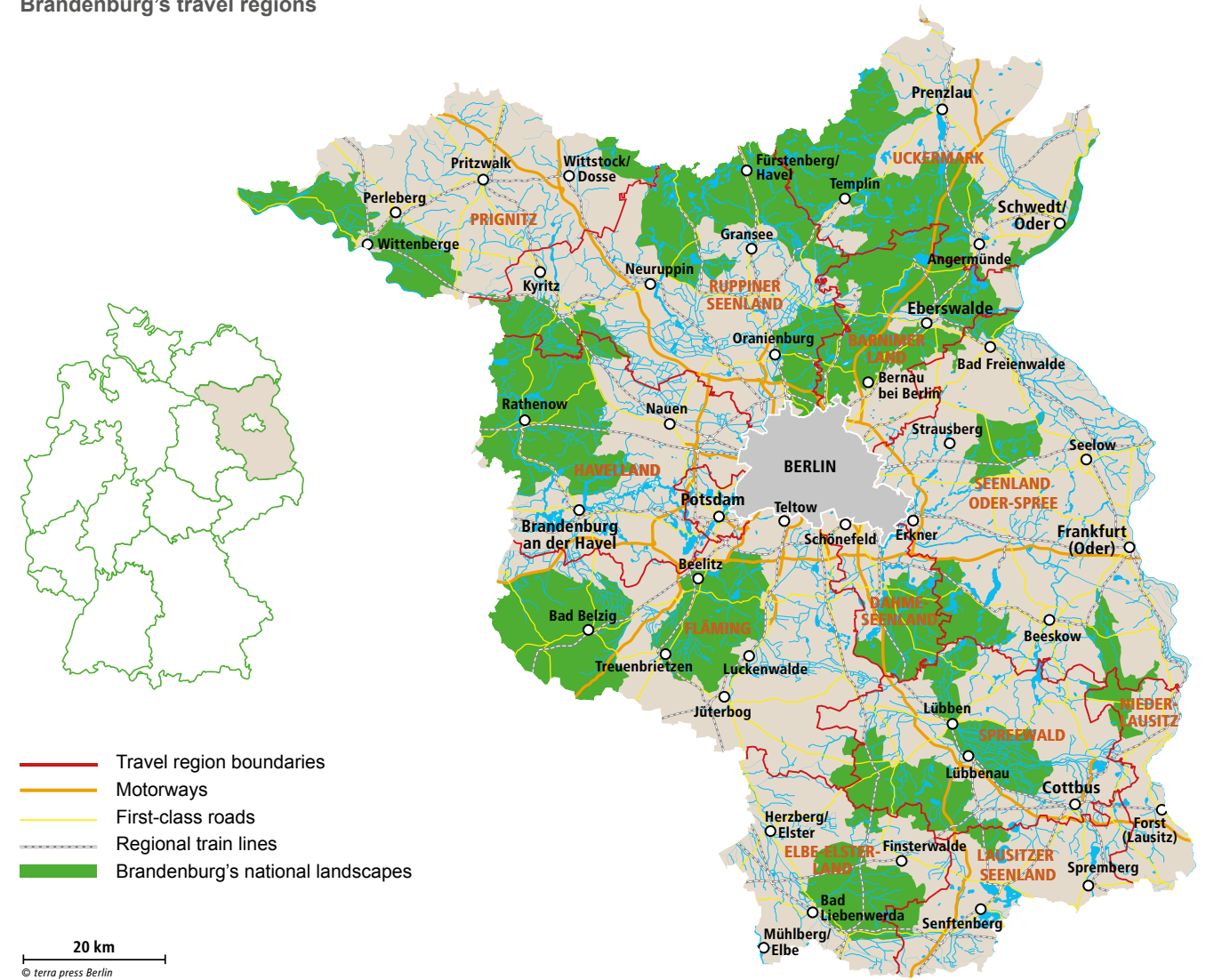
refinery in Schwedt/Oder. Together with the paper industry, it is one of the region’s most important employers. The university city of Frankfurt is a good distance further down south along the mighty river Oder. It constitutes an important bridge to our neighbour Poland.

#### A paradise for humans and animals

Some 250 bird species live in the Märkische Schweiz Nature Park, including black storks and white-tailed sea eagles. Here, one can happily cruise across the Schermützelsee on a steamer, just like on the almost identically named Scharmützelsee further down south. The Spreewald with its miles of streams offers unspoiled nature, romanticism and a dose of the exotic, be it the postman arriving by boat or the filming of yet another ‘Spreewald crime thriller’ for German national TV.

Lusatia is Brandenburg’s energy region. Here, electricity is generated from lignite, solar and wind power. The former opencast mines are being transformed into the Lusatian Lake District. With over 20 lakes, this is Europe’s largest artificial water park; it even touches the outskirts of Cottbus. In

#### Brandenburg’s travel regions



Lusatia one can experience how nature returns to the former opencast mines. The Sorbian and Wendish people have their very own culture and their language and traditions are being encouraged.

The Hoher Fläming with the spa town of Bad Belzig is a well-known hiking region that includes a climb up the Hagelberg. This is where, during the time of the Wars of Liberation, the Napoleonic troops suffered a harsh defeat in 1813 in the run-up to the Battle of Leipzig. First the Reformation and then Wallenstein’s troops during the Thirty Years’ War left their mark on Jüterbog. Johann Tetzel’s indulgence box now stands in the Nikolaikirche. Mills, medieval castles and field-stone churches are typical of this region. A lot of aviation industry has located not far from here and close to Berlin. Very close by is Potsdam, Brandenburg’s state capital with its historical city centre and Prussian palaces. The city is an island, surrounded by the waters of the river Havel. The

famous Glienicke Bridge no longer separates Potsdam and Berlin, as it did up until 1989, but now connects the two cities.

#### Forested hills and dreamy villages

The Margraviate of Brandenburg was established in Brandenburg an der Havel in 1157 by Albert the Bear. The cathedral and the historical centre are worth a trip. A famous son of the city is the fabulous humorist Vicco von Bülow, better known as Loriot. Water-rich lowlands, forested hills and dreamy villages give the Havelland landscape its unique character. This is where the aviation pioneer Otto Lilienthal conducted his flight experiments. Rathenow is famous for being the Town of Optics. This is the site of the largest connected wetland area in western Central Europe and one of the largest inland resting areas of Nordic migratory birds. And it offers another prize: the darkest night sky in Germany – an eldorado for stargazers.

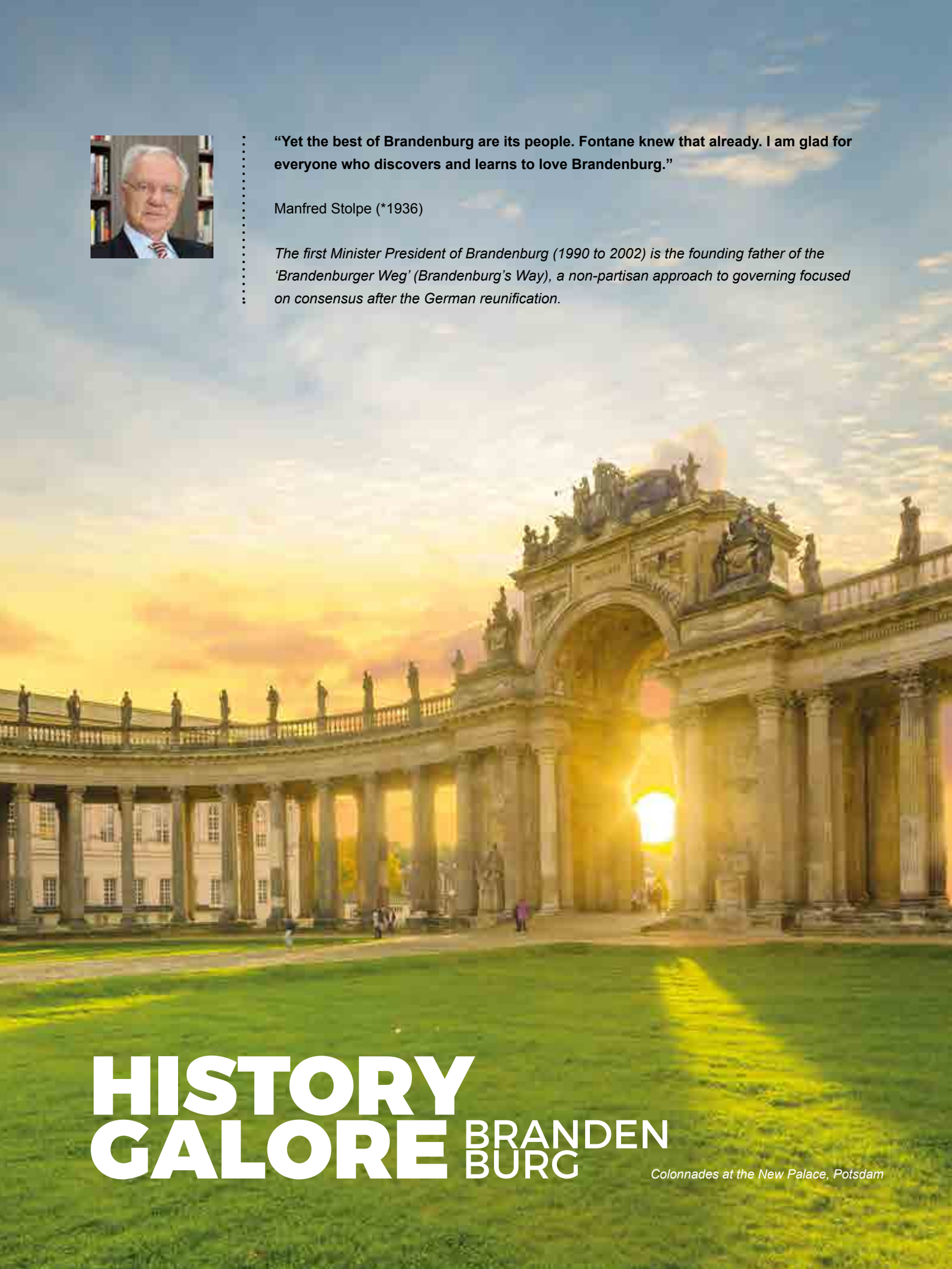




“Yet the best of Brandenburg are its people. Fontane knew that already. I am glad for everyone who discovers and learns to love Brandenburg.”

Manfred Stolpe (\*1936)

*The first Minister President of Brandenburg (1990 to 2002) is the founding father of the ‘Brandenburger Weg’ (Brandenburg’s Way), a non-partisan approach to governing focused on consensus after the German reunification.*



# HISTORY GALORE BRANDENBURG

Colonnades at the New Palace, Potsdam

Brandenburg in its present form is a very young state and was at first a huge experiment with uncertain outcome. Established in 1990 like the other East German states as a child of the peaceful revolution in the GDR, today’s Brandenburg looks back to not even three decades of regional history. Yet in this short era it has achieved much.

## Brandenburg is a master of change

What the people of Brandenburg experienced and actively dealt with in the first two decades of their federal state’s existence, was the almost complete change of all economic, social and political conditions. Traditional industries folded. Hundreds of thousands lost their jobs. Many, especially young people, left their homeland to find new life prospects elsewhere in Germany and Europe.

By now it has become clear: the struggle of the early years was not in vain. The people of Brandenburg successfully gained ground under frequently difficult conditions, without a doubt also owing to the support from other federal states, the German government and the EU. Today modern Brandenburg can proudly look back to its development years and tackles future tasks with optimism and confidence.

In doing so, the people of Brandenburg are guided not least by their region’s special history. The March of Lusatia is over 1,000

years old; the March of Brandenburg was established 860 years ago. The latter came to be the heartland of the Kingdom of Prussia in the 18th century. Famous historical buildings such as the palaces in Oranienburg, Rheinsberg and Sanssouci in Potsdam bear witness to this development. King Frederick the Great was an enlightened monarch who saw himself as “the first servant of the state”. During his reign from 1740 to 1786 he abolished torture, reduced censorship and established important fundamentals of the modern rule of law. Yet he also waged several European wars that inflicted much sorrow.

## Openness and tolerance

Already in 1685 Frederick’s great-grandfather, Frederick William, Elector of Brandenburg, encouraged 20,000 Huguenot refugees from France to relocate to Brandenburg with his Edict of Potsdam. Many buildings throughout the state bear witness to these immigrant cultures and newly founded villages. Frederick the Great built on this, also economically savvy, tradition of openness and tolerance towards religious minorities. “Every man must get to heaven his own way”, was his catchy formula – a motif that continues to be very topical as a guideline for the coexistence of people from a wide range of backgrounds in modern societies. Today’s Brandenburg likewise honours this aspiration.



King Frederick the Great



Peaceful revolution: Potsdam 1989





“Brandenburg is like a good breakfast.”

Christian Ulmen (\*1975)

The multi-award winning actor with leading roles in Herr Lehmann, Men in the City and as Detective Chief Inspector Lessing in the Tatort crime series lives in Potsdam.



# TOURISM GALORE BRANDENBURG

Tourism in Brandenburg is booming. By now, about 25 million overnight stays in small and medium-sized businesses are registered each year. This figure has almost doubled in the past 10 years. And the increase seems unstoppable. 60,000 women and men work with commitment in this industry and generate a gross revenue of about 4.3 billion euro. This excellent development is the result of hard work for Brandenburg as a tourist destination. Much has been invested in infrastructure and service. Last but not least, Brandenburg’s cuisine offers excellent quality and variety.

The state offers perfect conditions for a happy holiday: 3,000 lakes, more than 18,000 miles (30,000 km) of rivers and streams, 15 large-scale nature reserves, 8,000 miles (13,000 km) of long distance cycle routes and almost 1,250 miles (2,000 km) of main hiking routes – plus Berlin in the very centre. No wonder that water sports, bike tours and days out in nature are the most popular pastimes. They can often be combined, for example, in the Spreewald and in the Seenland Oder-Spree. Unspoiled nature can be found in many places, for example, in the Uckermark, the so-called “Tuscany of the North”.

### Nature, culture and cosmopolitan Berlin

In Brandenburg, this nature beautifully combines with culture, including impressive concerts such as the Musiksommer (Summer of Music) in the venerable Brick Gothic Cistercian Chorin Abbey and the Elblandfestspiele in Wittenberge. Yet culture also includes the many larger and smaller cities such as Potsdam, Brandenburg an der Havel, Angermünde, Neuruppin and Luckau.

Their town centres are superbly restored with many listed buildings. And they offer culture with their museums, palaces, castles and gardens, such as the worldwide famous highlight of Sanssouci in Potsdam and the palaces of Rheinsberg and Doberlug-Kirchhain. They all are a gift from the past for today’s Brandenburg. Of course, this also includes the gardens and parks – a feast for the eyes. Examples are the palace and gardens of Branitz in Cottbus with Pückler’s pyramid as well as Babelsberg in Potsdam with a view of the river Havel and Glienicke Bridge, a place highly charged with German history.

### Tropical Islands – the world’s largest free-standing hall

For those who like it a bit bigger: several thousand visitors a day amuse themselves at Tropical Islands, the world’s largest free-standing hall with a height of 354 feet (108 m). The former hangar was built for constructing transportation airships, but those plans had to be aborted. Fortunately, inventive entrepreneurs decided: We’ll simply start something else. Now the business is a huge success with 600 employees, true to the spirit of Theodor Fontane, the great poet of the March, who said, “Success depends on courage!”. Willkommen! Welcome! Witamy! Bienvenue! Bonjour! 欢迎



Tropical Islands: the world’s largest self-supporting hall

### TOURISM IN BRANDENBURG

**INDUSTRY** Major employer: some 60,000 women and men are employed in Brandenburg’s tourism industry.

**WATER GALORE** Featuring about 3,000 lakes, Brandenburg is Germany’s number one lakeland.

**MORE INFORMATION** [reiseland-brandenburg.de](http://reiseland-brandenburg.de)



# CULTURE GALORE BRANDENBURG



“Thanks to the internet, geography no longer matters. Whether I sit in Brandenburg, Tokyo or on the Moon: I write and that works beautifully in a village. I get far more done much faster than before.”

Juli Zeh (\*1974)

*The multi-award winning author lives in the Havelland region of Brandenburg. In her latest novel Unterleuten, she subtly and profoundly describes contemporary country life.*



Art nouveau splendor: Cottbus State Theatre





The Brandenburg State Orchestra of Frankfurt (Oder)



Youth music competition | Halbe War Memorial | Theatre Neue Bühne Senftenberg



**B**randenburg is a culturally active region with a lively mix of impressive historical heritage and energetic contemporary art scene.

Be it literature, painting, music, theatre, architecture or landscaping: names such as Fontane and Schinkel, Bettina von Arnim und Lenné, places such as Sanssouci and Branitz characterize today's image of Brandenburg as much as its outstanding festivals. Some 500 palaces and stately homes, a large number of old monasteries and churches and heart-stoppingly beautiful natural landscapes await exploration and provide a breathtaking setting for cultural highlights.

**An impressively varied theatre scene**

Nationwide, Brandenburg's theatres stage impressive theatre, opera and concert events, for example, at the Staatstheater Cottbus, an impressive art nouveau building. A dedicated free

theatre scene adds further excitement. Over 80 cultural festivals take place throughout the state, including the international Musikfestspiele Potsdam Sanssouci, the Brandenburgische Sommerkonzerte, the Havelländische Musikfestspiele, the Choriner Musiksommer, the Elblandfestspiele in Wittenberge and the Kammeroper Rheinsberg. And the overarching brand of 'Kulturland Brandenburg' (Land of Culture) organises special statewide theme years.

**An innovative and lively art scene**

The approximately 300 museums and archives present further opportunities for numerous discoveries. The innovative and lively art scene presents itself in art museums such as the Brandenburg State Museum of Modern Art with its two sites in Cottbus and Frankfurt (Oder) and at galleries, exhibitions, companies and public institutions. Artists also let themselves be inspired by Brandenburg's vast landscapes and work in

studios in smaller municipalities as well as at the Künstlerhaus Schloss Wiepersdorf.

Museums dedicated to important authors such as Brecht, Fontane, Hauptmann, Huchel, Kleist and Tucholsky host literary events. The number of public reading events organised by the Brandenburgisches Literaturbüro and the annual festival LIT:potsdam is increasing.

Brandenburg faces its history. Numerous memorial sites commemorate the crimes of the National Socialist reign of violence in the period 1933 to 1945 and facilitate the examination of this darkest chapter of German history.

**Drawing the right lessons from history**

The Sachsenhausen National Memorial alone is visited by over 700,000 people each year. Other sites are dedicated to

the history of the Soviet occupation and the former German Democratic Republic. Brandenburg actively contributes to enabling people to draw the right lessons from dark periods in German history in order to ensure a democratic, free and peaceful future.

**CULTURAL POLICY IN BRANDENBURG**

**FUNDING** The government of Brandenburg supports art and culture with funds totalling EUR 100 million annually.

**CULTURAL HERITAGE** Brandenburg has over 500 palaces and manors.

**MORE INFORMATION** [kulturland-brandenburg.de](http://kulturland-brandenburg.de)





# NATURE GALORE BRANDENBURG



“We have to preserve the natural capital! Only then also coming generations will have the chance of a liveable future.”

Prof. Heinz Sielmann  
(1917 – 2006)

The legendary environmentalist and documentary film maker (‘Expeditionen ins Tierreich – Expeditions into the Animal Kingdom’), nicknamed ‘Mr Woodpecker’ in Britain, established the Heinz Sielmann Stiftung, a foundation that successfully campaigns for the preservation and development of large-scale natural landscapes. In Brandenburg these include the former military training areas Kyritz-Ruppiner Heide and Döberitzer Heide as well as the Groß Schauener Seen chain of lakes.

Into the great wide open. As soon as one leaves the megapolis of Berlin, it is nature as far as the eye can see. And the eye can see very far here, for Brandenburg has hardly any mountains. Instead, it features an undulating, diverse landscape that was formed by the Ice Age.

## Fairytale waterscapes

Brandenburg is one of the most water-rich, forested, bio-diverse regions of Germany. The path there often leads along extensive tree-lined avenues of oaks, limes and beeches – and in some places mile long rows of apple trees line the lanes and roads. The protection of the environment and nature have constitutional status, yet not as an end in itself. This is always also about balancing the interests of inhabitants and the economy. Where roads cut through natural spaces, wide wildlife crossings are constructed to protect all animals.

With its abundant natural capital, Brandenburg has a national and international responsibility for the preservation of habitats and the protection of valuable animal and plant species. This even includes a UNESCO World Heritage Site. And it has long since been clear: this abundant biodiversity is a particularly important asset for Brandenburg that must



*Living tradition: Costumes of the Spreewald region*

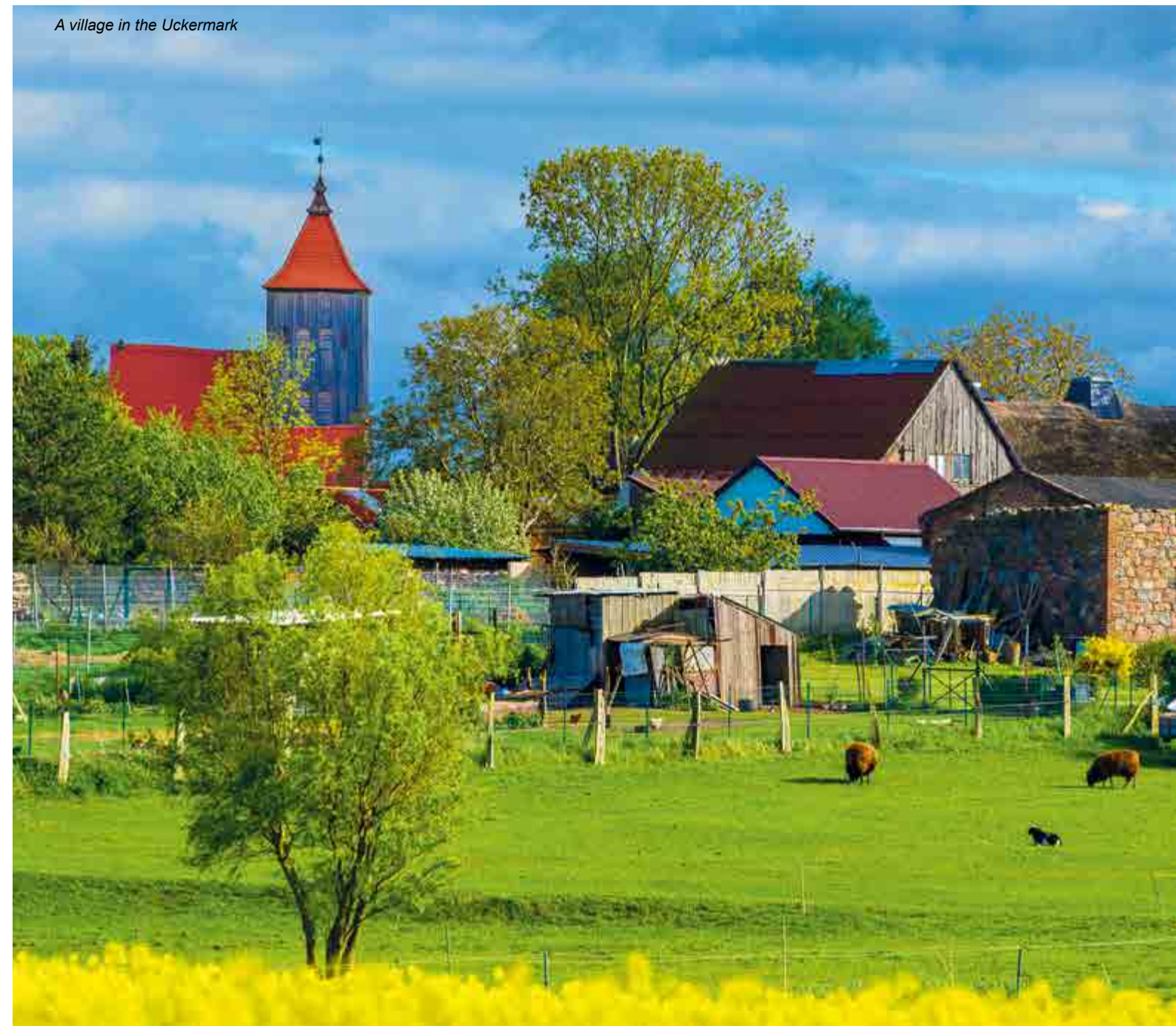


*Rheinsberg Palace*



*Diving into Lake Streganz*

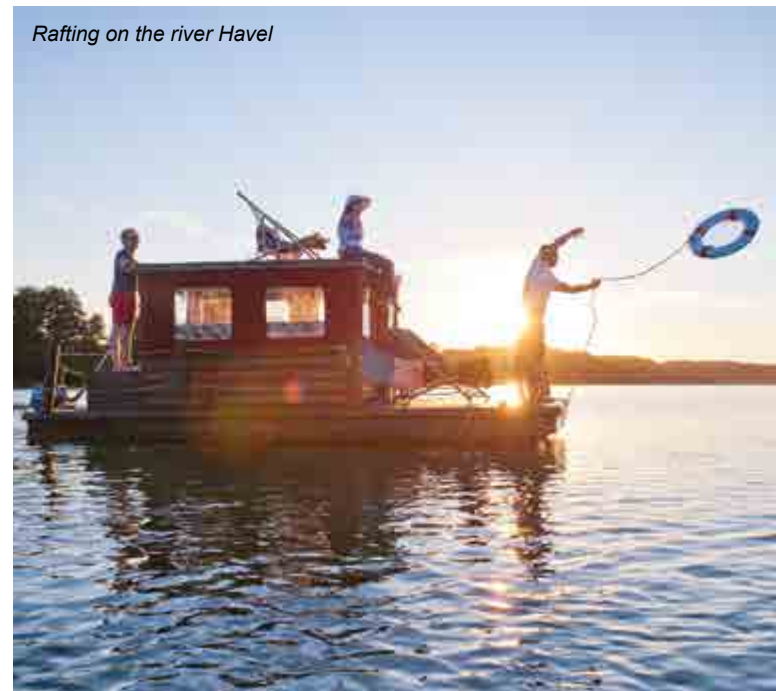
*A village in the Uckermark*



*Summer of Music at Chorin Abbey*



*Rafting on the river Havel*







Environmental education: young nature park rangers Naturwacht

Uckermark Lake District Nature Park | Grumsin Forest | Moor frogs | Cranes

be protected. It is the proverbial jewel in the crown of the German reunification. This is what dedicated environmentalists called Brandenburg's vast, undivided and diverse landscapes after the end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the German reunification in 1990. They developed the system of large-scale reserves in the East German federal states.

**Nature protection and tourism in harmony**

Fifteen conservation areas are dotted between the mighty and largely untouched rivers Elbe in the west and Oder in

the east: the Lower Oder Valley National Park, two UNESCO biosphere reserves and eleven nature parks. Altogether, these areas comprise about a third of the state territory. They are also the best regions for ecological agriculture and recreation close to nature.

This is where black storks trudge through swampy ground, white-tailed sea eagles and lesser spotted eagles circle above forests and fields, cranes congregate in their thousands on their extensive journeys and the rare bustards perform their impressive mating ritual. The wetlands are home to green lizards, terapins and fire-bellied toads.

**NATURE CONSERVATION IN BRANDENBURG**



**RANGERS**

92 rangers, Brandenburg's nature guardians, offer guided tours of the reserves. Much can be learned during these tours about and from nature.



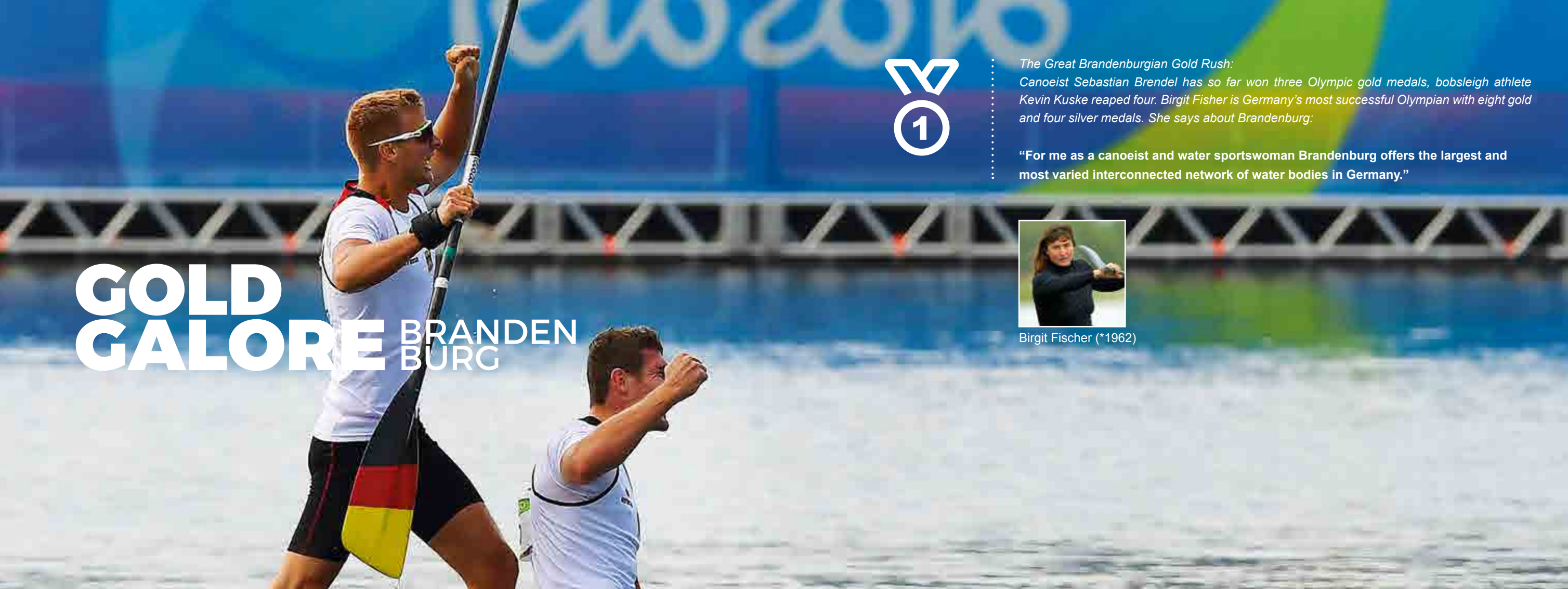
**ORGANIC FARMING**

The Biosphere Reserve Schorfheide-Chorin is Brandenburg's largest reserve. The ecovillage of Brodowin lies right in the middle of it. The whole village engages in organic farming and it is surrounded by beautiful lakes.



**MORE INFORMATION** [natur-brandenburg.de](http://natur-brandenburg.de)





# GOLD GALORE BRANDENBURG



The Great Brandenburgian Gold Rush: Canoeist Sebastian Brendel has so far won three Olympic gold medals, bobsleigh athlete Kevin Kuske reaped four. Birgit Fisher is Germany's most successful Olympian with eight gold and four silver medals. She says about Brandenburg:

“For me as a canoeist and water sportswoman Brandenburg offers the largest and most varied interconnected network of water bodies in Germany.”



Birgit Fischer (\*1962)

Brandenburg is a sporting region, both with regard to elite and to mass sport. Some 342,000 women and men, children and youths are active in over 3,000 clubs; almost 50,000 people are actively engaged in volunteer club work. They coach children and youths, manage the membership fees, drive the children to away games and act as referees in exciting weekend matches.



Integration by way of sport

Brandenburg's clubs thus fulfil important social functions and strengthen social cohesion.

### Over 1,000 medals for Brandenburgians

Since 1990 Brandenburgian athletes have won over 1,000 gold, silver and bronze medals in the Olympic and Paralympic Games as well as world and European championships. Brandenburg's active athletes regularly achieve best placements for Germany especially in the field of water sports, that is, canoeing and kayaking, as well as in the disciplines cycling and Olympic bobsleigh.

Other intensively practised sports in Brandenburg are athletics, swimming, judo, wrestling and rowing. The players of 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam have consistently been among the best teams in German and European women's football for many years.

The basis for success is the consequent early promotion of sport as implemented in Brandenburg by way of several intensive training centres. They coach children and youths, manage the membership fees, drive the children to away games and act as referees in exciting weekend matches across the state. Sport and games in Brandenburg are greatly emphasised in Brandenburg's child care facilities. This promotes the joy of exercise already from an early age.

### Early support is the basis of success

Nurseries and sports clubs cooperate closely, which for the clubs is also the best way of recruiting young talent. At Brandenburg's schools, the curriculum includes three weekly hours of physical education – more than in many other federal states. This may at times be a bit strenuous for some pupils, but it is good and healthy for all.

### SPORT IN BRANDENBURG



#### SPORTS-PEOPLE

Brandenburg has 2.5 million inhabitants. Some 342,000 of these are active in over 3,000 clubs; almost 50,000 people are actively engaged in volunteer club work.



#### FUNDING

Brandenburg's state government invests EUR 17 million per year in support of sports clubs. In addition, investment programmes contribute many millions of euros to the construction of sports facilities.

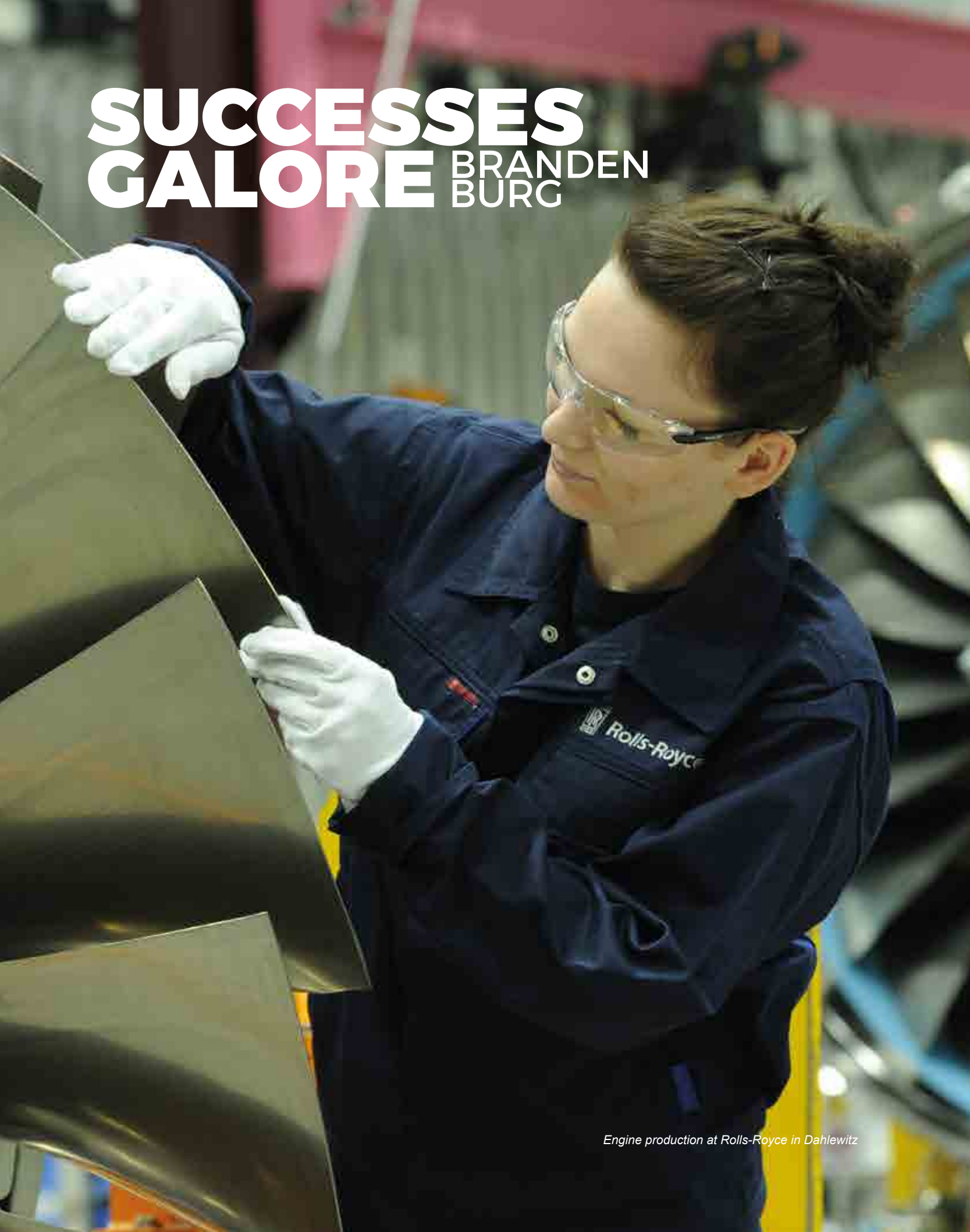


#### MORE

**INFORMATION** [lsb-brandenburg.de](http://lsb-brandenburg.de)



# SUCCESSSES GALORE BRANDENBURG



Engine production at Rolls-Royce in Dahlewitz



“The climate for start-ups in Brandenburg is incredible. The regional government has supported us fantastically. What matters for a good future is boosting young founders by granting them loans. Because we want to contribute something to our homeland’s success.”

Christina Grätz (\*1974)

*The biologist was awarded the title “Brandenburg Entrepreneur of the Year 2016”. In 2011 she founded her company Nagola Re Ltd for the ecological restoration of the Lusatian opencast coal mining district. This restoration of the land in her industrial home region has been close to the biologist’s heart since her youth.*

**B**randenburg has established itself as a successful location for business. It is a state with strong industries and highly productive small and medium-sized businesses. Berlin and Brandenburg closely collaborate in the field of economic policy. Of course, this also involves competition, which in turn invigorates business to mutual advantage.

### A robust economy and rising employment

Brandenburg’s gross domestic product has significantly improved over the past years and evidences robust economic development. The once high unemployment rate of up to approximately 20 per cent has drastically decreased and by now stands at about 7.5 per cent across the state. Well-known domestic and international companies such as Rolls-Royce, Oracle, LEAG, Vestas, ArcelorMittal, Goodyear Dunlop, Daimler, Fielmann, VW Logistik and MTU have located to Brandenburg. In addition, a strong domestic small firm sector

with a wide range of trades has emerged. With its many small and medium-sized businesses it forms the backbone of the economy and constitutes the largest source of employment.

Fifteen specified sub-regions featuring particular economic and scientific potential are being supported as Regional Growth Centres under the motto of ‘Stärken stärken’ (Strengthening strengths) – and they are on a growth course. This enables them to optimally develop as ‘anchors’, since they have a strong spillover effect on the surrounding area.

In addition, nine industrial sector clusters were formed, in part together with Berlin. These are associations of businesses and institutions in important growth industries. Examples are: energy engineering, health management, information and communication technology (ICT), media management and creative industries, transport/mobility/logistics, food industry, plastics/chemical industry and tourism.



PCK refinery in Schwedt/Oder



Prignitzer Chemie in Wittenberge



Energy production at Jänschwalde



Brandenburg Economic Development Corporation (brandenburg invest/ "Wirtschaftsförderung Brandenburg") offers a wide range of funding programmes. These range from investment incentives and infrastructure funding, promotion of innovation, foreign trade promotion to business finance programmes. The agency offers advisory services. It is closely linked to promotion of employment.

**Former Brandenburgians are returning home**

Professional development programmes are of increasing importance as Brandenburg is facing a significant shortage of young talent. Many companies are looking for skilled

personnel. This is why Brandenburg's school graduates enjoy excellent career opportunities in their homeland.

The good labour market and economic situation also incentivises increasing numbers of people who left Brandenburg during leaner years to return to their homeland. Returnee initiatives have been established throughout the state in their support. Welcome home! But also to all others: Welcome to Brandenburg! The future is here!

*Paper production at LEIPA in Schwedt*



*Reuther STC Fürstenwalde, specializing in tubular steel towers*

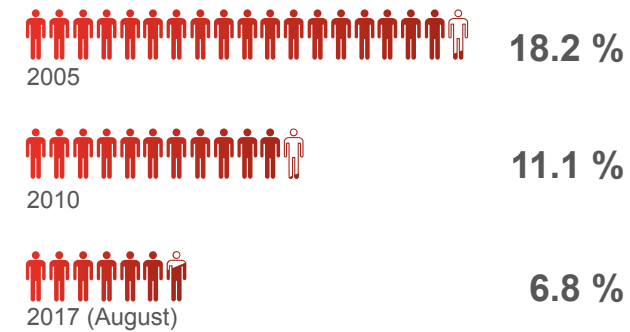


*An efficient and reliable rail network*



*Broadband deployment is being accelerated*

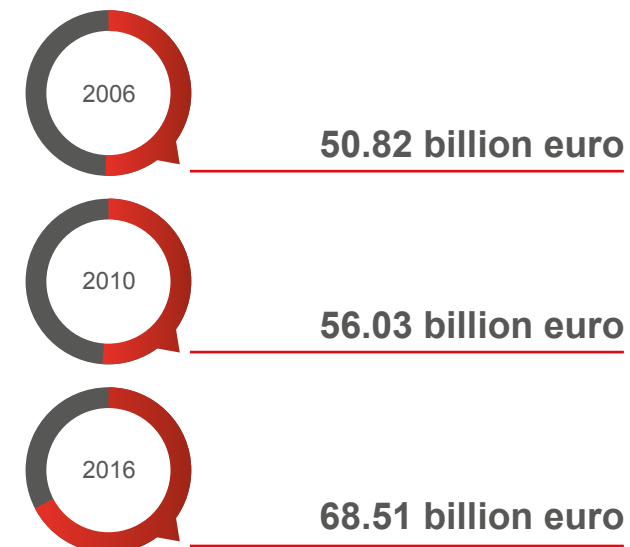
**Unemployment rate 2005-2017**



**Number of companies per business cluster**



**Gross domestic product (GDP)**



**Employment is up**

After the difficult years following the Wende and reunification, which forced the people of Brandenburg to deal with a complete change of social, economic and social conditions, the state has been prospering for many years now. This is particularly evidenced by the employment figures. Whereas as many as 18 of 100 Brandenburgians remained unemployed in 2005, the current unemployment rate is at 6.8 per cent (August 2017).

**Important business sectors**

Productive clusters have formed in Brandenburg and Berlin that efficiently bundle the core competences of the capital city region. The number of companies within the four most important clusters in Brandenburg is steadily increasing and employment also consistently shows a positive development. One example is the hospitality and tourism sector, which has become a veritable employment and turnover powerhouse with over 60,000 jobs and 92.3 million day trips annually within and to Brandenburg.

**Brandenburg is growing**

Brandenburg's GDP is developing very positively. It has more than tripled since the German reunification, when it was at about EUR 20 billion. The reason for this is the innovation power that is mainly shaped by one of the densest research and development infrastructures in Europe. Yet the diligence and creative power of the people of Brandenburg are equal drivers behind a development that makes us proud.





# ORGANIC GALORE BRANDENBURG



A brand in demand: asparagus from Beelitz



Organic cattle farming is on the rise



Internationally renowned: Spreewald gherkins



“I’m proud to be a farmer in Brandenburg. We love tradition and our local customs, but we’re at home in the digital world as well.”

Hanka Mittelstädt (\*1987)

The Uckermark native manages a farm in northern Brandenburg and serves as the CEO of Brandenburg’s agricultural marketing association ‘pro agro’.

Genuinely Brandenburg – Beelitz asparagus and Spreewald gherkins are the region’s most famous delicacies. However, much more grows on Brandenburg’s fields. Farmers engage in modern agriculture and animal husbandry.

In the 18th century King Frederick the Great introduced the a new South American wonder food to Prussia: the potato. This vegetable, cultivated on the king’s orders, has flourished and become a staple of the local cuisine. To this day, Brandenburgians commemorate Frederick by putting potatoes on his tombstone.

And there is still more. Bright red tomatoes from Werder, sea buckthorn from Petzow glowing orange from afar, green and red apples from all across the state and juicy, yellow pears not just from Ribbeck as described by the writer Theodor

Fontane. To ensure all is well pollinated, many busy bee colonies are kept throughout the state, even at the government campus in Potsdam.

### More organic farming than anywhere else in Germany

Even beer brewing is again experiencing a boom. Over the past couple of years more than two dozen small and craft breweries have been established in the Prignitz, Lausitz and Uckermark regions of Brandenburg. And new ones are constantly springing up. Yet there is also wine. The regional label ‘Brandenburger Landwein’ was awarded nationwide approval in 2009.

About 40,000 farmers engage in modern agriculture and animal husbandry on extensive fields. About eleven per cent of the land in Brandenburg is managed according to strict

organic farming guidelines. This is more than almost anywhere else in Germany.

Great value is placed on regional brands and local patriotism. The objective is to keep transport routes short. The agricultural cluster is one of Brandenburg’s most important industry sectors with some 3,500 businesses, ranging from agriculture, food and beverages to logistics and commerce.

### ‘Made in Brandenburg’ indicates top quality

Agriculture naturally also includes animal husbandry. City children can discover real cows, where milk comes from and how it is processed. Brandenburgian farmers have set themselves the objective of species-appropriate husbandry. And visitors are more than welcome – for instance at the Open Farm Day, the Brandenburg Country Outing event, the Beelitz

Asparagus Festival, the Werder Tree Blossom Festival, numerous harvest festivals and the Brandenburgian Agricultural Show in Paaren.

### VEGETABLES FROM BRANDENBURG

**EXPORT** Asparagus is king: some 17,000 metric tons were harvested in 2017. In 1991, the crop was only 800 metric tons.

**MARKET** Berlin is Brandenburg’s largest organic food market: most of the organic produce is sold in Germany’s capital.

**MORE INFORMATION** [proagro.de](http://proagro.de)



# FILMS GALORE BRANDENBURG



German Chancellor Angela Merkel with Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg during a shoot for 'Bridge of Spies' Glienicke Bridge in Potsdam.

Lights, camera, action! Babelsberg, a suburb of Potsdam, is the cradle of the German film industry. The arc lamps lit up for the first time there on 12 February 1912 for the silent film 'The Dance of Death' with Asta Nielsen. Later classic films such as 'Metropolis' by Fritz Lang and 'The Blue Angel' with Marlene Dietrich made the UFA Studios a capital of the film industry. Nearby, the film-stars' magnificent villas on Potsdam's Griebnitzsee still bear evidence of that period's glamour.

## The Potsdam dream factory is once again in operation

Yet the glamour has by no means faded, even though some difficult decades followed. The Nazis abused the studios as a propaganda machine for their inhuman reign of violence. Conversely, during the GDR period, some filmmakers managed to produce films of marked cultural value beyond the state-prescribed specifications. However, some were immediately banned, such as Frank Beyer's 'Trace of Stones' with Manfred Krug.

This site of dream worlds was in danger of disappearing after 1990. The Babelsberg studios were ultimately saved by a lot of skill, political reason and some luck. With the help of

partners such as the broadcaster Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg (rbb), the funding agency Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, various production companies and the Film University Konrad Wolf, Babelsberg has again become a powerful media site and world-renowned shooting location – for international blockbusters, auteur films and television series.



No wonder, for the studios provide an excellent art department ('Grand Budapest Hotel') and the combined federal states of Berlin and Brandenburg optimal sets, ranging from the pulsating metropolis ('Berlin Station') to inspired locations in the March ('Enemy at the Gates') and quiet spots far out in the country ('The White Ribbon'). Three other examples that were shot in Babelsberg: 'The Pianist' by Roman



“It was a real thrill to work in the Babelsberg studios. I was really taken by the place. The back lot was fantastic.”

Quentin Tarantino (\*1963)

The cult director filmed 'Inglourious Basterds' in Babelsberg. According to a 2016 BBC poll the film is one of the 100 greatest productions of the 21st century.

Polanski, parts of the 'Bourne' series with Matt Damon and Steven Spielberg's 'Bridge of Spies' with Glienicke Bridge as the film's eponymous 'main character'.

Other actors who have enjoyed working in Babelsberg include George Clooney, Cate Blanchett, Tilda Swinton and Tom Hanks. And many who came to Babelsberg have taken awards home: Academy Awards, Golden Globes, Golden Lions, Palms and many others.

Germany's first and most successful daily soap 'Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten' ('Good Times, Bad Times') has been produced here since 1992. And since that time it probably has had a larger aggregate audience than any Hollywood production. Interested film fans can watch the (almost) daily shoots.

That is part of the tour of the Filmpark Babelsberg next to the studios, which is visited by about 330,000 visitors per year. Add to that a stunt show and a 4-D cinema. Action!

## MOVIE MAKING BRANDENBURG

**FUNDING** Every euro of public funds invested in the film industry yields five euros for the capital city region.

**HISTORY** The Potsdam Film Museum tells the story of the industry.

**MORE INFORMATION** [medienboard.de](http://medienboard.de)

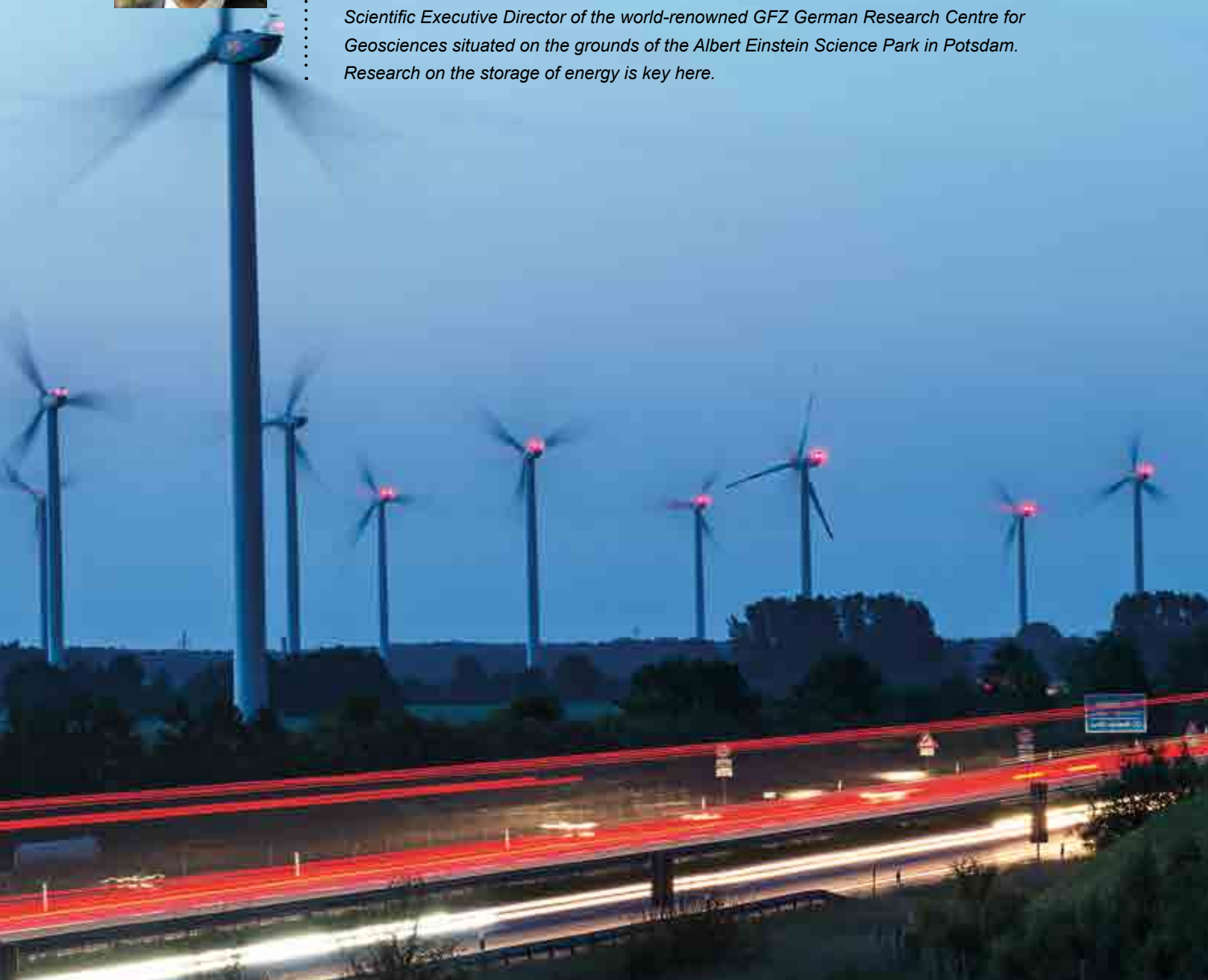




“For a sustainable energy provision we need stable grids and storage solutions that can absorb huge amounts of heat and power. Otherwise this won’t work.”

Prof. Reinhard F. Hüttel (\*1957)

Scientific Executive Director of the world-renowned GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences situated on the grounds of the Albert Einstein Science Park in Potsdam. Research on the storage of energy is key here.



# ENERGY GALORE BRANDENBURG



Germany's largest solar park in Lieberose



Opencast mines are turned into a man-made lake district



The Lausitzring: now a test route for driverless cars



Ecological solutions – for humans and storks

Electricity comes out of the socket. And where is it made? Frequently in the energy region of Brandenburg. Over a tenth of the electricity used in Germany today is produced here; about two thirds is exported, mostly to Berlin.

Brandenburg has an excellent reputation in the field of renewable energy and has received several awards for this and the climate protection it thereby supports. On windy and sunny days 130 per cent of Brandenburg's demand could be satisfied by green energy – significantly more than needed. Wind turbines rotate everywhere in the state. In many places, solar energy is harvested; Brandenburg is home to Germany's largest solar park, generating environmentally friendly power. The plant is located on the former dumping sites of a lignite opencast mine in the southern part of the state, Lusatia.

### Pioneering renewables

In the same region the most modern power plant park in Europe continues to safely and reliably generate power from lignite around the clock. Yet lignite mining in Brandenburgian Lusatia has notably declined. It has been reduced to about 40 million metric tons per year. However, lignite-based electricity will still be needed in the foreseeable future as a bridge technology, since wind and solar are not yet reliable energy sources at all hours. In the event of a 'dark calm', a

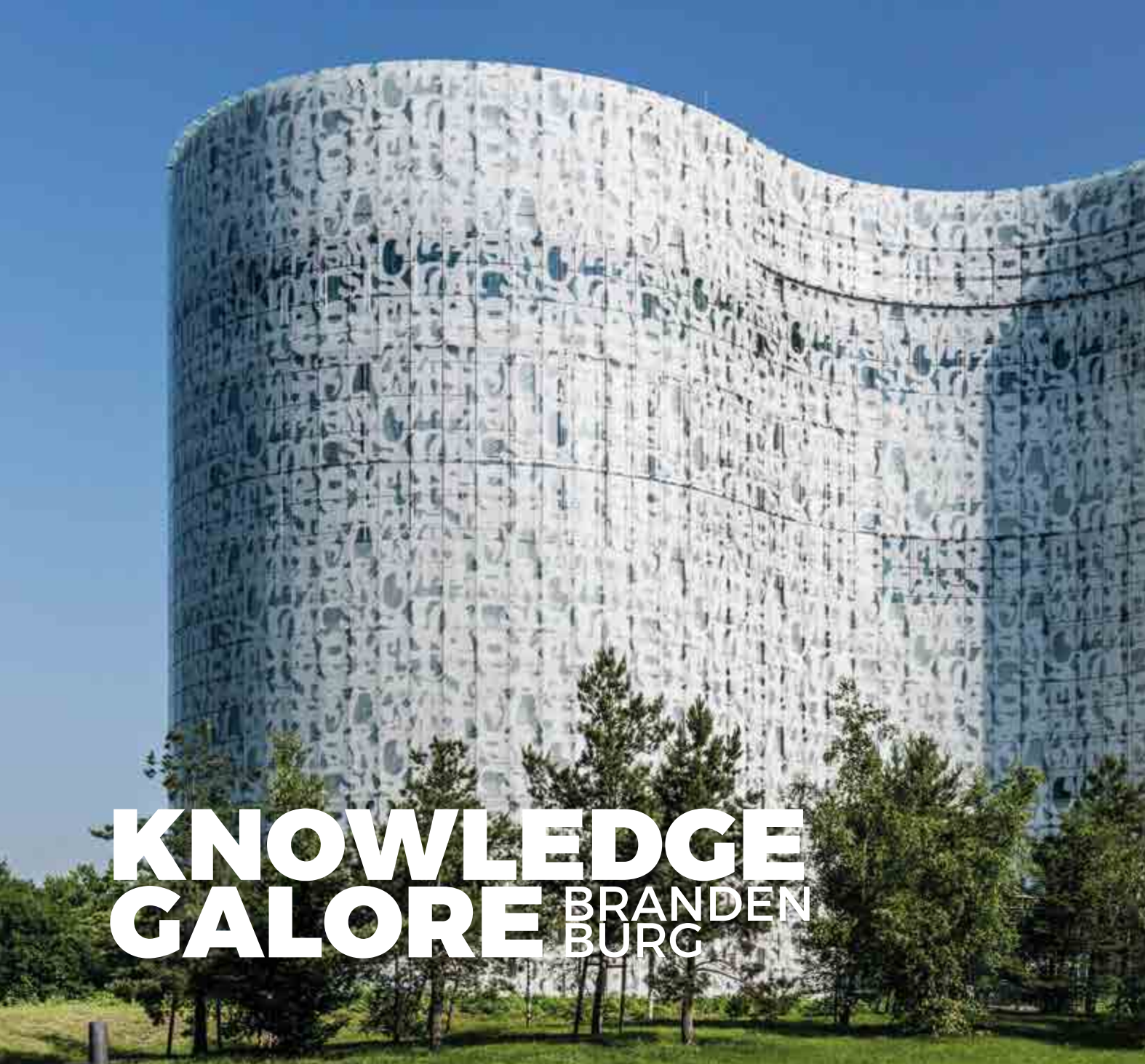
period without either wind or sunshine, no power can be fed into the grid.

This will only change once the key issue of power supply has been solved: storage. It is the subject of intensive research in Brandenburg, for example, at the GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences in Potsdam, and first practical applications are being tested near Prenzlau in the Uckermark and elsewhere. The state supports this research, so crucial for our future, since it aims at being a pioneer in the field of energy storage.

### The recumbent Eiffel Tower

The change in energy production is irreversible. And it is visible, illustrated by the former conveyor bridge F60, for instance. This 'recumbent Eiffel Tower' made of steel weighs 11,000 metric tons, is 549 yards (502 m) long and 223 yards (204 m) wide. From the 262 feet (80 m) high visitor platform visitors can overlook the vast expanse of the former opencast mine. F60 is a symbol of mining and coal production that have influenced professional and social life in Lusatia for 150 years and continue to provide employment for many Brandenburgians. Behind F60, a lake is 'growing'. It is one of many as former opencast mines are being flooded, giving birth to the Lusatian Lake District.





# KNOWLEDGE GALORE BRANDENBURG

Modern university, exciting architecture: the library of Brandenburg's technical university in Cottbus



“Innovation needs research and education. Digitalization paired with entrepreneurial spirit and pragmatism from Brandenburg – that is the recipe for sustainable future success.”

Prof. Dr. Katharina Hölzle (\*1974)

The industrial engineer holds the chair for Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship at the University of Potsdam. She is the founder of the Entrepreneurship Academy.



Research at Golm, a scientific centre



Open air studies in Brandenburg an der Havel

Science and research set the course for Brandenburg's future. Businesses profit from the innovation power of the scientific and research institutions. Students are given best prospects for the future.

Over 47,000 students are enrolled at the state's four universities and four colleges of applied sciences. They are augmented by two public administration colleges and four private universities. Together, they offer some 350 degree courses. A special feature are dual degree courses: here, young people study at university and train in a company at the same time. This ensures excellent practical relevance and studying becomes more varied.

### Internationally renowned institutions

Germany's only film university 'Konrad Wolf' in Babelsberg creates a special emphasis with numerous media-related degree courses ranging from animation direction and film music to film and television production. The University for Sustainable Development in Eberswalde may well be Germany's 'greenest' university. The Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg offers comprehensive scientific competence, for instance, in the fields of energy and biotechnology. Its English-language course 'World Heritage Studies' is unique.




The European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder) likewise boasts excellent international contacts; it awards Polish and German degrees. The University of Potsdam, the largest in the state, maintains excellent links to outstanding extra-mural research institutions and thereby offers its students and junior staff additional prospects.

All major German research organisations are represented in Brandenburg with a total of nineteen institutes: Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres, Leibniz Association and Max Planck Society. This puts the state in a very good position both nationally and internationally.

For instance, the GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences in Potsdam is internationally leading in the field of earthquake research and early warning. The Leibniz Institute IHP – Innovations for High Performance Microelectronics in Frankfurt (Oder) develops leading-edge technology for the semiconductor and automotive industries, aviation and telemedicine.

Other research institutions include the private Hasso Plattner Institute, which became a faculty of the University of Potsdam in 2017. Here, students can study courses such as 'Design Thinking' – creative thinking outside the box to get ahead. Its students come to Brandenburg from all over the world.

### SCIENCE IN BRANDENBURG

-  **INVESTMENT** Brandenburg invests over EUR 500 million annually in science and research.
-  **DEGREE COURSES** Some 350 degree courses are on offer in Brandenburg.
-  **MORE INFORMATION** [studieren-in-brandenburg.de](http://studieren-in-brandenburg.de)





# FAMILIES GALORE BRANDENBURG



“The true meaning of life lies in people getting together.”

Regine Hildebrandt (1941 – 2001)

*Brandenburg’s first Minister for Labour, Social affairs, Health and Women provided many people with support and courage in the difficult development years after 1990. She became known as the ‘Mother Courage of the East’ and established the Landesstiftung ‘Familien in Not’, a foundation to help families in difficult circumstances.*

The family-centered region. For us, the family is where people share their lives, have the centre of their lives and assume responsibility for each other across the generations. Usually this is the traditional family with children; however, society is developing – which is why single parents, patchwork families and same-sex couples equally are all part of this new image of the family.

Brandenburg’s aim is to make the region particularly child- and family-friendly – which it already is in many places. An infrastructure appropriate for families, a good education provision and a tolerant, attentive society are prerequisites for this. Obviously the state cannot and must not do everything. The families themselves have a responsibility here. Yet the state and municipalities have the obligation of creating good framework conditions for families. And the alliance ‘Gesund Aufwachsen’ (Growing up Healthily) ensures health from an early age.

### Better life chances for all

Basic requirements are the compatibility of family and work, the economic empowerment of families and a child- and family-friendly infrastructure. The guiding principle is equal opportunities for all forms of living together with children and across generations. As people increasingly are blessed with a longer lifespan, the quality of care becomes ever more important. Individuals requiring care ought to be able to remain in their familiar social environment for as long as possible. Examples are care ‘in the community’ and assisted living communities for senior citizens.





*The doctor calls: home visits will remain an important part of health care provision*

Young doctors are granted financial incentives for choosing to work in specific rural regions for several years. Hospitals offer outpatient care. This, too, helps families.

In 2017, the government of Brandenburg passed a comprehensive family and child policy programme comprising forty targeted measures. These include multigenerational houses, the regional 'Netzwerke Gesunde Kinder' (Healthy Children Networks), the statewide 'Lokale Bündnisse für Familie' (Local Alliances for Family) and the 'Netzwerk Gesunde Kita' (Healthy Nursery Network). The foundation 'Hilfe für Familien in Not' (Help for Families in Need) supports families in difficult circumstances.

**Focus on family policy**

Brandenburg has a very dense network of daycare centres. Additional carers are being hired to further lower the ratio of staff to children. This is good for all: the children and the staff. At the same time, efforts are underway for rendering daycare free for parents.

Primary school usually comprises six years. The school system in Brandenburg is flexible and offers a wide range of educational qualifications. No matter what social status the parents

have: all ought to have the same opportunities. No child must be left behind!

This is why targeted programmes provide early intervention for youths who are in danger of dropping out. They need a prospect for their future, even if they are without a chance. This is the active welfare state in action.

Recently, a new project has been implemented at select schools: school nurses look after the children's health. Depending on the type of school and other factors, pupils can attain their university entrance qualification after twelve or thirteen years. After school the successful transition to vocational training or a degree course is particularly important.

**Education is the key to a successful future**

All this requires committed, qualified and motivated teachers. Consequently, about 1,000 new teachers are recruited by the government of Brandenburg every year. They are urgently required, for once again there are more births in Brandenburg, increasing numbers of families move into the region, and the children from migrant families obviously also have a right to a good education. They, too, will be granted opportunities in Brandenburg.



*Celebration to thank mentors in the Healthy Children Networks*



*Joint learning at the Weidenhof primary school in Potsdam*



*Klinikum Dahme-Spreewald*



*Looking to Brandenburg's future*

**FAMILIES IN BRANDENBURG**

**FAMILIES** Some 336,000 families with children live in Brandenburg, including 182,000 married couples, 57,000 civil partnerships and 96,000 single parents.

**CHILD CARE** 57 per cent of children under 3 attend a crèche, and 97 per cent of older children attend a nursery until the start of school.

**MEDICAL CARE** 3,760 doctors provide outpatient care.

**PREVENTION / REHABILITATION** There are 27 facilities providing preventive care and rehabilitation. They play an important part in health care provision.

**MORE INFORMATION** [healthcapital.de](http://healthcapital.de)  
[familienbuendnisse-land-brandenburg.de](http://familienbuendnisse-land-brandenburg.de)



# COMMUNITY GALORE BRANDENBURG



Presentation of an award for volunteers supporting the integration of refugees. The prize is sponsored by the F.C. Flick Foundation against Xenophobia, Racism and Intolerance. In 2017 it was awarded by Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier at the State Chancellery in Potsdam.



“Because this is about people! Only a society marked by solidarity can survive.”

Katja Ebstein (\*1945)

In 2004, the singer (*“Wunder gibt es immer wieder”, ‘Ein Indiojunge aus Peru’*) established the *Katja Ebstein Stiftung*, a foundation for disadvantaged children and youths in Berlin and Brandenburg. She is also greatly involved in the integration of migrants in Brandenburg.

Every third Brandenburgian over the age of 14 does volunteer work. Many important projects would not be possible without these volunteers. And what is particularly gratifying is the increasing number of youths amongst them. Volunteering is not a question of age. To the contrary: volunteering keeps people young and fit. Volunteer work is social wealth.

Many thousands are actively engaged in volunteer fire brigades throughout the state. They do more than put out fires. Especially in rural areas, they provide an anchor for social structures, community life and youth work. This also applies to the many sports clubs in villages and towns that would not have a future without volunteers. Others engage in youth work, in the preservation and care of the natural environment and cultural assets, in the social sector and refugee relief. Family mentors campaign for children’s health and development in Brandenburg’s statewide ‘Netzwerke Gesunde Kinder’ (Healthy Children Networks).

### Respect and appreciation

Since 2007, the state government has been honouring the ‘Volunteer of the Month’. The first was Christina Tast, Chairwoman of the Association for the Promotion of Cultural Life ‘Festland’ in the village of Klein Leppin. She continues in this role to this day. The 120th Volunteer of the Month was Rüdiger Ungewiß from Gransee (Oberhavel) in August 2017. He established the local community bus there in 2004 which ensures that people regularly get from A to B in rural regions.

Brandenburg’s culture of acknowledgement also includes an annual volunteering reception hosted by the state government and the *Landtag* (state parliament) as well as the joint



Our youth fire brigades provide protection

*Ehrenamtskarte* for the capital city region. This volunteer card is good value as it enables admission at concession prices to numerous institutions and events in Berlin and Brandenburg. Of course the state supports volunteers and their clubs also by other means, such as insurance protection, advanced training support, networking and project funding. Best not just watch – join in! For volunteering is the glue that holds a society together.

### VOLUNTEERS IN BRANDENBURG

**INVOLVEMENT** Over 840,000 people in Brandenburg are actively engaged in volunteer work.

**ADVANTAGES** Some 175 partners offer rebates for cardholders of the *Ehrenamtskarte* Berlin-Brandenburg for volunteers.

**MORE INFORMATION** [ehrenamt-in-brandenburg.de](http://ehrenamt-in-brandenburg.de)