



Country guide for new EPIET/EUPHEM fellows

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[GERMANY]

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Disclaimer: The guide is intended to provide general information only. A fellow should always seek individual and / or professional advice tailored to their personal situation.

Please note: This is a living document. If you find any information to be incorrect or out of date, or there is anything you wish to add, please amend the guide (and date it accordingly) and send the new version to your cohort representative for uploading onto the EAN country guides website.

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1. Summary: The first steps to take when moving to Germany

These are the proposed steps to take when moving to Germany based on the experience of fellows from previous cohorts. More detailed descriptions and explanations of each part of the process can be found throughout the document.

1.1 Before you arrive in Germany, we advise:

- Start refreshing your German
- Gather documents that might be useful for your registration, MSAE inscription and your future work and rental contracts (more information in the corresponding sections of this guide)
- Book an appointment online at the *Bürgeramt* for your registration in the city
- Start looking for accommodation (ask previous fellows, start exploring options online to get an idea of the current rental market situation)
- If you already have a place to live, get quotes from different removal companies (at least three)
- Contact previous fellows (last page of this guide) in case of doubts

1.2 After you arrive in Germany, we advise:

- Look for accommodation (you might have to stay in a temporal accommodation until you find something more definitive, make sure that registration "*Anmeldung*" is possible)
- Sign the work contract (you will be guided through the document and formalities required)
- Get quotes from different removal companies (at least three)
- Complete the occupational health assessments as required (you will be timely informed about it)
- Attend the introductory course for PAE/EPIET/EUPHEM fellows in Germany (either in presence or online, usually the first week of the fellowship)

Prior to commencing the fellowship programme, we strongly recommend that new fellows refer to the '[Administrative Decision EU-track ECDC Fellowship Programme Cohort 2023.docx \(europa.eu\)](#)' document in which further information is provided on contracts, rights and duties of fellows and other administrative details.

2. Registration in Germany

*Residing as an EU citizen in another EU country: “As an EU citizen, you have the right to move to any EU country to live, work, study, or look for a job. You can stay in another EU country **for up to 3 months without registering** there but you may need to report your presence. The only requirement is to hold a **valid national identity card or passport**. If you want to stay longer than 3 months, you may need to register your residence.” Details for each EU country can be found here: https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/residence/residence-rights/index_en.htm*

Germany requires all residents to be registered at an address, and you are expected to register within two weeks of arrival (and unregister from your previous address). The registration is essential in your big move, because it is the starting point for many administrative procedures (taxes, social security).

This registration (*Anmeldung*) is done at the municipality office (*Bürgeramt*). You will also get your tax ID (*Steuer ID*) at this time if you do not already have one. If you change apartments you will have to reregister. It is recommended to book an appointment for an *Anmeldung* for your first week, even if you haven't found an apartment yet - you can easily cancel the appointment, while getting a new one might be harder. If you didn't manage to book one in advance, keep an eye on the calendar because other people might cancel their appointment. You have most chance to get an appointment if you check the calendar early morning or late afternoon when appointments are refreshed. Also, check out the different locations in the city.

To the *Bürgeramt*, you'll need to bring:

- The **registration form**: „Anmeldeformular“/ „Meldeschein“. You can find it online (not always available in printed form in the Bürgeramt):
 - Berlin: https://www.berlin.de/formularverzeichnis/?formular=/labo/zentrale-einwohnerangelegenheiten/assets/anmeldung_bei_der_meldebehoerde.pdf
 - München: [Anmeldung Meldeschein 20220622.pdf \(muenchen.de\)](#)
 - Hannover: as of 2023, this document was not required, but any relevant documentation can be found [here](#).
- Note: If you state you have a religion in this form you will have to pay church tax (*Kirchensteuer*)
- Your **passport or ID**
- A document that provides a **confirmation from the landlord/owner that you have moved into the apartment**. You can also find it online:
 - Berlin: https://www.berlin.de/formularverzeichnis/?formular=/labo/zentrale-einwohnerangelegenheiten/assets/mdb-f402544-20161102_wohnunggeberbestaetigung.pdf
 - München: more info here: [Wohnsitz anmelden oder ummelden – Landeshauptstadt München \(muenchen.de\)](#)
 - Hannover: <https://serviceportal.hannover-stadt.de/medien/dokumente/wohnunggeberbestaetigung.pdf?20230329113806>
- Note: Some employees at the Bürgerämter do not speak English (so it can be useful to bring somebody who speaks German)

Some Bürgerämter will also require:

- The flat rental contract
- A copy of your civil status

In Berlin

You can find the address, book an appointment, and find more information on the Bürgeramt closest to you or to RKI at: [Anmeldung einer Wohnung - Dienstleistungen - Service Berlin - Berlin.de](#)

- Note: It is very hard to find an appointment for the registration and sometimes you will have to wait several weeks until you find an appointment. Try to get an appointment in any office in the city and check frequently for free spots to increase your chances. There are some online bots that can help you with finding an appointment and sending you a notification once an appointment becomes available. (For example: [Anmeldung appointment finder - All About Berlin](#))

In Munich

You can book your registration appointment and download all forms at [Residence Registration \(muenchen.de\)](#) if you live in Munich. If you live in Oberschleißheim, check the local Bürgeramt there.

In Hannover

You can [schedule an appointment online](#). However, immediate availability is often limited, and appointments may only be accessible in a few weeks' time. It's advisable to book an appointment promptly once you have a confirmed move-in date. This way, you'll obtain an appointment confirmation, which serves as evidence that any delay in registration beyond the two-week limit is not your fault but rather due to the citizens' office.

3. Finding accommodation

Before contacting an estate or housing agent, it is a good idea to contact the current EPIET/EUPHEM fellow(s) or a named contact at the host site, who may know of a place that is available to rent.

3.1 Areas to live

In Berlin: You will work in the area Wedding. When considering transport times on Google Maps do remember that these may actually be considerably longer in real life, particularly in the winter months. If you like to cycle then this is an excellent way to get around Berlin and possible for most of the year.

- Close to work:
 - Wedding, neighborhood where the institute is located, usually cheaper and with a lot of restaurants and bars.
 - Mitte, with lots of shops and cafés, very popular and therefore more expensive
 - Moabit, up and coming and very close to the Institute.
 - Prenzlauer Berg is very family friendly. Highly demanded and becoming more and more expensive. Well-connected to the Institute through public transport.
- Further away:
 - There are many great areas to live in – it depends on your preferences. Go explore if possible. Current fellows will be happy to guide you and it is best to check with one of them if you are unsure about the area you are looking at. Most people will prefer an apartment inside the “Ring” or close to S-bahn stations (Light rail network) that connect with the rest of the city.

In München (information from 2022): The Epidemiology department within LGL has recently moved to central Munich at Lazarettstraße 67. LGL's main site is still in Oberschleißheim, which is also where the laboratory is located. Make sure to double check where your main location is! (as of 2022, all EPIET/PAE fellows are located in the Lazarettstraße).

- The Lazarettstraße is 7 min and another 5 min walk from Munich Central station by tram 20, or alternatively a 3 min and 5-10 min walk by metro U1 or U7 (closest stop is Maillingerstraße). The site at Oberschleißheim is a 20 min train ride from Munich central station to Oberschleißheim (S1) with a 5 min bus ride (292) or a 15-20 min walk to the site.
- If you will be mainly working in the lab, you could live closer to work in Oberschleißheim (cheaper, but rural and far from Munich), Feldmöching (one S-Bahn-stop away from Oberschleißheim or 5km

walking/running/cycling, and has the benefits from a U-Bahn connection [U2]) or Moosach (also on the S1 and connected to the U3-line).

- Alternatively, or if located mainly in Lazarettstraße, the following areas of Munich are recommendable:
 - Schwabing: student district, with lots of small shops and cafés. Very popular and therefore more expensive
 - Lehel: old town Munich, pricy
 - Maxvorstadt: nice area with many restaurants/cafés, close to the university and very central
 - Isarvorstadt-Ludwigvorstadt: trendier, along the river, very nice.
 - Haidhausen and Au – on the east side of the river, nice, but further away from the institute.
 - Sendling: a bit further out, more residential and affordable, but nice (especially around Harras) with some more alternative spots and close to nature
- Tips on the boroughs:
http://www.muenchen.de/Stadtleben/Accommodation_Residents/12244/02aboroughsinfrastruere.html

In Hannover: You can find a [map with the districts of Hanover on Wikipedia](#), and the NLGA is located in Linden-Süd. Hanover is a rather small city, and getting around by bike is quite convenient. Many parts of the city are suitable for living, with a reasonable commute to work. For public transport in Hanover, the ÜSTRA is responsible. If you want to check the connection of an apartment to the NLGA stop (“Allerweg”), you have several options. Google Maps, [ÜSTRA](#), and [Öffi](#) (an Android app that works well for many German cities) are useful tools.

- **Linden-Limmer (Linden-Nord, Limmer, Linden-Mitte, Linden-Süd):** Linden-Nord, along with Limmer and Linden Mitte, are vibrant districts known for their rich cultural scene and diverse community. The residents in these districts tend to lean towards the left politically. These districts have a history of activism and community engagement, with discussions focusing on social justice/equality and sustainability. There's a high proportion of international residents, and Linden-Nord is particularly popular with students. Linden-Nord and Limmer (tram line 10) as well as Linden-Mitte (tram line 9) are primarily connected to public transport through single tram lines. Other central districts usually have three tram lines. Additionally, tram line 10 does not have a direct stop at Kröpcke, which is the major interchange and transportation hub in the city center. This could be a disadvantage if you don't plan to rely mainly on biking. Linden-Süd is better connected to public transport (three tram lines and stops at Kröpcke, Aegiedientorplatz, and Hauptbahnhof) and is the district where the NLGA is located. Rental prices in all districts of Linden-Limmer generally provide a more affordable alternative compared to some other neighborhoods in Hanover. The housing market in Linden-Limmer is quite competitive, and apartments there are often passed on in the private sphere, meaning there are few public advertisements.
- **Südstadt-Bult (Südstadt, Bult):** Südstadt-Bult has the highest number of schools compared to other neighborhoods in Hanover, making it an ideal location for families with children. Rental prices in Südstadt and Bult generally fall into the mid to upper range compared to other neighborhoods in the city. Similar to Linden-Süd, the tram connection is excellent (tram lines 1, 2, and 8 with stops at Kröpcke, Aegiedientorplatz, and Hauptbahnhof). The neighborhood is quite popular for colleagues from infectious disease epidemiology.
- **Nordstadt:** Nordstadt's convenient location near the university makes it a popular choice for students to live, study and socialize. Like Linden-Limmer, Nordstadt has a comparatively high proportion of international residents. Rental prices in Nordstadt generally offer more affordable options compared to some other areas in the city. However, it can be challenging to find suitable rental accommodations, especially during peak periods such as the start of the academic year (September 1st). If you are looking for a room in a shared apartment, you will however find it most likely in the Nordstadt. Nordstadt is well connected by tram lines 4, 5, and 6, with stops at Kröpcke and Aegiedientorplatz.
- **Vahrenwald-List:** Vahrenwald is known for its relatively low rental prices compared to other

neighborhoods and its multicultural character. However, it's important to note that not all areas in Vahrenwald are equally attractive. Some aspects that may affect the desirability of certain parts include proximity to the railway tracks, the Continental factory, busy roads, and the presence of commercial and industrial areas. On the other hand, Vahrenwald benefits from its central location and excellent transportation connections (tram lines 1, 2, and 8 with stops at Kröpcke, Aegidientorplatz, and Hauptbahnhof).

The List presents a different picture. This district is very popular because of its well-preserved old buildings from the Wilhelminian era and its proximity to one of Europe's largest city forests, the Eilenriede. It's also a very central district with good transport connections (tram lines 3, 7, and 9, providing a direct connection to the NLGA). As you might have guessed, the List is also known for its relatively high cost of living compared to other neighborhoods in Hanover.

- **Mitte (Mitte, Calenberger Neustadt, Oststadt, Zoo):** Mitte, located in the heart of Hanover, is a bustling municipality with a limited housing supply. When considering apartment options, it's advisable to avoid the vicinity surrounding the Steintor stop and the area behind the main station towards Oststadt due to the lively nightlife, red-light milieu and drug activity. However, from the beginning of Lister Meile, the Oststadt is definitely a very nice residential area again. The Zoo district mainly consists of expensive villas.

3.2 Type of housing

The first thing to decide on, is if you want to bring all your belongings from home to the host country and rent an empty apartment – or just bring the essentials and instead rent a furnished apartment. Renting a furnished apartment can be as expensive as renting an empty one and buying furniture, especially if there is a commission involved. Compare the total price over the two years for a better measurement. Apartments in Germany usually come without kitchen interiors. So:

- Bring your own
- Buy your own (e.g. at IKEA or second hand/"[Kleinanzeigen](#)")
- Buy the one that is already there (a so called *Ablöse*) if the former tenant wants to sell it.
- Find an apartment that includes a built-in kitchen (*Einbauküche* or EBK) available as search option in most internet flat search engines.

WG's are very common in Germany. A group of people shares an apartment. 'Zweck-WG' means a more study-oriented WG, whereas 'Kein Zweck-WG' indicates that the tenants like to meet up in the common areas and talk the night away.

3.3 Housing contract and typical terms and conditions of renting

- *Kaltmiete* (base rent): The *Kaltmiete* refers to the basic rent, which is the amount you pay to the landlord for the actual use of the apartment. It does not include additional costs such as utilities and ancillary expenses.
- *Nebenkosten* (ancillary costs) usually include heating and water, sometimes hot water expenditure or parking, but rarely electricity - plus all the costs for managing the apartment building, washing machines, elevator, waste disposal, etc. Always check what is included!
- *Warmmiete* is the total cost of renting an apartment, including the base rent (*Kaltmiete*) and the ancillary costs (*Nebenkosten*). It's worth noting that *Heizkosten* (heating costs) may or may not be included in the *Warmmiete* and can significantly impact the total expenses. Make sure which type of rent is listed in the ad. It may be worth working out what the cost will be over the whole two-year period in addition to the monthly rental.

- A *Kaution* (deposit) is common when renting an apartment. It is usually two/three months *Kaltmiete*, and is returned when you move out. You usually receive interest for the money that is being held for you.
 - *Mindestmietdauer* (minimum rental period): This refers to the minimum duration for which you are required to rent the apartment. Landlords may specify a minimum period, such as six months or one year, during which you cannot terminate the lease.
 - *Staffelmiete* (graduated rent): *Staffelmiete* refers to a rental agreement where the rent increases in predetermined increments over a specified period. The gradual increase in rent may lead to significantly higher costs over time, which can impact your budget and affordability.
 - *Provision* (commissions) are non-refundable, and can be up to 2.38 months *Kaltmiete*. The fee is due upon signing the lease. Not all flats require a commission to be paid.
 - *Dauerauftrag* (standing order or recurring payment) means that the rent is withdrawn from your account automatically. It is preferred by most landlords.
 - *Ablöse* – Things you can buy from the former tenant, usually subsidized prices, but less often negotiable. Common for kitchens (*EBK*, *Einbauküche*).
- **Important in Berlin:** it is increasingly common to find apartment sublets and rentals in which official registration is not possible ("*ohne Anmeldung*"). This is usually illegal and should be avoided.

3.4 Necessary documents to get accommodation

To apply to rent a flat you need a copy of your passport, information about your income and prove that you have no previous debts for the apartment or public utility payments. A letter from RKI/host site detailing your income and employment status is usually enough for some landlords (if you don't have the contract yet), but not all. In addition, many landlords like a SCHUFA (German credit report).

Make sure the rent, *Nebenkosten*, the state of the apartment (damages) and what is included (built in kitchen, bath tub, etc.) is stated clearly in the contract. It is not uncommon for apartments to be newly painted when a new tenant moves in. Check if you are required to repaint the place before moving out. Prices vary wildly for seemingly similar flats so check with a local if the price doesn't seem right. You will might also need to open a German bank account in order to deposit the security deposit for your flat. Alternatively, if you have European bank account (in Euro or different currency) you can also transfer security deposit for the flat.

- Important tip: Once you have found a place to stay, get a name tag for your mailbox (intercom) as soon as possible. In Germany the mail is only allowed to be delivered if the name on the mailbox is exactly the same as the name on the mail!
- **Some agencies or owners also ask for a "SCHUFA", which is a credit check to prove that you have no previous debts for apartments or public utility payments. If you have not lived in Germany previously, you cannot get this. If you do not have it, usually it helps a lot to provide more information about your financial situation or providing SCHUFA equivalent documents from your country of origin.**

In Berlin and München: The housing market is very tight. It is common to have some information prepared about you to give to the house owner during the visit or immediately after a viewing. Previous fellows prepared a little booklet (both in digital and paper format) with some information to be provided to the owner including: bank statement, last 3 months payment slips (if available) and work contract (if possible including net salary). Be aware of scams and do not hesitate to check with locals (for example, PAE Fellows) that everything looks legit.

3.5 Amenities: Internet, Telephone, Television, Gas, Electricity, Water, Heating etc.

Internet and Telephone

Most companies offer both internet (DSL or Cable) and telephone (Festnetz), and it's usually cheaper if you get both from the same company. For some companies a telephone connection and free calling with landlines within Germany comes as a bonus nowadays. Some even offer free calling with landlines for the entire EU. Some also offer mobile phone services. [Check24](#) is a good place to compare deals. Check with other people living around the area which firms give you the best reception. One fellow found that some companies had no reception at all in their flat. Another thing to consider for installing internet is that there may be quite a delay when you move in to getting it installed. At best you are looking at 4-6 weeks, some companies take even longer. Usually cable based internet can get installed more quickly (even within a week) than the ones that use telephone lines. This may affect which mobile contract you take as you can use your mobile as an internet hotspot with some contract/phone combinations. (Some companies also offer special temporary internet dongles for the time it takes them to install or deliver your internet connection.) You might want to consider getting a very cheap prepay phone until you have all the requisite documents to get a contract phone as will need one in your flat and bank search. Alternatively, you can also consider upgrading your phone plan to be able to hotspot yourself when you have issues during (or after) internet instalment in your apartment.

Companies:

- Fonix (recommended by previous fellows)
- Vodafone, cable-based internet, various (high) speeds available.
- O2
- Base
- Alice – complicated, bad reviews
- Deutsche Telekom, has good reviews, only offers internet using telephone lines.
- Kabel Deutschland

Television

Everybody pays for public radio and television; you'll receive a bill automatically (*Rundfunkbeitrag*). The cost is about 18 euro per month.

Electricity

You can use the [Check24](#) website to figure out who will provide you with the best deal for your specific flat. Once you get your flat, you should arrange a contract with an electricity company within 5 weeks. Otherwise you will be appointed to a standard company that is often not as cheap as the best deals you could get. (Should you wait longer than 5 weeks and get the standard supplier, that contract is easy to get out of. They only require a two week notice to get you out of the contract). To sign up (online or on the phone) you need your address and the number on your meter (*Zählernummer*) (which you should get from the land lord, or can see on the meter).

Some electricity firms:

- Vattenfall
- Lichtblick -www.oekostrom.de
- Eprimo (don't get a contract with them, very bad service)

Gas

You can use the [check24](#) website to figure out who will provide you with the best deal for your specific flat. Once you get your flat, you should arrange a contract with a gas company within 5 weeks. Otherwise you will be appointed to a standard company that is often not as cheap as the best deals you could get. (Should you wait longer than 5 weeks and get the standard supplier, that contract is easy to get out of. They only require a two week notice to get you out of the contract)

Some gas firms:

- Eprimo (don't get a contract with them, very bad service)

3.6 Furniture and household goods

Some places where you can buy furniture and other household goods are:

- IKEA
 - Butlers (decorative items for the home).
 - Saturn and Media Markt (electrical items etc.)
 - Home24
 - Ebay Kleinanzeigen (for second hand items)
- **In Berlin:** If you don't have a car you can use a furniture taxi to transport your goods home. Previous fellows experience with the IKEA-own delivery service has been consistently extremely poor. Ikea now offers a 'drive yourself delivery van' at reasonable prices. You can also find furniture and household goods offered close to your place on social media (i.e. Facebook groups such as 'Expats in Berlin', or on apps in your neighbourhood such as 'Nebenan').

3.7 Reimbursement of relocation expenses

*Eligible moving costs [for reimbursement] include removal of household goods and transportation costs for the fellow and family members from any place within the EU/EEA to the place of employment and from place of employment to any place within EU/EEA. Since 2022, fellows, are entitled to a maximum lump sum of **EUR 2 500** for fellows without family obligations or **EUR 3 500** for fellows with family obligations. This amount is split into two equal instalments, at the start and end of the Fellowship respectively. Kindly also note that the reimbursement to the fellow is done according to each host site's reimbursement policy, i.e. the host site may reimburse the fellow the actual costs incurred, provided they do not fall above the eligible amount, and not the lump sum.*

You will have to pay your removal expenses yourself, and then claim them back via the institute. Therefore, it is recommended to contact the person who is in charge of the grant agreement at the institute beforehand, to talk things through for smooth reimbursement. Remember – you might have to live somewhere while your things are in transit, which can take a couple of weeks. Therefore, some options are::

- a) Consider sending things before starting the fellowship, and temporarily live with a friend/family in your own country, or
- b) Find a furnished apartment (i.e. sublet, AirBnB) for the first month(s)/weeks and only bring your essentials, or
- c) Schedule the removal so that your things are in transit while you are in the 3-week introductory course

In Berlin: You will need to get three quotes from removal companies for RKI, who will then generally approve the cheapest one which meets your needs. There are many websites around that are linked up with removal companies that let you request and compare quota at several companies at the same time.

In München: Cohort 2021 fellow rented a van to move the stuff herself, and double-checked with LGL's HR department before the final booking to confirm reimbursement.

3.8 Useful links and websites

When it comes to finding an apartment, there are a few resources you can use. Most apartment advertisements are published on [ImmobilienScout24](https://www.immobilienscout24.de/), and you may also find additional offers

on [Kleinanzeigen](#) and [immowelt](#). If you're interested in shared flats (known as "WG" in German), [WG-Gesucht.de](#) is a popular website. It seems that you can also filter for shared flats on Kleinanzeigen. Keep in mind that apartments in Germany are usually rented without furniture, but if you're looking for something furnished, the German keyword to search for is "möbliert". "Zwischenmiete", also known as "Wohnen auf Zeit", refers to the practice of renting a property for a limited period of time. It typically involves renting a room or apartment from someone who is temporarily away or has an extra space available. It can be a practical solution when seeking immediate or short-term accommodation. The duration can range from a few weeks to several months, with some cases extending up to a year or more.

It is common for companies to advertise apartments at the same sites as private individuals. Ads from individuals are usually without commission, whereas some companies may charge a fee for the mediation. Other useful links are:

- <http://www.studenten-wg.de/> (flat shares with students)
 - <http://www.immowelt.de>
 - <http://immobilienmarkt.sueddeutsche.de>
 - <http://www.immobilienscout24.de>
 - <http://www.planethome.de>
 - <http://www.kurzfuendig.de>
 - <http://www.city-mitwohnzentrale.com>
 - <http://immo.haz.de> (Hannover's local newspaper, e.g. the Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung (HAZ))
- TIP: at least 4 EPIET fellows at RKI have found flats using www.immobilienscout24.de. A useful feature is the "Umkreissuche", where you can enter an address you want to live close to and then e.g. look for flats within 5 km distance. **In Berlin given the current housing crisis you will have to apply to many apartments before even getting invited to a visit.** Having a ImmoScout Plus account may increase your chances of being invited.
- If you want to sublet an apartment whilst you are looking for somewhere more permanent you can also look on Ebay Kleinanzeigen. One EUPHEM and one EPIET fellow found a flat using <http://www.wg-gesucht.de/>. This is the website for temporary accommodation, however it is possible to find a flat on this website for whole ECDC program. Just search for the flat that people want to rent for a year (or longer) and then email the landlord/landlady why you are coming to Germany, how long you need a flat and a few sentences about yourself.

4. Finances

4.1 Opening a bank account

While European legislation and IBAN and BIC bank account numbers facilitate quick (and usually free) money transfers across the border, many institutions will still ask for a German bank account. Therefore, it is recommended to open one as soon as you have found a place to live.

- Note: Cohort 2022 Fellow in Berlin used the Revolut bank account for the salary and all payments without any problems, did not open a German bank account.
- Note 2: Cohort 2021 Fellow in München was able to get a N26 bank account prior to my move to Munich, which was very helpful for HR-related purposes before she was officially registered.

Before getting a bank account you need to have a German address and be registered at the Bürgeramt – see above. There are many banks to choose from, including internet banks (often free of charge):

- ING-DiBa (free account including EC and Visa card, online only, but good service & app)
- N26
- Postbank
- Berliner Volksbank

- Deutsche Bank (it's not free, but doesn't require Bürgeramt)
- Tomorrow bank (green bank, free account including EC card, user friendly app)

Good to know

- Cash (*Bargeld*) is the way to go in Germany! The canteen at work, bars, restaurants, etc usually only accept cash. You will be able to pay by card in the supermarket and bigger shops. However, in the past year this has changed and more places will also accept card.
- If you want to be able to pay by card in Germany, an EC-card is sometimes needed. The stores do not have to pay as high fees to the banks when you pay by EC, as compared to VISA/MasterCard/etc., and therefore EC-cards are sometimes the only option.
- Check the fees for withdrawing cash at ATMs. Depending on which bank you have, you can withdraw money free of charge from some, but not others.

4.2 Paying your taxes and other deductions

After registration at Bürgeramt (*Anmeldung*), you will automatically receive your tax ID (*Steuer ID/Persönliche Identifikationsnummer*) by mail on your new address. Taxes depend on your relationship status and income. If you are registered at a church, you will also pay church tax (*Kirchensteuer*). For help with your income taxes you can join the income tax association (*Vereinigte Lohnsteuerhilfe* <https://www.vlh.de/>), or if your situation is straightforward you can do it easily yourself online (<http://wundertax.de>). Another option (but more expensive and often unnecessary) is a tax advisor (*Steuerberater*) for your annual tax returns. The tax year runs with the calendar year in Germany and if you do your own returns they will be need to be done by July (deadline will change every year, check the deadline for your year online).

Tax authority: Bundeszentralamt für Steuern: http://www.bzst.de/DE/Home/home_node.html

4.3. Unemployment

In Germany you are entitled to unemployment benefit if you fulfil all of the following requirements:

- Being unemployed
 - Having completed the qualifying period
 - Being registered as unemployed in person
- *Note:* A legal obligation to register as seeking employment exists at the latest three months before finishing an employment relationship or extra-company training relationship.

Source and for more information: <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/en/unemployment-benefits>

IMPORTANT!

Please note that payment of local taxes and charges is entirely the responsibility of the fellow. Any information provided in this guide reflects the experience of previous fellows and may not be relevant to the situation of incoming fellows. If in doubt, always ask for advice.

5. Administration

The fellowship programmes are funded by ECDC and the participating training sites in the Member States. EU-track fellows are employed by training sites that have signed an agreement with ECDC to fund their salaries. MS-track fellows receive the local salary from their training institutes. The participating institutes will cover the costs for office space and fieldwork of the fellows.

5.1 Signing your contract

- If you work at RKI, your contract will refer to the collective agreement TVöD-Bund (*Tarifvertrag für den Öffentlichen Dienst Bund*), which you can find online. You will be asked to provide your CV and certificates from your previous formal qualifications and proof of previous employments. Your contract will be signed before you start working at RKI.
 - If you work at a Bundesland (NLGA and LGL), your contract will refer to the collective agreement TV-L (*Tarifvertrag für den Öffentlichen Dienst der Länder*).
- Please note that all paperwork (contracts, etc) will be in German and that most people at HR only speak German. If your German skills are not yet good enough, bring someone or ask the PAE secretariat for help.

5.2 Salary correction factor

Pending cost of living and other factors in your host country, a correction factor for salaries may be applied by ECDC. Please enquire with the Fellowship Programme Office at ECDC if you need to know the correction factor for salaries in your host country. These correction factors may change and the most up to date information should be available from the Programme Office.

- If your site is RKI (Berlin), your contract will probably refer to *TVöD Bund* or *Kommunen* salary scale E13 (*Entgeltgruppe*), step (*Stufe*) 1 or 2, depending on your previous work experience:
https://oeffentlicher-dienst.info/c/t/rechner/tvoed/bund?id=tvoed-bund&g=E_13&s=1&zv=VBL&z=100&zulage=&stkl=1&r=0&zkf=0&kk=15.5
 - If your site is a Bundesland (for instance, Hannover), your contract will probably refer to *TV-L*, salary scale E13 (*Entgeltgruppe*), step (*Stufe*) 1, 2 or 3, depending on your previous work experience:
https://oeffentlicher-dienst.info/c/t/rechner/tv-l/allg?id=tv-l&g=E_13&s=1&zv=VBL&z=100&zulage=&stkl=1&r=0&zkf=0&kk=15.5%25
 - Some Bundesländer have their own salary sheets, for example Hessen.
- In 2024, the salaries at Bundesland level are lower than at Bund (national) or Kommune (local) level. Remember to provide proof of previous employment to HR as soon as possible, to prevent any error in the assessment of your category (*Stufenprüfung*).
- **For München (information from 2022):** Your actual monthly salary might be a bit lower than what is stated in your contract. In Bavaria, because LGL is a state institute, their employees are required to pay another ca 60 euros in the pension fund, which they will get back later on in the form of a higher pension. However, if you are staying there less than 5 years, you have the option to opt out, either signing some papers in advance or, at the end of your fellowship you can get the money back. HR department is very helpful at the LGL and can provide you with answers and explanations on this bureaucracy.

5.3 Receiving your paycheck

At the RKI (Berlin) the salary is paid monthly distributed in 12 paychecks at the end of the month. Be sure to provide all required documents when signing your contract and that you are registered in Berlin as soon as possible so that the correct salary scale and tax group is applied. For the cohort 2022 there was no issues with the payments and everything went smoothly after arrival.

At the NLGA (Hannover) the salary is paid monthly distributed in 12 paychecks at the end of the month. Be sure to provide all required documents when signing your contract and that you are registered in Hannover as soon as possible so that the correct salary scale and tax group is applied. Note that in 2023, the first salary was received in October.

5.4 Retirement Pension (public/private)

If you've worked in several EU countries, you may have accumulated pension rights in each of them. You'll have to apply to the pension authority in the country where you're living or where you last worked. If you've never worked in the country where you're living, your host country will forward your claim to the one you last worked in. That country is then responsible for processing your claim and bringing together records of your contributions from all the countries you worked in Source :

https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/work/retire-abroad/state-pensions-abroad/index_en.htm

The German state pension is organized by the *Deutsche Rentenversicherung*. Furthermore, you will build up pension through the *Versorgungsanstalt des Bundes und der Länder (VBL)*. You will automatically sign up through HR, when you are signing your contract and completing many forms.

5.5 The PAE programme

The PAE is a "field epidemiology training programme" and as such closely linked to the ECDC Fellowship Programme (EPIET/EUPHEM). The curriculum and most of the integrated training modules are framed in cooperation with the ECDC. Thus, the participants of the PAE are part of the EPIET/EUPHEM network. Every year there are at least 5 PAE fellows, most of them placed at the RKI but also in the Federal State Public Health Authorities, and in local health authorities (*Gesundheitsamt*).

For EPIET/EUPHEM that supposes that you will start your fellowship together with fellows from the PAE programme and many administrative rules and routine activities will be shared with them.

- All fellows will attend together with the PAE an introduction week at the RKI, a laboratory module, and several fixed days a year at RKI, even if you will be working at state level.

There is a very useful PAE Info Sheet that can provide you, especially for fellows based at RKI, with more guidance about the intertwining between EPIET and PAE activities. You will receive it together with further information during the introductory week (usually held at RKI at the beginning of the fellowship for all fellows in Germany).

For more information:

https://www.rki.de/EN/Content/Institute/DepartmentsUnits/InfDiseaseEpidem/Epidemiology_Training_Programme.html

5.6 Master's in Applied Epidemiology (MSAE)

The Master Programme is offered to German fellows or fellows that have their residency in Germany. IT is conducted in collaboration with the Berlin School of Public Health (Charité). The master doesn't require much additional work – a few homework assignments following the modules, an exposé and a final master work (either cumulative or monographic).

Enrolling in the MSAE is optional, if you opt for it you will have to pay for enrolment at the university every semester:

- The 2022 summer fee for enrolment at the university including semester ticket (i.e. free public transport in Berlin) was € 312,89 (around € 112 without semester ticket). Starting in the summer semester of 2024, a semester ticket is no longer possible when enrolling in the master programme.
- Before the start of the fellowship, the PAE secretariat will email you with the question whether or not you would like to sign up. You will need your university and secondary school, as well as proof of health insurance (in case you have not yet turned 30 in which case proof of Health insurance is not needed). The PAE secretariat will help you with this during the introductory week at RKI.

For more information:

https://bsph.charite.de/en/academic_programs/epidemiology/msc_applied_epidemiology_at_the_robert_koch_institut/

6. Health and Wellbeing

6.1 The healthcare system in Germany

Prior to arriving in your host country, please note the following on accessing healthcare: *'If you already have health insurance in an EU country (i.e. your home country), you can ask your insurer for a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), free of charge. Sometimes you can find it on the back side of your national insurance card. The card is proof that you are insured in an EU country. If you don't have your EHIC, or you can't use it (for instance, for private health care), you can't be refused treatment [in your host country], but you might have to pay the full amount for your treatment and claim reimbursement once you get home.'*

You can read more about the and what the EHIC entitles you to [here](#)

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) allows temporary residents to access public health care in Germany, including free emergency treatment. Nevertheless, under the law, all longer-term residents must have a policy with an insurance provider (called a *Krankenkasse* in German) that offers at least the minimum level of coverage permitted.

6.2 Health Insurance

There are state owned and managed health insurance companies for instance the AOK or TK, as well as private ones (like *HanseMerkur* or *Barmenia*). The private ones are usually more expensive – but provide better terms (*Leistungen*).

- Several fellows got their insurance from the TK - *Techniker Krankenkasse*. Human resources of your Training Site will send you the forms for registration so everything can be arranged before arrival and start of the fellowship.

Important things to compare, before choosing a health insurance:

- Yearly/monthly cost?
- Cost for first visit per quarter year?
- What are the benefits?
- How much of the costs for hospitalization (*stationäre Behandlung*), outpatient visits (*ambulante Behandlung*), physiotherapy, dental care, optician, vaccinations, etc. will the *Krankenkasse* reimburse?
- Is there a ceiling – or a minimum level up to which you have to pay everything yourself?
- Do they have a reduced price for students and/or persons below a certain age (when applicable)?

International options for health insurance

If you have health insurance in your own country, you may be able to extend it to an international policy, which could be the simplest and cheapest option.

If not, a scheme many EPIET fellows have used in the past is

<https://www.expatsplus.com/English/Personal/international-healthcare-medical-insurance-individual-expats.htm>. Set up for expats, so pricier but fits our situation well (e.g. repatriation if necessary, etc).

Other international health insurance agencies include:

<http://www.axapphealthcare.co.uk/international/personal/private-medical-insurance/?intcamp=1>
<http://www.bupa-intl.com/>

6.3 Accessing the healthcare system

In Germany, you can usually contact medical specialists directly, without a referral. Nevertheless, a *Hausarzt* (general practitioner) is required if you want access to all medical services and it will be your first point of contact for non-emergency medical issues.

You can use online appointment finders for either finding your general practitioner or medical specialist. A very useful resource for that is the app/website Doctolib (<https://www.doctolib.de/>).

- If you want to have a practitioner that speaks English or any other specific language, you can use filters in your search in Doctolib. Also make sure that the practitioner services are covered by your chosen insurance.
- Other similar sites are Jameda or Doctena.

6.3.1 Emergency services

If you need out-of-hours medical help (for example, if you feel unwell but do not need an ambulance), try calling your GP (*Hausarzt*) first. They will usually have an answering machine message with the contact details of the doctor on duty.

Alternatively, you can call 116 117 for a non-emergency doctor on call. This number works nationwide. The helpline is open 24 hours a day, including evenings, weekends and public holidays. You can also visit the 116117 website to find a local practice that offers emergency services. More information: [116117.de - English - Englisch](https://www.116117.de/)

Dial 112 only for acute medical or fire-related emergencies. This number connects you to emergency services, including medical assistance and the fire brigade. The operator will also contact the police if necessary.

6.3.2 Primary care

If you need to visit a doctor during your employment in Germany, you should:

1. Arrange your health insurance (point 6.2)
2. Find a general practitioner (*Hausarzt*): You can search online (point 6.3) or ask for recommendations from local colleagues.
3. Make an appointment: contact the doctor's office by phone or online to schedule an appointment. Specify whether you're a new patient and provide your insurance details. Bring your identification, health insurance card (if applicable), and any relevant medical records or prescriptions to your appointment.

If you work at the RKI: there is an occupational health (*Betriebsarzt*) for screenings, aptitude tests, travel-related vaccinations and other occupational health. You will find further information in the RKI intranet.

6.3.3 Mental health support services

You can try to use your regular health insurance to see a therapist or psychiatrist, by asking your general practitioner or health insurance company for help making an appointment, or searching on your own with a site like Doctolib, Jameda, or Doctena. If you have tried and cannot find a provider available who speaks your language and is taking new clients (in Berlin, for example, mental health services are overloaded), you can

apply to have your public insurance cover a private therapist.

In case of emergencies, there are also the emergency numbers described in section 6.3.1. and free hotlines. For example: [Krisendienst](#) (In Berlin) or [TelefonSeelsorge](#).

If you work at the RKI: in the of the intranet you can find useful resources for mental health. There is also an emergency psychological support from an external service provider (Stimulus)

6.3.4 Travel clinics/where to get vaccinations

If you work at the RKI: for vaccinations and health check-ups related to work, contact the RKI *Betriebsarzt*. You will receive an invite to go to the *Betriebsarzt* during your first week at RKI.

7. Other personal Insurance

Please note: Information on health insurance is provided in Section 6 above.

Some helpful tips:

- Feather is company that helps managing and purchasing different insurances (health, personal liability, household, bike, etc.). It has been used by previous fellows, all the content is available in English and the platform is very user-friendly. It is a cheaper alternative to a insurance broker. More information: <https://feather-insurance.com/>
- There are brokers for health, accident, private liability (and possible other) insurances, which without cost help you to find the most suitable health insurance. BIAC (<http://www.biac.de/>) and HanseMerkur (<https://www.hansemerkur.de/>) are brokers that helped previous fellows. Be prepared to sign a lot of forms, allowing the broker to e.g. legally represent your interests.
- A useful website to compare insurance providers and schemes (and many other things) is: <https://www.check24.de/>

7.1 Home, car and liability insurance

- How can home insurance / contents insurance be arranged?
- In some countries, liability insurance is advised (e.g. if a member of the public is injured while visiting your apartment), separately from home insurance. If applicable in your country, please provide information.
- Please provide links to any relevant sites / information.

7.2 Travel insurance

Information about ECDC Travel Insurance:

ECDC travel insurance is provided by Cigna International Health Services. All staff and sponsored meeting delegates travelling on behalf of ECDC are covered by this insurance. The insurance takes effect from the time one leaves their home/office for the meeting/mission and ends upon return to home/office. Times outside this period, including durations with private deviations, are not covered.

Coverage includes, among others, medical expenses as well as costs for repatriation in case of personal accident and/or serious illness, theft, riots etc. For medical expenses, the travel insurance is a complimentary insurance. Any costs or damages that are not covered by the primary insurance (private, national or corporate) will be supplemented by the travel insurance upon a written declaration that such expense had not been covered.

Please note that the ECDC Travel Insurance is only a "top-up" insurance and everyone is expected to have

a travel insurance (professional or private) already. It is recommended to always bring your European Health Insurance Card when travelling in Europe. Source: ECDC EVA

Central (www.central.de) has good travel insurances for you when living in Germany, but travelling abroad (for instance – on vacation, or home over the weekend). Costs only 10€/year. It might also be possible to have a travel health insurance included in your health insurance. For example, the exclusive partner for TK is Envivas (<https://www.envivas.de/en/products-and-services>). The costs are approximately the same as with Central.

7.3 Accident insurance

There are many insurance companies to choose from for accident insurance (*Unfallsversicherung*). Brokers can help you signing up for this as well or alternatively use an online price comparison website. However, it might be good to look into the possibility of keeping your current accident insurance or expat insurance, if you have a good and cheap accident insurance in your home country, which will also cover you abroad.

7.4 Liability insurance

Liability insurance (*Privathaftpflicht*) insures you against costs incurred by accidents and negligence. It is very common to have this in Germany and reasonably cheap. Again, you can check on price comparison websites such as Check24 to identify what is most appropriate for you.

Different suppliers include:

- VHV
- Central

8.A. Working at the Robert Koch Institute, Berlin

8.1 Getting to & from the city/institute

8.1.1 Getting to the institute: Public transport links or shuttle

The RKI Department of Infectious Diseases is located in Seestrasse 10. Most people come to work by bike, or public transport:

- Tram: 50 or M13 Virchow-Klinikum (directly outside)
- S-Bahn Westhafen (10 min walk)
- Bus: 160 stops directly outside (stop Virchow-Klinikum)
- U Bahn: U9 Amrumer Straße or U9 Westhafen (10 min walk)

8.1.2 How and where to buy tickets

Currently the Deutschland-Ticket lets you travel easily by all means of local public transport from for just 49 euros per month. You can get it through the Deutsche Bahn (DB) or Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe (BVG). For RKI workers you can get it at a discount price (Job ticket). You can ask PAE fellows about it during the introductory week.

The

8.2 General orientation

During the introductory week with the PAE Fellows, the essential aspects of your work at RKI will be presented and there will be time to answer any questions you may have. In addition, there is a weekly meeting of the fellows (PAE meeting), which is also a good opportunity to present the projects you are working on and to get to know the other fellows.

At the RKI, the role of the training site supervisor is played by the “*mentor:in*”, who you will choose from a list of candidates, usually after the induction course. Until then, you can always contact the Training Site Representative or the PAE team if you have any doubts.

8.3 Your office space

EPIET fellows will be placed in one of the units (*Fachgebieten*) within the department of infectious disease epidemiology (*Abteilung 3, Infektionsepidemiology*). There you will have usually your own office space. The selection of units is done together with the PAE fellows.

8.4 Institute / department access card

An electronic card will give you access to the building (outside and inside) and the bike parking. You will receive a separate key for your office.

8.5 Laptop and mobile

You will receive a laptop from RKI, a headset, and a mobile phone (not EUPHEM fellow). With this, it is possible to work from home and read your email and view your calendar. You will not be able to do this on your private laptop or phone.

8.6 Remote Access

You can access your email account and RKI server through your RKI laptop and virtual desktop, using a softtoken (an app on your mobile phone called SecurID generates access codes).

8.7 Vacation days

If you want to plan a holiday, you need the approval from your supervisors (including project supervisors), and submit your request through intranet. You will also need to ask a colleague to stand in for you during that period and add this person's name to your request.

The usual amount of holiday days per year is 30.

8.7.1 Public Holidays

There are 10 holidays celebrated in Berlin. These include New Year's Day, Easter Monday, Labor Day, Ascension Day, Whit Monday, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day. In addition to the national holidays, Berlin also celebrates International Women's Day.

8.8 The typical working day

Apart from your meetings, you are free to plan your own working hours anytime between 6.00 and 21.00 hours. You'll use your access card or the online application to register your time when coming in and leaving. This also allows you to work longer/shorter days as you like, as long as it ends up around 39 hours/week (468 *Sollminuten*), excluding breaks.

8.9 Meals and breaks

Most people have lunch with colleagues from their unit (*Fachgebiet*) in the canteen, at 12.00 a clock. You can pay both in cash and with card, there is always a vegetarian/vegan option and the price is around 5 to 7 euros.

As EPIET/PAE fellows, it can be nice to set a day for a lunch with fellows from both cohorts (e.g. each Thursday before the PAE meeting).

Other places to have lunch nearby RKI:

- Rudolfs (next door)
- Kubi (Vietnamese, Torfstraße 18)
- Spice (Vietnamese, Föhrer Straße 11)

8.B. Working at the Bayerisches Landesamt für Gesundheit und Lebensmittelsicherheit (LGL), München

8.1 Getting to & from the city/institute

8.1.1 Getting to the institute: Public transport links or shuttle

The Lazarettstraße is 7 min and another 5 min walk from Munich Central station by tram 20, or alternatively a 3 min and 5-10 min walk by metro U1 or U7 (closest stop is Maillingerstraße). The site at Oberschleißheim (Veterinärstraße 2) is a 20 min train ride from Munich central station to Oberschleißheim (S1) with a 5 min bus ride (292) or a 15-20 min walk to the site. The S1 goes between Ostbahnhof and Munich Airport, and the 292 between Sonnenstraße and Garching. NB. The 292 in both directions stops at the same stop, so make sure you take the right one.

----- To be updated -----

8.C. Working at the Niedersächsisches Landesgesundheitsamt (NLGA), Hannover

8.1 Getting to & from the city/institute

8.1.1 Getting to the institute: Public transport links or shuttle

The Niedersächsisches Landesgesundheitsamt (NLGA) is located at Riesebeckstr. 4-6 30449 Hannover. Most people cycle to work. You may leave your bike next to the main entrance or in the parking space within the institute. Here is a link that provides information on where to find secondhand bikes in Hannover:

<https://www.deingebrauchtesfahrrad.de/hannover>

You can also reach the institute by U-Bahn lines 3, 7, 13 and 17 stop "Allerweg", or by bus 100 or 200, stop "Allerweg".

8.2 General orientation

8.3 Your office space

As a fellow, you will share your office space with one other person.

8.4 Institute / department access card

You will receive a chip that is useful to access all necessary spaces in the institute, elevators and to record your working time. There are time-clock machines at all access points of the institute.

8.5 Laptop and mobile

You will receive a laptop and a headset. With this, it is possible to work from home and read your email and view your calendar. You will not be able to do this on your private laptop or phone. You will not receive a work phone. Officially, the institute should provide you with any working you may need.

8.6 Remote Access

You can use your work laptop to work from home.

8.7 Vacation days

You have the right to 30 days off. Your holidays must be approved by the head of the department. Requests are submitted via Novatime. Depending on your duties, you may be asked to have a colleague stand in for you during that period and add this person's name to your request.

8.7.1 Public Holidays

There are 10 holidays celebrated in Hannover. These include New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Labour Day, Ascension Day, Whit Monday, Day of German Unity, Reformation Day, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

8.8 The typical working day

The working hours depend on the day of the week:

- From Monday to Thursday, you need to be present at least from 9h to 12h, and from 14h to 15h30.
- On Friday and days before a bank holiday (including 24/12 and 31/12), you need to be present from 9h to 12h.

You are free to organize the rest of work time, as long as you work between 6h and 20h, for a total of 40h (39h and 48 minutes to be precise) per week. More on this in the *Dienstvereinbarung Nr. 03/19*

8.3 Meals and breaks

The nearest eating spots are a bit far from the institute, so most people bring food from home and warm it up in the microwave in the cafeteria.

The institute is located near the Ihme river and people usually use the break to go for a walk along the river. There is a bakery at Schwarzer Bär, about 10 minutes from the institute.

9.A. Living in Berlin

9.1 Getting around

9.1.1 Airport transfers

You can get to the airport either with regional trains or with certain S-Bahn lines. The price of both is included in the Deutschland ticket.

9.1.2 Public transport

The BVG (*Berliner Verkehrsgesellschaft* <https://www.bvg.de/en>) runs the U-Bahn, busses and trams in Berlin. The DB (*Deutsche Bahn*) runs the S-Bahn, and coordinates traffic in the region. The BVG and DB are interlinked, the tickets are valid on all means of transport, and they have a joint travel planner. Check out either website for travel planner, rail and bus network maps and ticket prices. There are also two good iPhone apps worth a download to enable you to get around quicker: search for GVB and Berlin Tube. The Deutschland Ticket will allow you to travel all around Germany using public transport and regional train services for 49€ a month. More recently, a Berlin ticket (Berlin-Abo) has been launched for 29€ a month (this one does not include the area C necessary to go to the airport).

9.1.3 Walking and cycling

Cycling is an easy way to get around Berlin. Consider getting a bike for your work commute and spare time if you do not already have one. Walking is very common in Berlin and there are many beautiful parks and green areas, but keep in mind that the distances in the city are usually quite long and you might be using a bike or the public transport a lot.

9.1.4. Driving license and other considerations

If you move to another EU country, you don't usually have to exchange your driving license for a local one. However, you can voluntarily exchange it for an equivalent one in your new country of residence if you wish. Source: [Driving license exchange and recognition in the EU - Your Europe \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/european-council/en/driving-license-exchange-and-recognition-in-the-eu)

9.2 Language schools

Language courses are reimbursed up to a maximum total of EUR 1 500. ECDC recommends that a budget of €750.00 is apportioned during the 1st specific grant agreement (SGA) and €750.00 during the 2nd SGA (01 March 2022 – 28 February 2023).

There are many language schools (*Sprachschule*) to choose from in Berlin. The C2017 and C2018 fellows went

to Nativa Akademie (www.nativa-akademie.de), which is relatively close to RKI.

Check the possibility to (partially) take lessons during working hours with Katharina Alpers. The *Sprach- und Kulturbörse* at the Technical University also offers attractive courses (www.skb.tu-berlin.de/).

Other alternative used by previous fellows has been online German classes with a private tutor. The costs were also reimbursed. You can check www.italki.com or www.preply.com.

9.3 Recreational activities, sports, worth visiting, meeting people

If you want any information about Berlin, its maps, swimming pools, cinemas etc. this is a good website: <http://www.berlin.de/>

During the weekends there are many interesting markets to visit:

- Flohmarkt im Mauerpark
- Boxhagener Platz
- Flohmarkt im RAW-Gelände

Cinema with in original version or with subtitles:

There are plenty of possibilities to see a movie without subtitles in Berlin. Look for OmU, which tells you that the movie is in the original language with German subtitles or OmeU with English subtitles. Cinemas which are good for OmU or OmeU include:

- Hackischer hof Kino: <http://www.hoefekino.de/>
- Cinemaxx
- Yorck Kinos: <https://www.yorck.de/>
- Other large movie cinemas

During the summer months there are many lakes surrounding Berlin that are amazing places to socialize, relax and water sports. Some suggestions are:

- Plötzensee: walking distance from RKI!
- Wannsee
- Liepnitzsee: clearest water in Berlin, surrounded by beautiful nature

9.4 Supermarkets

The closes supermarkets to the institute are at least at a 15 minutes walking distance (Rewe and Edeka both in Wedding).

In Berlin you can find all kind of supermarkets. Besides the big chains (Lidl, Aldi, Rewe, Edeka, Kaufland...) and bio/organic supermarket chains (Bio company, LPG...), you can also find some other interesting supermarkets in the city:

- Mitte Meer: huge selection of Mediterranean (mostly Spanish products)
- Centro Italia: very big Italian supermarket
- Go asia: chain of Asian supermarket

➤ During Sunday supermarkets are closed. Be sure to make your groceries on Saturday or during the week.

The big department stores are:

- Galeria Kaufhof – at Alexander Platz
- KaDeWe – by Kurfürstendam

Kurfürstendam is a shopping street in the former West Berlin. It is very beautiful around Christmas when it is decorated with lights. It has high end shops in the end with KaDeWe and all the expensive shops when going towards Adenauerplatz (West). Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg are two other great shopping areas. Here you can

find anything from high-street shops to small local designers etc. Enjoy discovering the shops around your area!

9.5 Cultural insights

Germany is a very open country and many people are able to communicate in English almost in any situation. However, you will need good knowledge of German to be able to make the most of the fellowship, as most of the work is done in this language, and many relevant research papers may only be available in German.

9.B. Living in München

9.1 Getting around

9.1.1 Airport transfers

- Please describe transport links available to and from the airport and their frequency.
- Please provide links to relevant information, e.g. transport providers and timetables.
- Please suggest typical costs associated with the trip.

9.1.2 Public transport (Information from 2022)

The MVG (Münchener Verkehrsgesellschaft) runs the U-Bahn, busses and trams in München.

<http://www.mvg-mobil.de/>

The MVV (Münchener Verkehrs- und Tarifverbund) runs the S-Bahn and coordinates traffic in the region.

<http://www.mvv-muenchen.de/>

The MVG and MVV are interlinked, the tickets are valid on all means of transport, and they have a joint travel planner. Check out either website for travel planner, rail and bus network maps, ticket prices, etc..

Is the S-Bahn on time? Probably not... but here you can check it out:

<http://reiseauskunft.bahn.de>

All of them provide now also apps for your mobile phones. Very useful!!

All tickets can be bought at service centers at Marienplatz, Sendlinger Tor and Poccistrasse. Then there are ticket machines at the entrance of all S- and U-Bahn stations – as well as on the trams for short-, oneway, 1-day and 3-day tickets. These machines however only take coins or small bills.

IsarCard: For regular weeks and months, the IsarCard is recommended. It allows you unlimited travel for a week or month, within the number of Rings you choose. From the central point in München to Oberschleissheim you need Rings 1-6. By buying weekly/monthly tickets (instead of yearly) you can adapt them to modules, vacations, etc. You get the IsarCard from computer terminal-like machines at most S- and U-Bahn stations, but will need an EC-card (i.e. not VISA or Mastercard) to pay, or from the red Deutsche Bahn-machines at most S-Bahn stations, Hauptbahnhof and the Airport.

IsarCardAbo: Ride 12 months – pay for 10 – or 8! Sounds nice? Then sign up for a subscription online or at the MVG Service center at Marienplatz. You will need a German bank account and the account details with you.

Streifenkarten: A slip with 10 strips that is good for occasional travels (or when the next month starts on a Wednesday and you want to get the IsarCard for the whole month – or when going outside your chosen number Rings (e.g. to the airport)). Costs less than getting a oneway ticket, and without needing change for the machine.

9.1.3 Walking and cycling

The Bavarians like cycling, especially along the river Isar, so getting a bike for your spare time might be an idea. (Or bring the one you have at home with your removal!). A bike can also get you to the institute, depending on where you live and how far you are willing to cycle.

If you are mainly working in Oberschleißheim, consider having a bike to take you between the site and the

U/S-bahn-stop.

9.1.4. Driving license and other considerations

If you move to another EU country, you don't usually have to exchange your driving license for a local one. However, you can voluntarily exchange it for an equivalent one in your new country of residence if you wish. Source: [Driving license exchange and recognition in the EU - Your Europe \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/european-council/driving-license-exchange)

- Please share here if you have any tips on driving in the country and provide links to any relevant websites of information sources.

9.2 Language schools

Language courses are reimbursed up to a maximum total of EUR 1 500. ECDC recommends that a budget of €750.00 is apportioned during the 1st specific grant agreement (SGA) and €750.00 during the 2nd SGA (01 March 2022 – 28 February 2023).

There are a number of language schools to choose from in Munich, but the prices vary a lot, from ca 35 €/UE (Unterrichtseinheit, 45 min) to 60€/UE. The less each lesson costs – the more lessons you will get (reimbursed by ECDC, and because of the price differences it can be worth shopping around. Mentioning that you have a limit for what your “employer” will reimburse can actually could make them adjust the price. It is worth a try!).

All forms of studies are tax free in Germany, so you and the school do not have to bother with financial identification forms to have classes billed without tax. A normal reimbursement is easier.

- If you are a beginner, consider group classes, that will give you a basis.
- If you already know some (or a lot) of German, a good way to improve and fine tune your language skills is to take private lessons. *recommended* Then you'll work with your weak spots – and not be limited by what the group as a whole knows. You can also take your work reports and presentations to class and sharpen the expressions.
- Even though you know German, consider taking lessons anyway. You can study and write an exam to have your language skills certified. And have the costs reimbursed.

Schools in Munich (price references from 2022)

- Dialog Sprachschule *recommended* Ca 36-40 €/UE. I had private classes with Fr. Doris Meier, a good teacher with a good teaching concept.
- Sprachschule Aktiv Ca 33-35 €/UE
- Goethe Institut Ca 60€/UE
- Berlitz Ca 55 €/UE
- InLingua Ca 55 €/UE
- DeutschAkademie ?
- Google “Sprachschule München” for more options.
- Tip: Choose a school that has good local communications to work or home, as you might be going there a lot.

9.3 Recreational activities, sports, worth visiting, meeting people

ToyTownGermany – www.toytowngermany.com

The expat community – a lot of things are happening, check out the forum and tag along for a beer, a book-reading or a run.

DAV – Deutsche Alpenverein - <http://www.alpenverein-muenchen-oberland.de/>

A nice way to get out into nature is through the DAV. They arrange walks, hikes and courses all year round. Their course programme is updated and available online. Join section München.

Cinema Museum Lichtspiele: Lilienstrasse 2 *recommended*

See the current programme at <http://muenchen.movietown.eu/>

9.4 Supermarkets

Main shopping areas:

- **Sendlinger Tor, Marienplatz and Isartor.** The big streets going between these three places are the big shopping streets. Mainly clothes.
- **Glockenbachviertel & Gärtnerplatz.** Area with smaller stores and cafés.
- **Olympia Einkaufszentrum.** The mall in München.

9.5 Cultural insights

Please add any other insights you believe would be helpful to a fellow moving to the country.

9.C. Living in Hannover

9.1 Getting around

9.1.1 Airport transfers

The Hannover airport can be reached by train (S Bahn). You will find all relevant information here: <https://www.hannover-airport.de/en/information-for-passengers-visitors>

9.1.2 Public transport

The Deutschland Ticket will allow you to travel all around Germany using public transport and regional train services for 49€ a month. This is especially of interest for fellows, as we tend to travel to Berlin for modules and activities at the RKI.

Anyone traveling by bus, light rail or local train in the Hanover region uses the ÜSTRA network. With [EFA - the electronic timetable information](#) system - the Hannover Region provides all the information you need to travel by local train, suburban train, light rail and bus. It includes timetable data from all over Lower Saxony and Bremen. Ticket purchase can be done via [website](#) and [app](#).

9.1.3 Walking and cycling

Most people around the city and at the institute use a bicycle as main means of transportation.

9.1.4. Driving license and other considerations

If you move to another EU country, you don't usually have to exchange your driving license for a local one. However, you can voluntarily exchange it for an equivalent one in your new country of residence if you wish. Source: [Driving license exchange and recognition in the EU - Your Europe \(europa.eu\)](#)

----- To be updated -----

9.2 Language schools

Language courses are reimbursed up to a maximum total of EUR 1 500. ECDC recommends that a budget of €750.00 is apportioned during the 1st specific grant agreement (SGA) and €750.00 during the 2nd SGA (01 March 2022 – 28 February 2023).

----- To be updated -----

9.3 Recreational activities, sports, worth visiting, meeting people

----- To be updated -----

9.4 Supermarkets

----- To be updated -----

9.5 Cultural insights

----- To be updated -----

10. Moving with a family

Eligible moving costs include removal of household goods and transportation costs for the fellow and family members from any place within the EU/EEA to the place of employment and from place of employment to any place within EU/EEA, at the beginning and end of the fellowship respectively. Due to the implementation of the simplified cost options process under the FPA signed from 2022 onwards, between ECDC and the partners, there will be two systems in parallel. It is the responsibility of both the training site and the fellow to understand which system will apply. Please provide your general impressions of living in your host country with a young family.

----- To be updated -----

10.1 Social benefits for expectant parents and families:

In the event of pregnancy and birth or adoption, fellows are entitled to maternity or paternity leave according to the rules of the employer and within the duration of the framework partnership agreement (FPA) signed with ECDC. The training period may be extended in order to ensure the minimum length of 23 months to be eligible for the diploma. During the above-mentioned leave period, the fellow is entitled to the benefits as foreseen in his/her employment contract. ECDC may cover salaries during this period only if these costs are not covered by the social security system and provided that a specific grant agreement (SGA) is in place. Fellows must notify the training site supervisor and confirm their communicated return date to the Head of Fellowship Programme and FFO in accordance with the national law, but at least 30 days in advance.

10.2 Daycare and kindergarten (information from previous Country Guide)

Berlin is a great place for children. There are plenty of international schools and Kindergartens and lots of fun activities to keep them occupied. There is a child room at the RKI for last-minute child-care issues. Most Kindergartens are free, or of low cost. If you are thinking about coming with your family we would highly recommend that you speak to one of the current fellows who can give you more detailed information. It can be difficult to get a spot in a Kindergarten, and it is recommended to start the search early.

10.3 Healthcare for children

----- To be updated -----

10.4 Children and public transport

----- To be updated -----

10.5 Schooling for children

----- To be updated -----

11. Leaving the country

11.1 Household Removals

----- To be updated -----

If moving from the UK, the Netherlands and some other European countries, some fellows have used the services of <https://www.mychiapremovals.co.uk/> with low rates compared to other companies and relatively good service.

11.2 Deregistering from your host country

----- To be updated -----

When leaving Berlin, you will need to deregister at Bürgeramt between 7 days before and 14 days after your move: <https://service.berlin.de/dienstleistung/120335/>

12. CONTACTS

12.1 Key contacts at your institute

At the RKI, Berlin:

For General questions before the start of the fellowship

PAE team (either Juliette Zunk, Katharina Alpers or Sofie Raiser will answer to your questions through the PAE mail box, before the start of the fellowship they can also redirect you to human resources, finance and IT. The contacts to those departments will be available once you start the fellowship on the RKI online portal) PAE@rki.de

12.2 Contact information of current and previous fellows

We actively encourage you to contact fellows that are currently located at your host site. They have lots of current and additional information that they are happy to share with you.

Name	EPIET or EUPHEM	Cohort	Email	Nationality, moved from → to	Moved with partner/family
Robert Koch Institute, Berlin					
Mario Martín-Sánchez	EPIET	2022	martinsanchezmario@gmail.com	Spaniard, Hong Kong → Berlin, RKI	With partner
Katarzyna Schmidt	EUPHEM	2021	schmidtk@rki.de	United Kingdom, Manchester → Berlin	Alone
Henrieke Prins	EPIET	2021	prinsh@rki.de	Dutch, Rotterdam → Berlin	Alone
Ida Sperle	EPIET	2020	Sperle-heupeli@rki.de	Norwegian, Copenhagen → Berlin	With family
Sonia Boender	EPIET	2018	BoenderS@rki.de	Dutch, Amsterdam → Berlin	With partner
Lynn Meurs	EPIET	2017	MeursL@rki.de	Dutch, Belgium → Berlin	With family
LGL, München					

Liza Coyer	EPIET	2021	Lizacoyer@hotmail.com		
Durdica Marosevic	EUPHEM	2015	djurdjica.marosevic@gmail.com		
Hélène Englund	EPIET	2016	henglund22@gmail.com		
NLGA, Hannover					
Lilas Mercuriali	EPIET	2023	Lilas.mercuriali@gmail.com	French, Paris → Hannover	Alone