



# GERMAN YOUTH HOSTEL ASSOCIATION

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



*share the experience*

youth-hostels.de



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## Masthead

### Publisher

German Youth Hostel Association  
Hauptverband für Jugendwandern  
und Jugendherbergen e.V.  
Leonardo-da-Vinci-Weg 1  
32760 Detmold  
Tel. 05231 7401-0  
hauptverband@jugendherberge.de  
www.jugendherberge.de

### Responsible

Bernd Dohn, CEO

### Design

DJH Hauptverband e.V.

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Berlin Office  
Marktstraße 9–12  
10317 Berlin

# WELCOME TO THE YOUTH HOSTELS

## RECORD MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

In 2017, the number of German Youth Hostel Association (DJH) members once again reached an all time high. Since 1990, the number of individuals, families, schools and clubs joining the association has been continuously rising. Last year, the association recorded an absolute increase of 22,514 members, bringing the total number of members to 2,421,593. As such, the DJH is one of the associations with the most members in Germany.

Shortly after the German reunification 27 years ago, approximately one million people owned a DJH member's card. 1.5 million people were reached in 1994, and in 2009, the DJH's 100th anniversary, the number of members first exceeded 2 million. This renewed increase proves that the youth hostels and their offers and ideals remain very popular today.

## STABLE LEVEL OF OVERNIGHT STAYS

The number of overnight stays recorded in previous years was maintained in 2017. This outcome is significant as the overall number of youth hostels declined slightly. A detailed evaluation shows a balanced distribution. As is traditionally the case, schools had the highest share (38 %) of all overnight stays, an increase of 6.5 %, followed by families (20 %), recreation groups (18 %) and training courses/conferences (14 %). In total, precisely 4 million guests visited the youth hostels last year.

## DIGITALISATION IN PROGRESS

For 10 years, guests have been able to book their stay in a youth hostel online. Largely due to new and improved features, 1.4 million bookings were made online last year alone. This trend is likely to continue according to latest responses from the youth hostels. In 2017, final preparations were made for a complete relaunch of the website [jugendherberge.de](http://jugendherberge.de). This includes improved

features for rating their stay in an online process and the youth hostel experience. Ratings play an increasingly important role for guests when choosing a youth hostel.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Günther Schneider".

Prof. Dr. Günther Schneider  
DJH President



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernd Dohn".

Bernd Dohn  
CEO



## SUSTAINABLE QUALITY CONCEPT – “SUSTAINABLE EXPERIENCE”

The framework for sustainable corporate development has been in its implementation phase since the resolution of the 2014 general assembly in Prora. This process currently encompasses the following elements:

- The regional office in Unterweser-Ems has, to a great extent, implemented the current “Sustainable Experience” concept for all its youth hostels.
- In 2017, 10 pilot youth hostels were certified as having implemented the “Sustainable Experience” concept (regional office Nordmark: 6, regional office Baden-Württemberg: 4).
- In April 2018, the regional office Baden-Württemberg received “Sustainable Experience” certification for all its active youth hostels (44).
- 8 further regional offices have taken steps towards implementing the quality concept “Sustainable Experience”.

## CARBON FOOTPRINT

The overall carbon footprint has been continuously improving, with the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per overnight stay sinking from 17.0 kg (2014) to 12.9 kg (2016) and 12.7 kg (2017). These values are based on 120 carbon footprints calculated by the services Viabono and Myclimate. With only a few exceptions, the youth hostels, the regional offices and the

main office use 100 % regenerative electricity. Interestingly, the main office is powered by wind gas. The reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> through renewable energy sources (for heating and electricity) and compensation payments to climate-friendly projects with gold standard was increased from 17,693 tonnes (2013) to 26,142 tonnes (2017). 5 youth hostels and the website [www.jugendherberge.de](http://www.jugendherberge.de) remained climate-neutral in 2017. As of 2018, the first regional office (Baden-Württemberg) will offer a climate-neutral accommodation option in its 44 youth hostels.

## FACTS AND FIGURES

- 81 youth hostels have a “veggie day” once a week
- 107 hostels are certified organic
- 120 youth hostels have calculated a CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of their carbon emissions
- Over 100 youth hostels offer at least one fair trade product
- 26,142 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction through renewable energy sources and compensation payments
- CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per overnight stay: 12.7 kg

## PROJECTS AND PROFILES

### Experience biodiversity with location-based games (BioDiv2go)

Part of this project was the development of smartphone-based games (“Find Diversity Simulation”) on various topics for 11 youth

hostels. Another smartphone-based game, “Green Treasure”, was developed especially for families and is independent of location. The project was extended until the end of 2018 and is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) and the German Federation for the Environment and Nature Conservation (Friends of the Earth Germany).

### Climate Action Cinema (Klak)

The project “Climate Action Cinema” encompasses the development and distribution of videos and programmes concerning sustainable mobility and climate protection with the aid of bicycle cinemas. The participating youth hostels are Erfurt and Freiburg. The project-executing organisation is the association Solare Zukunft from Freiburg, and the project is funded by the Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

### Scavenger Hunts in Youth Hostels

The DJH submitted an award-winning contribution to the United Nation’s Ideas for Action competition on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Fun and creative tasks give the young audience an understanding of 17 SDGs. A partner of the project is Scavenger Hunt Germany, an innovative event concept offering an app-based treasure hunt. Sponsors are procured by the Council for Sustainable Development (Rat für Nachhaltige Entwicklung).

### Further Regional Projects in Cooperation with the Main Office

- Pilot project for energy efficient accommodation (sponsor: BMUB)
- Education project "Climate Plus"

### Educational Profiles and Conferences

The following certified youth hostels offer high-quality educational programmes promoting sustainable development:

- 17 Environment|Youth Hostels
- 17 Sports|Youth Hostels
- 10 Fit and Active|Youth Hostels
- 7 Graslöwe|Youth Hostels

Hostels can qualify for these certificates by attending annual training conferences:

1. DJH forum for sustainability and sustainable development education (November 14 – 17 2017 in Lingem Youth Hostel)
2. Conference of the Sports|Youth Hostels and Fit and Active|Youth Hostels (December 4 – 6 2017 in Rotenburg/Wümme Youth Hostel).



Inclusion in youth hostels has long since become common practice: people with mobility, orientation or communication disabilities are often seen and very welcome as youth hostel guests. The DJH claims a social responsibility which it realises in clear educational and social, youth-oriented programmes. Youth hostels are already equipped with many facilities necessary for an inclusive visit. Flexible adaptation in cooperation with trained in-house advisors allows the hostels to modify almost all programmes designed for school trips so that all pupils can actively take part, regardless of any handicaps they might have. In 2014, the German Youth Hostel Association concluded an official framework agreement on accessibility with the BAG Patient Group (BAG

Selbsthilfe). Their common goal is to grant disabled and chronically ill people accessibility to all facilities and services of the youth hostels, preferably without barriers. Nine DJH regional offices entered into the framework, of the remaining regions a total of 49 individual youth hostels also joined. The concept of accessibility is taken into consideration when building new youth hostels and renovating or extending existing ones, as well as in all marketing activity of the association, such as the programming of the website or the design of brochures and catalogues.

In a unilateral declaration of November 2016 by the DJH general assembly, accessibility and inclusion are determined as issues subject to

long-term consideration and coordination within the association by the main DJH office. Two symposiums on inclusion in Duisburg-Sportpark Youth Hostel were evaluated by the main DJH office, the results being used to develop a recommendation which, in the future, will prepare youth hostels to receive inclusive guest groups. The paper will give the house management and staff a deeper understanding of the concept of inclusion. It also helps to realistically assess and optimise the conditions for inclusive groups in the hostels, in order to create a flexible "service package" which respects the wishes and needs of inclusive groups and will make them want to visit again.



## YOUTH HOSTELS REPRESENT VALUES

The 2.4 million DJH members are part of a community committed to traditions and values. A new video uses comical illustrations to outline the significance of a DJH membership. The animated illustration helps answer the most important questions concerning the DJH membership card. Even the DJH founder Richard Schirrmann appears – as a stick man. In addition, there is some information on the numerous partners offering discounts to DJH members.

## LOW-BUDGET HOLIDAYS

A holiday with the children doesn't have to be expensive. Last summer and winter 120 selected youth hostels ran a special offer for families: a short holiday for up to six family members for a special price.

The offer, which was available in all parts of Germany, encompassed a three-day stay for two adults and up to four children (up to the age of 14) for 99 euros. This included two nights with breakfast, a free dinner on the day of arrival and tips for excursions. The offer was limited and only available online. The initiative was a great success.

## AMBASSADOR FOR NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

"Shaun the Sheep" is one of the most famous television stars in the world. As part of a long-term collaboration with WDR mediagroup and the film studio Aardman Animations, the DJH was able to engage the cartoon character as an official ambassador for nature and the environment. The friendly sheep reminds us to behave in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way.

A rally can be booked for free and is a fun way for families and school classes to experience nature. A sticker book has 12 playful tasks to complete, where taking the stairs, healthy eating, a meat-free day and much more are rewarded. Once a task is completed, parents and teachers can reward a Shaun-sticker. A complete sticker book merits a small prize.

## SELECTED PRINT PRODUCTS



**Family Catalogues**, Autumn/Winter, Edition: 52,000; Spring/Summer, Edition: 52,000



**Staff Magazine "Mittendrin"**, four editions, total editions: 10,000



**Klassen Mobil 2017**, Edition: 33.000



**Members' Magazine "Extratour"**, four editions per year, total edition: 3,177,744



**Entdeckerbuch**, Edition 2016: 220.000, Reprint 2017: 88.000  
**Entdeckerkarte**, Edition 2016: 261.000, Reprint 2017: 100.000





## IMPROVED ONLINE BOOKING FUNCTIONS

The continuing digitalisation process is also having an effect on youth hostels. "We recognized that we have to optimise our online presence and so we decided to make a start", says Oliver Peters, DJH Deputy Managing Director.



One of the most significant changes is an extensive overhaul of the design and content of jugendherberge.de. Guests are now able to rate the youth hostels after their visit. "We hope to gain more transparency and hints about where we can improve thanks to the ratings of our guests", Peters explains. Moreover, package deals are available for online booking. The new features also include a quiz on youth hostels and a clear overview of the



various youth hostel categories. All pages also have responsive design for use on mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets and mobile phones. "We are convinced that this will significantly improve our service for members and guests", Peters concludes.

An overhaul of the youth hostel app is also in preparation. One of the main advantages here is the digital membership card, which can't be lost and is available at all times.


## FREE E-BOOK


Several bloggers and their readers discovered the youth hostels last year. The British travel journalist Kirstie Pelling discovered five castle youth hostels and published one family's best tips and experiences as e-books. They are available as a free download on [www.jugendherberge.de/en/](http://www.jugendherberge.de/en/)

## NEW NEWSLETTER SERVICE


The nationwide newsletter service was expanded in 2017. As such, the DJH does not only regularly provide the best travel tips for families, schools or young travellers, there is also a free newsletter for job openings in the youth hostels. More information can be found under [www.jugendherberge.de/jobs](http://www.jugendherberge.de/jobs)


## THE DJH ON SOCIAL MEDIA

 **Facebook**  
[facebook.com/youthhostelsDE](https://facebook.com/youthhostelsDE)

 **Twitter**  
[twitter.com/Jugendherberge](https://twitter.com/Jugendherberge)

 **YouTube**  
[youtube.com/JugendherbergeDE](https://youtube.com/JugendherbergeDE)

 **Blog**  
[blog.jugendherberge.de](http://blog.jugendherberge.de)

 **Instagram**  
[instagram.com/Jugendherberge](https://instagram.com/Jugendherberge)



The idea of peaceful encounters between young people from all around the world is at the core of the youth hostel concept. With its partners from around the globe, the DJH organises international youth encounters, volunteering and work experience programmes as well as professional exchange programmes.

## “WORLD YOUTH RALLY” IN SOUTH KOREA

For the first time, a German delegation took part in the “World Youth Rally” organised by the Korean youth hostel association, which took place in Seoul. 140 young people from Malaysia, India, Singapore, Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Algeria and Germany came together for this multinational youth event. They discussed topics such as the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals and developed a common “Seoul Declaration” concerning the global goals of the Agenda 2030. City tours in small multinational groups were organised to promote intercultural understanding.

## PROFESSIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMME WITH JAPAN

The main focus of the exchange programme with “Japan Youth Hostels” and the “National Institute for Youth Education” was on the various offers of youth hostels concerning non-formal education. In addition to talks

with active organisations, the July programme in Japan included field trips to the prefectures Kyoto and Okinawa. The return visit in the autumn led the Japanese partners to the regional DJH offices in Baden-Württemberg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Nordmark. The programme helped improve common knowledge about existing programmes for various target groups outside the school system in Germany and Japan in order to find potential ways of transferring successful methods.

## GREEK YOUTH HOSTEL ASSOCIATION FOUNDED

On April 25, the Greek youth hostel association was founded in Athens: associations and organisations with over 20 houses have agreed to cooperate, the region of Corinth already has its own youth hostel. The DJH is financially supporting the development of these structures in Greece with funds provided by the main association’s Dr. Anton Graßl Foundation as well as providing personnel expertise by the DJH regional office Unterweser-Ems. As early as March, a Greek delegation in Berlin and the region around Bremen was able to experience a range of educational offers of German youth hostels. The next steps of the partnership include an opportunity for trained personnel from Greece to visit German youth hostels and the DJH’s support developing a sustainable IT infrastructure for the new association.

## “CULTURE, HISTORY AND CREATIVITY”

The DJH organised a youth encounter focused on media education in collaboration with the Government Agency for Education of the region Pskow (Russia), which took place in July in Ravensbrück Youth Hostel in Brandenburg. For one week, approximately 20 participants were able to produce short films under the supervision of professionals, with different ideas being pooled in small groups and transformed into creative projects. Participants had the opportunity to learn about the various work stages, from creating a storyboard to filming and cutting the footage. The cooperation with the concentration camp memorial centre Ravensbrück provided everybody with new perspectives as well as the unique experience of talking to contemporary witnesses, which left a lasting impression on the entire group.

## FEDERAL FUNDING

The DJH youth and professional exchange programmes are funded as part of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth’s “Child and Youth Plan”, in addition to bilateral youth agencies and coordination bodies such as the German-Polish Youth Organisation (Deutsch-Polnisches Jugendwerk, DPJW) and the Coordination Centre for German-Czech Youth Exchange TANDEM.





### NEW PRESIDENT ELECTED

Dr. Günther Schneider is the new president of the DJH main association. He was elected by the delegates of the general assembly on November 18 2017 in Berlin Ostkreuz Youth Hostel as the successor of Angela Braasch-Eggert. In his opinion, the DJH is in “a good position”, with common values at the core of all working processes.

Dr. Schneider, a judge by profession, is very well acquainted with the youth hostel association. He has been the head of the regional office Sachsen for 11 years and was awarded the title of honorary professor by Dresden University of Technology. He was a directly elected delegate of the State Parliament of Sachsen from 2004 to 2017 and, on December 18 2017, was appointed State Secretary in the State Ministry of the Interior of Sachsen.

### FORMAL FAREWELL

After 16 years in office, Angela Braasch-Eggert decided against running for president of the DJH. During the general assembly of the DJH main association, the delegates thanked her for her exceptional commitment to the association. At the suggestion of the chair, the outgoing president was appointed an honorary member.

Angela Braasch-Eggert has held various positions within the youth hostels since 1977. In 2001, she was the first woman elected to the top of the main association. During her time in office, she significantly shaped the development of the content and structure of the DJH’s work. The farewell ceremony was an opportunity for the general assembly and numerous guests from Germany and around the world to say goodbye to Angela Braasch-Eggert.



## GOOD FOR LARGE FAMILIES

For the third time running, the Youth Hostels were awarded the quality seal “Fair Family” in 2017. The seal is proof of a particular suitability for large families.

“Fair Family” is a free, independent and fair award. It is given by the association of large families “Verband kinderreicher Familien Deutschland e.V” (KRFD), which promotes the interests of large families with several children.

## NEW CATEGORIES

With three new categories, the almost 500 youth hostels in German offer more transparency. The allocation used an objective point system, with criteria including room size, the bistro and parking options. The basic category “classic” designates purely functional buildings. The category “standard” represents contemporary furnishings with different options for recreational planning. Youth hostels with the category “top” offer guests lots of room for encounters and exchange as well as modern furnishings. The majority of rooms have an own shower and toilet.

classic 

standard 

top 

## YOUTH HOSTELS IN THE LIGHT OF RESEARCH

In 2019, the German Youth Hostel Association celebrates its 100th anniversary. In anticipation of this event, a cooperation agreement with the University of Paderborn was signed in February 2018.



The working groups Contemporary History and Recent History of the university’s Historical Institute will use the DJH as an example for a national case study on the developments, forms and transitions of citizen participation in the field of youth work and its public perception.

In a first step, the study will analyse the development of the DJH from its founding to its standing today as a globally networked civic actor. The second step will develop a regional perspective. A third part of the study will focus on an international comparison of the DJH’s values and their correlation with current issues of youth politics. The aim of the study is to examine the role of the DJH’s concept and founding values today.

## NEW PATRON

Shortly after his election as Federal President of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier became patron of the German Youth Hostel Association in April 2017.

He appreciates the varied offers and services of the DJH, and believes the youth hostels offer valuable services for schools, families and international youth encounters. This gives impulses to support young people and promote social cooperation.



# DJH 2017 AT A GLANCE

466  
Youth Hostels

2,421,699  
Members

70,978  
Beds

5,899  
Employees full time 5,033  
volunteers 866

9,952,776  
Overnight Stays

56,498,891  
Page views on jugendherberge.de

## DJH MEMBERS IN 2017

140,730  
juniors 5.80 %

2,208,214  
families/27plus 91.18 %

51,204  
associations 2.11 %

21,551  
schools and corporate bodies 0.88 %

2,421,699  
Members in total

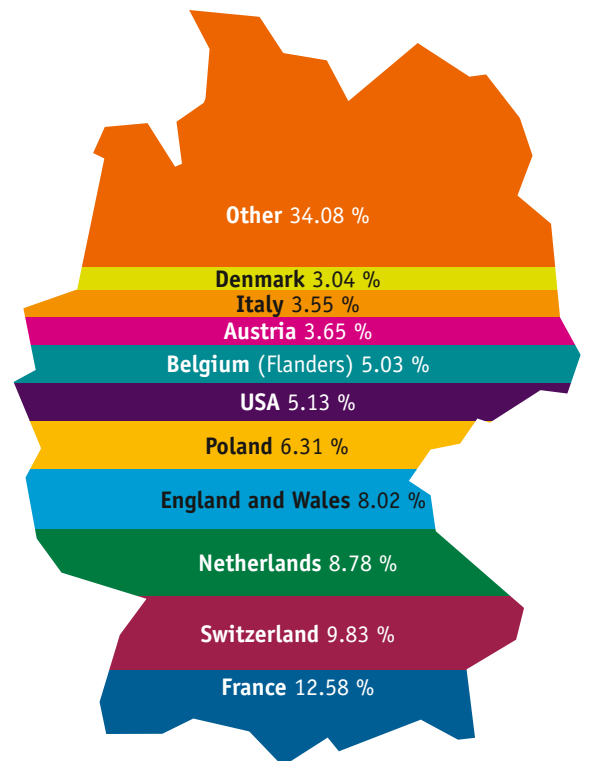


families/27plus 91.18 %  
juniors 5.80 %

schools and corporate bodies 0.88 %  
associations 2.11 %

## OVERNIGHT STAYS OF FOREIGN DJH GUESTS IN 2017

Country	Absolute	in %
France	96,878	12.58
Switzerland	75,739	9.83
Netherlands	67,616	8.78
England and Wales	61,785	8.02
Poland	48,629	6.31
USA	39,549	5.13
Belgium (Flanders)	38,747	5.03
Austria	28,154	3.65
Italy	27,317	3.55
Denmark	23,381	3.04
Other	262,530	34.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>770,325</b>	<b>100</b>



## We are here for you

**To take away:**

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for free



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[instagram.com/jugendherberge](https://instagram.com/jugendherberge)

[blog.jugendherberge.de](http://blog.jugendherberge.de)

**Watch:** [youtube.com/JugendherbergeDE](https://youtube.com/JugendherbergeDE)