

# Berufsfeuerwehr Mönchengladbach, Germany



*Berufsfeuerwehr Mönchengladbach at Station 2*



**B**erufsfeuerwehr Mönchengladbach is the municipal fire service situated in Mönchengladbach, Germany. Fire and Rescue International visited the Berufsfeuerwehr Mönchengladbach and met up with Chief fire officer Jörg Lampe during a recent visit to Germany and was honoured to spend a day with him, visiting the fire stations in Mönchengladbach as well as head office/command centre, while the chief and some of the staff members provided an overview of the fire service.

Mönchengladbach, formerly known as München-Gladbach is a city in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany and is located west of the Rhine River, halfway between Düsseldorf and the Dutch border. The original name of the city was Gladbach, which is still used in its name today. To distinguish the town from another town of the same name (the present Bergisch Gladbach), it took the name München-Gladbach in 1888. This spelling could mislead people to think that Gladbach was a borough of Munich and consequently the name was changed to Mönchen-Gladbach in 1950 and Mönchengladbach in 1960.

The origin of the town was an abbey founded in 974. It was named after the Gladbach, a narrow brook that mostly runs subterraneously today. The abbey and adjoining villages became a town in the 14th century. The town of Rheydt is located nearby and is incorporated into Mönchengladbach.

Since 2009, the territory of Mönchengladbach has comprised four (previously ten) boroughs, which are subdivided into 44 districts.

## **Berufsfeuerwehr**

Mönchengladbach was established 1901. The fire service operates within the city limits of Mönchengladbach, which covers an area of 170km<sup>2</sup>. In addition to this, the fire service is also responsible for the motorways A44, A46, A52 and A61 with a total of 120km in length. There are also 112km of railway lines within Mönchengladbach, which are also part of the fire services operational area.

Additionally, the fire service operates outside of the city limits in accordance with the concepts of the interior ministry of Northrhine-Westphalia. The ambulance and emergency doctors' services cover the same area as the fire service but extend into the council of Korschenbroich to the east as well as Jüchen towards the south.

In the year 2015 the city council of Mönchengladbach spent almost 30 million Euros on the fire and ambulance service.

The headquarters (Führungs- und Lagezentrum/FLZ) of Berufsfeuerwehr Mönchengladbach was built at its current ▶



- location in Rheydt in 2007. There are four stations of which three are fire and ambulance stations and one rescue/ ambulance station employing 323 professional fire fighters, 312 men and 11 women. A very important part of the fire service in Mönchengladbach is the volunteer force. There are 436 volunteer fire fighters, 29 of whom are women, serving from 20 volunteer stations throughout the city.

Mönchengladbach also has a youth fire brigade with 110 junior fire fighters, 10 whom are girls. The youth brigade fire fighters are aged between 10 and 18 years.

**Brief recent history**

Today's city of Mönchengladbach used to be two separate cities, the city of Mönchengladbach (North) and the city of Rheydt (South). Both cities had their own separate fire departments. Mönchengladbach's headquarters was located at its current Station 1 in Neuwerk whereas Rheydt's headquarters was based at Station 3 in Rheydt.

In 1976, shortly after the two cities were combined, the two fire services were merged into the Berufsfeuerwehr Mönchengladbach. The headquarters of the Berufsfeuerwehr Rheydt became Station 3 and the headquarters at Station 1 became the control centre for the new fire department.

The new headquarters (FLZ) was build next to Station 3 in 2007. In order to consolidate the specialist vehicles and the swap body system, the fire service constructed the

logistics centre next to Station 2 in 2008. In 2010 the control centre was moved from Station 1 into its new location on the top floor of the FLZ in Rheydt.

In 2016, Mönchengladbach City Council, as well as the fire service, began installing new sirens to warn the public in case of major civil emergencies or disasters.

The Berufsfeuerwehr Mönchengladbach has three professional fire and ambulance stations as well as a separate ambulance station within the city. The fire and emergency ambulance stations are manned by two groups of fire fighters and paramedics alternating in 24-hour shifts. Each group is run by an officer who captains the group when deployed. The non-emergency medical transports are deployed from Station 1. Station 2 features a logistics centre, which houses all of the specialist vehicles such as the hazmat components, the tanker and the swap body system.

The headquarters (FLZ) is located in the district of Rheydt, next to Station 3 and compromises 27 officers (22 silver and five gold), supported by 13 senior fire fighters as well as nine civilian employees. Within the FLZ there are nine departments namely management controlling, ambulance service, operations, control centre, emergency planning, engineering, preventive fire protection, human resources and administration. The Berufsfeuerwehr Mönchengladbach also has a chief of medicine as well as a psychological support team on staff.

The liaison between the fire service and the mayor's office is the "Dezernent", an elected official who liaises with the fire service and the city council.

**Risk profile**

Mönchengladbach is a city with around 270 000 people living there. The risk profile includes the usual scenarios that may be found in a city of this size including five hospitals, a mental health institute, a sleep clinic, several train stations, high rise flats, a number of small lakes and 120km of motorway.

High risk areas include four chemical plants, a military facility, the football stadium with a 54 000 capacity, the hockey stadium with a capacity of 9 000 as well as the airport. Mönchengladbach also features two main train stations; one in Rheydt and one in Gladbach. Another high-risk area would be the parts of the motorway (Autobahn) that feature no speed limit.

Station 2, which houses a mobile crane, tanker and a heavy rescue vehicle, was built close to the motorway A61 via which the other motorways can easily be accessed in order to deal with possible high speed car crashes.

**Operations**

The fire department has four specialist groups, namely SEG-Gefahrgut, the hazmat group; SEG Höhenrettung, which is a high-angle rescue group; SEG luK, which is the information and communication group and SEG

Rettungsdienst, the emergency medical service special response group, in order to deal with uncommon incidents.

There are also two emergency (soon three) doctors on 24-hour duty within the fire service.

Mönchengladbach is within range of three air ambulance (helicopter) services, which are based in Duisburg, Aachen and Cologne. Biological threats are not analysed by the fire service themselves but are sent to the respective Bio-Labs. It is the same case with animal borne infectious disease such as CJD, which are dealt with by the veterinary office.

The explosive ordinance disposal (Kampfmittelräumdienst) is run by the interior ministry of the state NRW.

The fire service tends to follow certain technical developments; a good example being the advent of modern car safety equipment. Car manufacturers will develop more advanced and safer methods of constructing cars, which results in the requirement for more powerful means to cut through these constructions when trying to rescue people out of cars involved in an accident. All of Mönchengladbach's fire engines are equipped with Weber Rescue extrication tools to handle this development. In addition the department has a heavy rescue vehicle featuring a more powerful set of hydraulic cutters at Station 2, which was deliberately built near two on-ramps to the motorway.

To stay up to date with modern equipment, the department replaces the four primary fire engines (HLF20) and the four turntable ladders (DLK23/12), which belong to the professional branch of the service, every five years. The equipment on these vehicles is completely replaced in the same cycle.

Ambulances get replaced in shorter intervals due to their higher usage. To be more economical, the ambulances get a new chassis when they are at half their lifetime instead of replacing the entire ambulance.

The engineering department also visits specialist exhibitions on a regular basis as well as staying in touch with the leading manufacturers of fire fighting equipment and medical products.

Generally an incident is responded to with a pumper, a ladder and an incident manager. An ambulance and a doctor would meet up with the fire and rescue team at the incident.

### The control centre

The fire service operates an integrated control centre, which also features facilities for disaster management. The new control centre was opened at its current location on the top floor of the command centre in Rheydt in 2010. For forty years prior, the control centre was based at Station 1. The total cost of the new, modern control centre was 1,2 million Euros. While modernisation was one requirement, it also needed to increase in size due to the increased



number of responsibilities such as coordinating large scale incidents and catering for an increase in emergency calls.

The control centre is equipped with six control posts, which are used to receive emergency phone calls via the emergency services number 112, as well as the 19 222, which is used for requesting non-emergency medical transports. From the control posts, the control centre clerk can dispatch the necessary and available units while taking the phone call. There are seven control centre clerks on duty in a 24-hour shift, three of which are also the drivers and command assistants of the C- and B-service. The control centre clerks must be public servants with the fire service, have a paramedical qualification as well as several years of experience, both in the fire service and the ambulance service and have a group commander's qualification.

The incident management system is by the company Siemens. It has the alarm call centre system also by Siemens integrated into it. The automated fire alarm system is also directly connected to the control centre's main computer so that the control centre clerks can have all of the information they require available at their control posts. The control posts are equipped with several screens in order to provide an overview of currently deployed units, available resources as well as further information, like available beds/capacities in the local hospitals.

When an emergency call comes in, a clerk will take the call personally. While the caller states what their emergency is, the clerk enters the alarm prompt, the



- ▶ address of the incident and a short notice with further information. Each alarm prompt has a pre-defined set of resources allocated to it as defined in the department's alarm and dispatch order. When all information is entered, the corresponding station(s) get alerted, the individual fire fighters/paramedics/medics get the command prompt on their bleeps and the system automatically programmes the satnavs on each vehicle to be deployed with the address of the incident. Additionally, the clerk will make an announcement and the alarm printers, which are positioned at the entry of each vehicle bay, will print out all available information about the incident as well as a map overview of the location.

**Further features of the control centre include:**

MoWaS (modular warning system)  
 This is a warning and information system for the public. It uses the local radio stations as well as the NINA app (emergency information and news) and a vehicle-based PA system to get important information to the public in case of emergencies.

**Autarchic satellite communication system**

The control centre is linked to other control and disaster management centres via autarchic satellite communication.

**Multi-language system**

While all of the control centre clerks are proficient in English, there are people who pass through or live in the city, who speak neither English nor German. To allow these people to call for help via 112, there is an algorithm with the most

common languages in place. Once the clerk identifies the caller's language, there is an on-screen questionnaire, with yes and no questions to figure out what the caller needs.

**Siren warning system**

The city of Mönchengladbach has recently reinstalled a siren warning system throughout the system. This is to ensure that every one within the city gets alerted to danger, should this be required. The siren network is accessed through the control centre.

**Telephone resuscitation**

In 2016, telephone resuscitation was introduced to Mönchengladbach's command centre. Should resuscitation be required, the clerk will guide the caller through the CPR procedure in order to give patients a better chance of survival until professional medical help arrives at the scene. This system has already been used several times and has been deemed a success.

In Germany, the maximum response times by the emergency services are fixed by legislation. The following are the response times for the city of Mönchengladbach. The time stated is the maximum allowable time between the caller phoning the alarm call centre (phone number 112) and the arrival of the emergency service at the scene of the incident.

Fire service: 8 minutes for the base unit and 13 minutes for the first reinforcement  
 EMS: 8 minutes (12 minutes for emergency doctors) 90 percent of the time

For the fire service the most common emergency scenarios include smaller fires (493 incidents in 2016), medium sized fires (52 incidents in 2016), technical assistance (2001 incidents in 2016) and assisting the emergency ambulance service.

**Major incident**

In 2004 there was a fire in a former textile factory. The fire was fought by 250 fire fighters over the course of 90 hours. The compacted cotton bales were difficult to access so that after a day it was decided to blow a hole through a concrete wall, in order to target the source of the fire more effectively.

**Equipment**

Each of the three professional fire stations houses the following:  
 1x HLF20 fire engine, Rosenbauer on a Mercedes-Benz chassis  
 1x DLK 23/12 Metz turntable ladder on a Mercedes-Benz chassis  
 4x RTW Fahrtec emergency ambulances on a Mercedes-Benz chassis  
 1x MTF Ford Transit or Mercedes-Benz Sprinter transport vehicle

**Station 1 specific**

4x KTW VW Transporter T5 transport ambulances  
 1x iRTW Fahrtec intensive care ambulance on a Mercedes-Benz chassis

### Station 2 specific

1x sRTW Fahrtec heavy emergency ambulance on a Mercedes-Benz chassis  
1x KEF Kfzbau Kevelaer small incident vehicle on a Mercedes-Benz chassis  
1x KW45 Liebherr mobile crane  
1x RW Rosenbauer heavy rescue vehicle on a Mercedes-Benz chassis  
1x TLF4000 Ziegler tanker on a Mercedes-Benz chassis  
1x CBRN ErkW Zeppelin hazmat Scout on a Fiat chassis  
2x DEKON\_P EMPL Decontamination truck on MAN chassis  
1x ELW Baumeister und Trabant command vehicle (C-Service) on a VW Transporter T5 chassis

### Swap body system at station 2

4x WLF Michels or Pütting swap body truck on MAN chassis  
13x roller containers for the swap body trucks for different purposes

### Station 3 specific

1x ELW Baumeister und Trabant command vehicle (C-Service) on a VW Transporter T5 chassis  
1x ELW Binz command vehicle (B-Service) on a Mercedes-Benz chassis  
1x ELW Ford Kuga command vehicle (A-Service)

There are a large number of additional vehicles with the volunteer force. A selection of the more specialist vehicles residing with the volunteer force can be found here:

### Volunteer Station Hardt

TLF 16/25 Metz tanker on a Mercedes-Benz chassis  
RW1 Wackenhut heavy rescue vehicle on a Mercedes-Benz Unimog chassis

### Volunteer Station Wickrath

DLK 23/12 Metz turntable ladder on a Mercedes-Benz chassis

### Volunteer Station Stadtmitt (City centre)

SW2000 Freytag hose laying vehicle on a MAN chassis  
GW Logistik Mercedes-Benz truck with a field kitchen trailer

### Volunteer station Neuwerk

RW1 Wackenhut heavy rescue vehicle on a Mercedes-Benz Unimog chassis

### Volunteer station Rheindahlen

GW Licht Mercedes-Benz Unimog lighting unit

### Swap body system

The Berufsfeuerwehr Mönchengladbach runs a swap body system, which is deployed from station 2. This system encompasses four swap body trucks as well as 13 roller containers, which can be deployed via the swap body trucks. This efficient system enables the fire service to cater for a wide range of incidents without requiring a specialised vehicle for each of the incidents that are less common. The 13 roller containers (AB) are:

1x AB Atemschutz: Used to resupply pressure breathers and their equipment  
1x AB Rettungsdienst: Roll container with a large supply of medical equipment

1x AB MANV: Medical supplies for situations where there are a lot of patients

1x AB Dekon: HAZMAT container, deployable to provide a decontamination system

1x AB Bahn-Bau: Construction equipment as well as materials for railway incidents

1x AB Hochwasser: Roll container with a boat and materials to combat flooding

1x AB Einsatzleitung: Mobile command centre

2x AB Ladeboden: Loading platform utilised for transporting heavy goods

1x AB Mulde: Skip for transporting heavy materials/debris

1x AB Schlauch: Container with a large number of hoses and hose materials

1x AB SOLM: Carries additional CO<sub>2</sub>, powder as well as foam concentrate

1x AB GSG: Hazmat container with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) equipment

### AutoPuls

To assist the EMS, Station 2 can deploy a vehicle with an AutoPuls, which is a non-invasive cardiac support pump that assists the medics and paramedics during resuscitation. This also enables a transport to hospital by ambulance while CPR, automated in this case, is in progress.

### Workshops and maintenance

Mönchengladbach features a number of in-house workshops that repair and maintain the equipment of the fire service. These workshops are based at the fire stations:

### Station 1

Fire extinguisher workshop  
Carpenters Workshop

### Station 2

Medical equipment storage and workshop  
Respiratory protection storage and workshop

### Station 3

Car repair workshop (for minor repairs)  
Radio and electronics workshop and storage  
Hose tower including a cleaning facility and hose workshop as well as storage

### External repairs/maintenance

The fire service cooperates with NEW, Mönchengladbach's utility services, that operate a large fleet of vehicles and manages the maintenance and repair of the fire service vehicles within their facilities. Furthermore, the fire department has contracts with commercial vehicle dealerships that service and repair the ambulance fleet. They even offer a priority service where the fire service vehicles get prioritised over the civilian customers. The fire fighting vehicles are maintained by their respective manufacturers.

The apparatus are maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations. The equipment and the vehicles in both the ambulance and in the fire service are checked every morning after station hand-over for their functionality. In addition to this, every Monday each fire ►

- ▶ station does a technical check-up on all of the equipment loaded onto their vehicles", added Chief Lampe.

## Ultimate apparatus

We asked Chief Lampe what his dream apparatus would be to which he replied, "The 'dream apparatus' would be in the area of swift reconnaissance such as drone/helicopter surveillance of incidents. It is also a dream to have the control centre 'see' what is going on at the scene of an incident. This could also be done with the use of video surveillance."

## Staff

The Berufsfeuerwehr of Mönchengladbach has a total staff complement of 330 people as well as 436 active volunteers. The fire stations naturally work 24 hours a day. There are four female fire fighters and four female paramedics on staff. The personnel numbers mentioned below account for the staffing during one day; the shift changes every morning at 07h00am. The staff is allocated as follows:

### Station 1 (13+2+1+8)

12 people are on duty 24 hours a day on a two-shift rotation. Additionally there are two paramedics who man an ambulance for 10 hours during weekdays. Station 1 has one reservist (Verfüger) who can be called in to compensate for understaffing due to illness. The emergency doctor's car, manned by one paramedic and one emergency physician, for the north of Mönchengladbach, uses Station 1 as its home base.

The four transport ambulances run from Station 1 as well. They are manned by two ambulance people each, totalling eight more staff members.

### Station 2 (18+2+2)

18 people are on duty 24 hours a day on a two-shift-rotation. Station 2 runs a daytime ambulance seven days a week. To compensate for understaffing due to illness, Station 2 has two reservists (Verfüger) standing by each day.

### Station 3 and station 4 (13+2+1+2)

12 people are on duty 24 hours a day on a two-shift rotation. Additionally there are two paramedics who man an ambulance for 10 hours during weekdays. Station 3 has one reservist (Verfüger) who can be called in to compensate for understaffing due to illness. The emergency doctor's car, manned by one paramedic and one emergency physician, for the south of Mönchengladbach, uses Station 3 for its home base.

Station 4 is a subsidiary of Station 3. It was constructed in order to improve EMS cover for the south of the city. The ambulance at Station 4 is manned by two paramedics.

## Command centre/headquarters (Führungs- und Lagezentrum)

The headquarters is located adjacent to Station 3. A total of 27 officers (22 silver and five gold), 13 senior fire fighters and nine civilian employees work in the headquarters. The officers will take charge of the A-, B- and 2 C-service

(command) vehicles in 24-hour shift. The three command vehicles deploy from the command centre during daytime. At night the A- and B-service remain at the command centre while the two C-Service redeploy to Station 2 and Station 3. C- and B-service command vehicles come with a command assistant (usually a control centre clerk) to support and drive the commander. The senior fire fighters, who support the officers in the command centre, also do regular 24-hour shifts at the three fire stations.

## Control centre

The alarm call centre is located on the top floor of the command centre. The emergency calls are received here and processed by seven senior fire fighters (control centre clerks) who also work in 24-hour shifts on a two-shift-rotation.

The fire service and the (emergency) ambulance service get dispatched from the four stations. First response/small incident hazmat is done by the fire service themselves. For larger incidents the fire service's SEG Gefahrgut (hazmat group) gets alerted in their free time. Hazmat equipment is based at Station 2.

The emergency medicine service is run by the fire department; however, the emergency medics are hospital staff who are seconded to the fire station. The control centre is completely run by the fire service.

## Recruitment policy

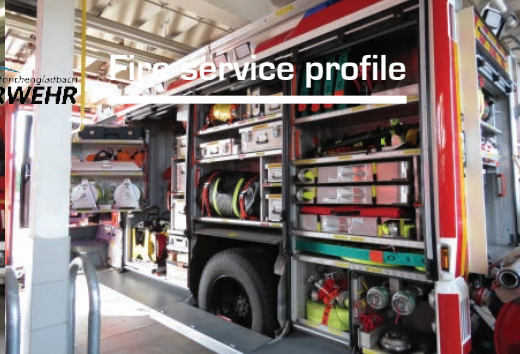
There are several components to the recruitment policy of the fire service Mönchengladbach. The service puts job adverts out in specialist journals as well as on its own webpage ([www.feuerwehr-mg.de](http://www.feuerwehr-mg.de)) and the city council's webpage.

There are also several events that the fire service utilises for its recruitment for example the Girls and boys day' and CHECK-IN, which are run by the council. Naturally a number of potential recruits come directly from the volunteers who also support the recruitment through their own means. Recruitment also occurs through sport events such as Toughest fire-Fighter Alive (TFA). In order to be taken on as a recruit there are several tests that candidates would have to pass before entering.

## Training

Every employee who has a paramedical qualification is required by law to attend a one week 'Quality Assurance' course every year. This course is offered in-house by the fire service. In addition to this there are a number of 'annual must-have' classes, which have to be attended by every employee such as a road safety or occupational health and safety presentation.

The Berufsfeuerwehr Mönchengladbach has its own school based at the Gingter Strasse near Fire Station 2, which offers a variety of training courses. The school is part of the SINN:FAN education network, which is a collaboration between several councils and fire services in the region. Employees can sign up to several interesting courses at SINN:FAN free of charge.



- ▶ More advanced training courses such as the group commanders course can be attended through the IdF in Münster (Fire Service Institute, run by the state interior ministry). There are also other government-run institutes like the AKNZ (Academy for Crisis Management, Emergency Planning and Civil Protection) that offer diverse courses.

Each station offers its own daily training programme. There are also several large scale training exercises each year involving more than one station such as the PTZ-10 (patient transport platoon) or MANV (mass triage incidents).

For medical qualifications and training courses the KBS academy, formerly an inner city hospital, is open to city council employees as well as external students. Their courses range from simple first aid certificates up to Bachelor's degrees. KBS is run by 'Maria Hilf Clinics' in Mönchengladbach in cooperation with the local university and the Berufsfeuerwehr Mönchengladbach.

### Fire safety

There are a number of safety awareness programmes. The PSU (psychological support) has been a very successful programme, which is offered to fire fighters, paramedics and medics to help deal with psychologically extreme situations in order to minimise or eliminate long term psychological trauma.

Many of the safety awareness aspects are being delivered through the day-to-day training on the fire stations themselves. An example is the previously mentioned road safety lessons.

Live-fire training exercises can be accessed through SINN:FAN. The Berufsfeuerwehr Mönchengladbach has its own solid-fuelled live-fire container and a team of instructors. The live-fire exercises help to prepare for real incidents and are an excellent way to teach about fire safety aspects.

One of the constant safety challenges are the fire incidents themselves, in particular the respiratory protection surveillance. Each group has one member, the fire engine driver, who looks after the squad, which is currently working under respiratory protection. The driver keeps an eye on the remaining air which each individual has left in his or her pressure breather and notes this down as well as their current location. In order to improve this further each pressure breather is equipped with a dead-man sensor, which sounds an alarm as soon as the sensor stops moving for a short period of time. The alarm would quickly alert the group members that there might be something wrong with one of their colleagues.

The fire service's preventive fire protection department works closely with architects, civil engineers as well as the planning office. Among other things the preventive fire protection department will have to sign off on construction plans for new buildings before they can be realised. It evaluates those plans in terms of their fire safety as well as the ability to tackle fires, should they arise, and the possibility for people to be evacuated from those building in case of emergency.

### Statistics:

1. Population: 270 000 people
2. Size of area covered: 170 km<sup>2</sup>
3. Emergency calls (2016): 73 509 (which resulted in 45 500 deployments)
4. Incidents:

These are the statistics from the annual report 2016.

### Fires

- a) Small fire (extinguisher): 295
- b) Small fire (hose/one station involved): 198
- c) Medium fire (at least two stations involved): 52
- d) Large fire (all three professional stations involved): 6
- e) People saved from fire: 47
- f) Fire deaths: 0
- g) False alarms: 1 245

### Technical assistance/rescue

- a) Total number: 2 001
- b) Hazmat: 5
- c) Oil spills: 317
- d) Animal rescue: 137
- e) Regional assistance: 2

### EMS/ambulance service

- a) Emergency ambulance (EMS): 26 803
- b) Non-emergency medical transport: 8 388
- c) Emergency doctors car: 7 150

### Volunteer deployments

- a) Total: 525
- b) Manning the professional stations: 34
- c) Storm/water incidents: 25
- d) Technical assistance/rescue: 177 of which 14 were car crashes without the professional fire service
- e) Fires: 274

### Preventive fire protection

- a) Fire watches (events): 308
- b) Inspected buildings: 331
- c) Position statements for the planning office: 313

### Interagency involvement

There are several areas where the Berufsfeuerwehr Mönchengladbach and the neighbouring services interact. As mentioned before, the training is done in cooperation with a number of the regional fire services. This is true for the basic training for recruits as well as further training, for fully qualified fire fighters/paramedics.

In case of an incident that is too large to handle for a single department or so large that it would compromise too much of the fire department, "Überörtliche Hilfe" (regional assistance) may be requested. Regional assistance will usually require several of the neighbouring fire services to deploy a number of resources to assist, to ensure that their own as well as the affected service can still run other incidents/the ambulance service. There were two of these kinds of incidents in 2016.

As Mönchengladbach is close to the Dutch border, the possibility for international cooperation exists. Plans, especially defining areas of responsibility, for this case are in place.

The relationship with the police is very good and cooperative. Many incidents require both the police as well as the fire and ambulance service to be present. The



police have their own control centre in the city which works independently from the fire service. The emergency calls (112) can be rerouted to the police control centre and the police emergency calls (110) can be rerouted to the fire service control centre should the need arise.

The chemical industry in Germany and Austria run the TUIS (Transport Accident Information and Assistance) system. This is a three-stage system, where the chemical cooperation sends out their own hazmat personnel to advise or assist local fire stations in case of large hazmat incidents.

In case of certain infectious diseases, the health department is informed. They may give advice or arrange for further measures.

Visiting Berufsfeuerwehr Mönchengladbach in Germany was quite an eye opener to the capabilities, resources and response of a professional fire department in Europe. Not only was the "German precision" very obvious, resulting in an exceptionally efficient and well-resourced fire brigade but also the support from the municipality and very evidently support from the public. 