

LOCATION CLASSIFICATIONS 2015

Germany

1 Introduction

Location Classifications 2015 provides a hierarchical breakdown of Germany's municipalities that indicates these municipalities' regional significance. The dataset features six classifications, including urban agglomeration, large city, high-order/middle-order center with densely populated surroundings, large-order/middle-order center with rural surroundings, other municipalities with densely populated surroundings and other municipalities with rural surroundings.*

2 Applications

Location Classifications assigns categories to Germany's municipalities as a means of offering insight into their regional function and significance. Municipalities with greater regional significance serve or have been designated to serve more of a supply function for the surrounding population (e.g., via administrative and other services) than municipalities with less regional significance. In Germany, planning and building permission (e.g., for large-area retail projects) is directly contingent upon a location's hierarchical classification and the role it plays – or is intended to play – in the broader region.

Location Classifications provides this information by categorizing Germany's municipalities according to their (trans-)regional significance and functional scope. The dataset is therefore a valuable decision-making tool for planning locations and expansion endeavors.

3 Basis of calculation

Various factors determine a given municipality's location classification. Important considerations include the size of the municipality as measured by the number of inhabitants, its spatial designation (e.g., "urban", "rural", "central area", "peripheral area", etc.) as determined by Germany's Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR) and its categorization as a "low-order", "middle-order" or "high-order" center. The population density of the surrounding area is also taken into account for the sake of determining the general profile of the region.

**The terms "low-order center", "middle-order center" and "high-order center" are used within the context of regional planning policies and practices in Germany to distinguish between different classifications of municipalities. Municipalities with "low-order" status tend to offer only basic services to the local population, while "high-order" municipalities usually offer a much broader range of services for both the local population and inhabitants of the surrounding region. As an example, a high-order municipality might offer specialized medical services and a full range of administrative offices, while a low-order municipality would be more likely to offer only a general-purpose hospital and basic administrative services. These distinctions have relevance to retail trade, because some types of retail endeavors (e.g., large shopping centers) are only allowed to be built and developed in higher-order municipalities. An understanding of these different categories is therefore essential for tailoring retail projects and practices to the municipalities where they are to be based.*

Location Classifications provides data on the following categories:

Location Classifications	Description	Example cities
1	Urban agglomeration	Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Frankfurt a. M.
2	Large city	Bonn, Augsburg, Karlsruhe, Lübeck
3	High-order/middle-order center with densely populated surroundings	Flensburg, Ahlen, Gießen, Ravensburg
4	High-order/middle-order center with rural surroundings	Weimar, Ansbach, Schwäbisch Hall, Görlitz
5	Other municipalities with densely populated surroundings	Petersberg, Heroldsberg, Wendelstein
6	Other municipalities with rural surroundings	Neuenkirchen, Greding, Lüssow, Zepelin

Questions?
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