The ARD is short for the “Association of Public Broadcasting Corporations in the Federal Republic of Germany” (“Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland”). With its nine self-governed regional public broadcasting corporations, which are independent from the state or government and publicly funded, the ARD offers a diversity of programmes on television, on the radio and online for all. Depending on the device in question – Smart TV, PC, tablet, or smartphone – the digital media world also allows for time-delayed and mobile reception of all ARD services. The ARD has a total output of approximately 250 hours of television and 1,400 hours of radio broadcasts per day – plus online services and teletext.

The mission of the ARD is to provide information, educational, service and entertainment programmes. This mandate is defined in the statutes of the nine broadcasting corporations and in the Interstate Broadcasting Agreement at national level (“Rundfunkstaatsvertrag”). Collectively, the ARD and its affiliates produce a repertoire of programmes that are indispensable to the German media landscape – offering diversity and quality at local, regional and national level.

ARD, ZDF – “the Second” German Television Channel (“Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen”) –, as well as the nationwide radio stations of “Deutschlandradio” which is jointly run by both corporations, comprise the public service broadcasters in Germany. In the past, their programmes were practically without any competition. Since 1984, however, commercial broadcasters have been competing with the public service broadcasters.
The ARD was founded by six broadcasting corporations in 1950. Today, the ARD consists of nine regional public broadcasting corporations for 16 federal states: Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR), Hessischer Rundfunk (HR), Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR), Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR), Radio Bremen, Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg (RBB), Saarländischer Rundfunk (SR), Südwestrundfunk (SWR) and Westdeutscher Rundfunk Köln (WDR). The tenth member is the Deutsche Welle (DW), Germany’s international broadcaster.

Since 2013, public service broadcasting is financed by the new license fee which is independent of the device used. This fee amounts to 17.50 euros per month and is payable for each residence. The fee is paid by the citizens for the citizens. Persons on certain social welfare services are exempt from payment and under certain criteria, disabled persons are entitled to pay a reduced fee. Further information on the license fee and a contact form for the Beitragsservice agency which collects payments on behalf of ARD, ZDF and Deutschlandradio can be found on www.rundfunkbeitrag.de.

Being financed through the license fee means all programmes are independent from commercial and political interests, and thus, provide credible, serious and reliable information. The licence fee covers all forms of usage – weather classical radio or TV set, computer or mobile devices. Advertising also constitutes a small part of ARD’s revenues. Currently, 0.8% of radio and 1.1% of television air time is used for advertising. Advertising is neither permitted in the evenings after 8pm nor on Sundays and holidays.

The radio and television programmes of the ARD reflect the diversity and identity of all regions within the Federal Republic of Germany. The “First German Television Channel” (“Das Erste”) is ARD’s flagship channel on German television, jointly operated by all nine ARD members. A strong network of domestic and foreign correspondents ensures news reporting of the highest quality.
Fast, competent, reliable: ARD foreign correspondents are the cornerstone for credible reporting throughout the world. With more than 100 journalists in 30 studios, the ARD maintains one of the most extensive networks of foreign correspondents internationally. These correspondents guarantee the unique quality of ARD news programmes – in the news bulletin “Tagesschau” and the news programme “Tagesthemen”, and numerous other broadcasts on the radio, on television and online.

ARD correspondents provide first-hand information about current affairs and developments around the globe. They live on location, they know their countries and cultures, they analyse the political situation.

In Germany, the ARD’s nine regional public broadcasting corporations operate 16 television stations and more than 50 local studios and correspondents to cover regional affairs. All, ARD radio stations and the so-called ARD “Third Television Channels” report from the region for the region.

All ARD members contribute to the nation-wide television programme “Das Erste”. The twelve or more “Tagesschau” news bulletins daily, the 30 minute news programme “Tagesthemen” at 10.15 pm and the late-evening news provide viewers with professional and up-to-date information. The German television audience considers the “Tagesschau” to be the most important source of information: In the first six month of 2016, on average more than ten million viewers watched the main bulletin at 8pm every day.

More information is offered by investigative political programmes, political talk shows, journalistic reports and documentary films. Very popular fictional trademarks of “Das Erste” are the crime series “Tatort” and top-quality films made for television. “Das Erste” also offers a broad range of entertainment programmes as well as feature films, plus programmes on culture, general knowledge and consumer advice. Great sporting events and the “Sportschau”-programme regularly bring together millions of television viewers. Additionally, a wide variety of musical and church-related programmes is offered to viewers, as well as programmes for children and the whole family.
“Das Erste” broadcasts 24/7 and can be received in digital format (or high-definition/HDTV in some cases) in practically all households within the Federal Republic of Germany via satellite, cable, antenna, or the web. Of all television viewers in Germany, 24.1 million watch the First Television Channel on a daily basis, amounting to a market share of 11.6 % in 2015.

In addition to “Das Erste”, there are seven regional television programmes – the so-called “Third Television Channels”: BR Fernsehen, hr-fernsehen, MDR FERNSEHEN, NDR Fernsehen (NDR and Radio Bremen), rbb Fernsehen, SWR/SR Fernsehen and WDR Fernsehen.

Each of these Third Television Channels is characterized by an individual regional profile and a high degree of regional focus throughout its news, sports and entertainment programmes. With these regional roots, the Third Channels reflect the diversity of the federal structure in Germany, and thus, promote a sense of identity in their separate broadcasting regions.

Most of the regional programmes offered by the Third Channels are being broadcast between 6pm and 8pm. There are also prime time or late-night talk shows, political debate and comedy shows with well-known guests and artists. In addition to this, television productions on politics, culture, science, the economy, consumer interests, self-help themes as well as reports about countries, geography and nature are broadcasted throughout the evening. All Third Channels show documentary films, TV dramas and feature films. Furthermore, the Bayerischer Rundfunk operates the educational channel “ARD-alpha”.

Like “Das Erste”, the Third Channels broadcast 24/7 and can be received in digital format in their respective broadcasting region. In 2015, their combined market share was a stunning 12.5 %.

“tagesschau24” is one of two special interest stations of the ARD, offering news and information around the clock. “One” (formerly “Einsfestival”) offers a wide range of fiction and entertainment for younger audiences from 30 to 49 years of age.

The children’s channel “KiKA”, jointly operated by ARD and ZDF carries no advertising and is geared towards children between 3 to 13 years of age. ARD and ZDF also run the current events and documentary channel “PHOENIX”. For the cultural channel “3sat”, ARD and ZDF collaborate with their Austrian and Swiss public service counterparts. The European cultural channel “ARTE” is a cooperation of ARD with ZDF and ARTE France.
Every day, more than 53.1% of the German population (38.51 million people above 10 years of age) listen to one of the ARD’s 60+ radio stations. Every regional ARD broadcaster offers at least four different radio programmes over antenna, cable or satellite (analogue and/or digital). Mobile use is guaranteed via web streaming, podcasts and apps.

Co-operation between the various broadcasting corporations plays an important role in radio, too: projects like the crime series “ARD Radio Tatort” and the “ARD radio-feature” are jointly produced by all ARD members. Every summer, the ARD cultural radio stations join forces for the “ARD Radiofestival”. All ARD members also co-operate in organizing the weekly radio conference transmission for the German football league as well as producing four evening programmes: the “ARD Nachtkonzert” with classical music, the “ARD PopNacht” with popular music, the “ARD Hitnacht” with old favorites and the “ARD Infonacht” with reports, current affairs and the latest news headlines.
Even more, there are “pure word programmes” with radio plays, readings, general knowledge programmes and productions for children, as well news stations (“Infowellen”) which provide listeners with a steady and continually updated supply of current affairs and first-hand reporting.

Together with ZDF, the ARD operates “Deutschlandradio”, which produces three nation-wide radio programmes: “Deutschlandfunk” with a focus on news and current affairs, the cultural programme “Deutschlandradio Kultur” and the young, sophisticated, and entertaining programme “DRadio Wissen”.

For the listeners in each broadcasting area, every broadcasting corporation produces several regional programmes which are addressing at different target groups.

Nine ARD cultural radio stations offer concerts, literary programmes and readings, as well as programmes on science and politics of the highest standard, and also ambitious productions in the rich tradition of radio plays and features.

In every region, music fans can enjoy stations offering current pop music and older hits, as well as easy listening programmes supplemented by programmes dealing with self-help topics and consumer advice.

Nine regional radio programmes produced for a younger audience play songs from rock, pop, hip-hop, dance, techno, house and other music genres. Moreover, they have their own news formats, condensed information shows, talk radio, comedy programmes, etc.

The ARD’s “Refugee radio” started in 2015 on Funkhaus Europa and provides information and service for refugees from crisis regions in Arabic and English.

In this way, listeners in every broadcasting region are able to find themselves in “their” programme with a strong regional accent, close to what is really happening.
On all relevant digital platforms, ARD Online supplies its audience with news, sports, education, culture and entertainment. The portal ARD.de provides access to all ARD websites. Catch-up-services as well as live television and radio programmes are all contained in the comprehensive ARD Mediathek. Tagesschau.de offers 24-hour news service, available on all kinds of devices. Sportschau.de covers a variety of popular and special sports events. Boerse.ARD.de gives clarity to stock market information. The website DasErste.de paired with the main TV programme offers access to all shows and programme information, and children can find their favorite shows and heroes by clicking through kinder.ARD.de.

ARD Online is free of advertising. Instead of maximizing web traffic, ARD Online is focused on providing high-quality content, in-depth and independent coverage, serving all audiences and providing access for physically challenged people. Through Social TV and Social Radio, the ARD connects with viewers and listeners in a new way. To communicate and to join in the audience can use their social media accounts on well known platforms or a direct login as an alternative. Social TV is available on all devices and can also be used as a second screen application.

Produced by ARD and ZDF, a new online channel for young people from 14 to 29 years of age will start in October 2016. It will be available on Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other online platforms.

Each of the nine regional public broadcasting corporations of the ARD is an independent non-profitable institution subject to German public law. Each of these corporations has a Director-General at its head. A broadcasting council (Rundfunkrat), which consists of representatives from leading social and corporate groups like churches, trade unions, and the civic movement elects and controls the Director General and his executive team. An administrative board (Verwaltungsrat) monitors the business management of each broadcasting corporation.

The ARD Assembly of Members, which consists of representatives from the nine regional public broadcasting corporations, appoints one corporation to chair the ARD for the duration of one year. In 2016, the Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR) has this role. As a result, the Director-General of this corporation becomes the chairman/chairwoman of the ARD. The ARD Secretary-General in Berlin reports directly to the ARD chairman/chairwoman and deals with media politics, lobby groups professional associations and other civic institutions.

In addition, the ARD has several other joint operations like ARD Degeto, an independent company responsible for film production and acquisition, the German Broadcasting Archive Foundation (DRA), and the ARD.ZDF medienakademie for further training and professional development jointly operated by ARD and ZDF.
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Bayerischer Rundfunk – BR
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Regional Public Broadcasting Corporation of the Free State of Bavaria • Radio Broadcasting: Bayern 1, Bayern 2, BAYERN 3, BR-KLASSIK, BS aktuell, PULS, Bayern plus, and BR Heimat • Television Broadcasting: BR Fernsehen with Bayerntext, ARD-alpha with Alphatext as well as www.br.de

Hessischer Rundfunk – HR
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Regional Public Broadcasting Corporation of the Federal State of Hesse • Radio Broadcasting: hr1, hr2-kultur, hr3, hr4, YOU FM und hr-INFO • Television Broadcasting: hr-fernsehen with hr-Text as well as www.hessenschau.de

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Director-General: Lutz Marmor
Press office: Martin Gartzke
Common Broadcasting Corporation for the Free Hanseatic City of Hamburg as well as the Federal States of Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania • Radio Broadcasting: NDR 90.3, NDR 1 Radio MV, NDR 1 Niedersachsen, NDR 1 Welle Nord, NDR 2, NDR Info, NDR Kultur, N-JOY, NDR Blue, NDR Plus and NDR Info Spezial • NDR Fernsehen together with Radio Bremen, NDR Text as well as www.ndr.de

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Regional Public Broadcasting Corporation of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen • Radio Broadcasting: Bremen Eins, Bremen Vier, Nordwestradio, Bremen NEXT, in co-operation with WDR and RBB Funkhaus Europa • Television Broadcasting Radio Bremen TV in NDR Fernsehen (NDR together with Radio Bremen) with Radio Bremen Text as well as www.radiobremen.de

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Common Public Broadcasting Corporation for the City of Berlin and the Federal State of Brandenburg • Radio Broadcasting: Antenne Brandenburg, radioberlin 88.8, Infomedia, Fritz, Kulturradio und Radioeins, Funkhaus Europa (in co-operation with WDR and Radio Bremen) • Television Broadcasting: rbb Fernsehen with rbb Text as well as www.rbb-online.de
Saarländischer Rundfunk – SR
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Phone +49 (0) 681 60 20
Director-General: Thomas Kleist
Press office: Peter Meyer
Regional Public Broadcasting Corporation of the Federal State of Saarland • Radio Broadcasting: SR 1 Europawelle, SR 2 KulturRadio, SR 3 Saarlandwelle, 103.7 UnserDing (in co-operation with SWR), KiRaKa (in co-operation with WDR) und AntenneSaar (in co-operation with several partners) • Television Broadcasting: SR Fernsehen in co-operation with SWR, SAARTEXT as well as www.sr.de

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Regional Public Broadcasting Corporation of the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia • Radio Broadcasting: 1LIVE, WDR 2, WDR 3, WDR 4, WDR 5, Funkhaus Europa (together with Radio Bremen and RBB) • Television Broadcasting: WDR Fernsehen with WDR-Text as well as www.wdr.de

Deutsche Welle – DW
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Telefon +49 (0) 228 42 90
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Broadcasting Corporation under federal law for foreign broadcasting with a worldwide multimedia repertoire, five television programmes in English, German, Spanish and Arabic, as well as informational services in 30 languages via radio/audio or at: www.dw.com

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Online Channel for young people administered jointly by ARD and ZDF

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Nation-wide Broadcasting Corporation, administered jointly by ARD and ZDF, with the programmes: Deutschlandfunk, Deutschlandradio Kultur and DRadio Wissen as well as www.deutschlandradio.de

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ARD is Active Member of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU).

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ARD International Cable Coordination ensures the retransmission of the ARD programme family via cable and DSL networks in Europe.
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Extensive information regarding the ARD can be found on the Internet at: www.ARD.de