

The flood disaster in the Ahr Valley

President *Marcel Hürter*

Court of Audit of Rhineland-Palatinate

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2nd October 2025

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Challenges

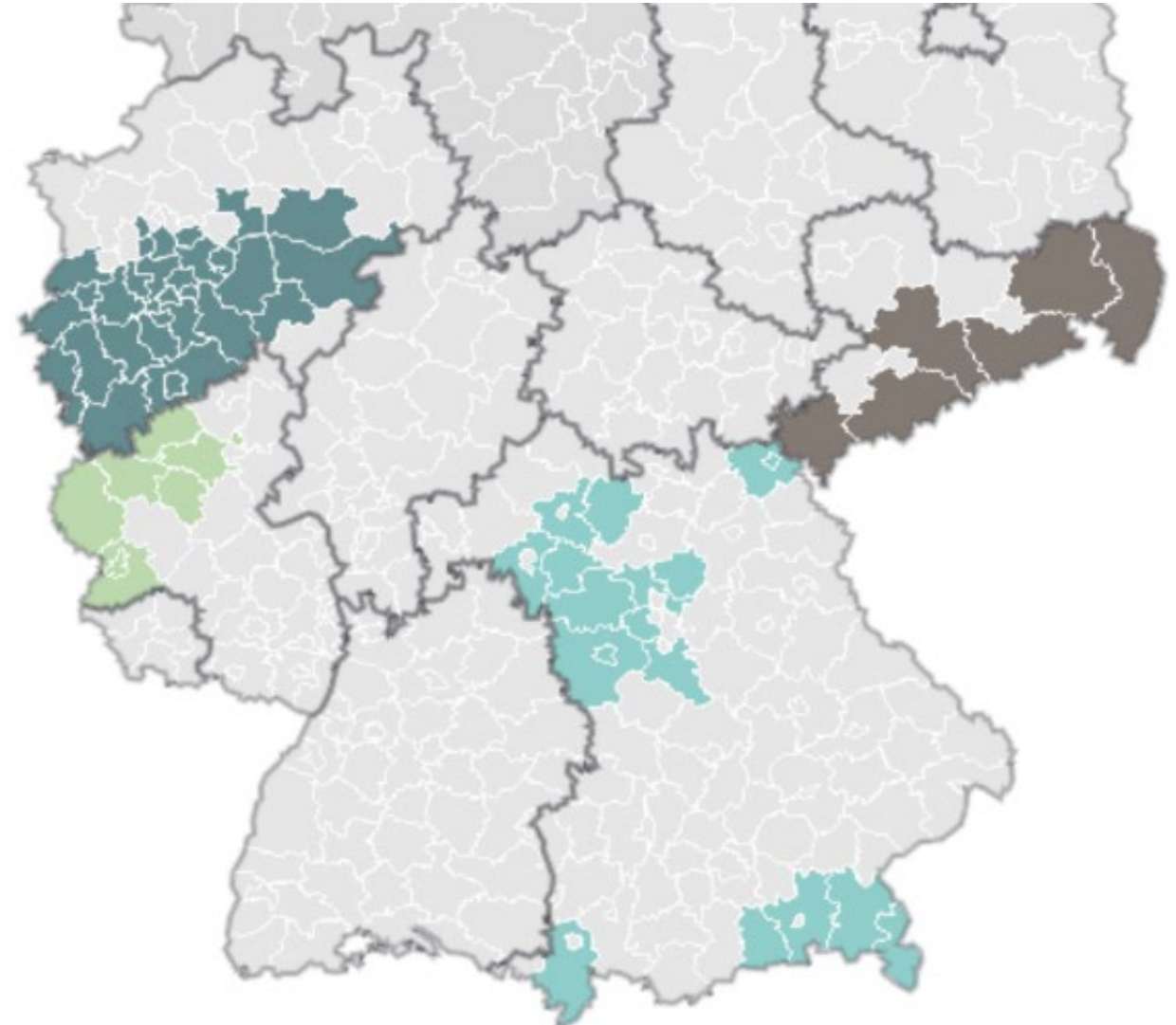
04

Role of the
Court of Audit

01

Regions affected by the flood

- Extreme rainfall
- 14th July 2021
- Led to damage and flood events
- 183 dead
- In districts in Rhineland-Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria and Saxony

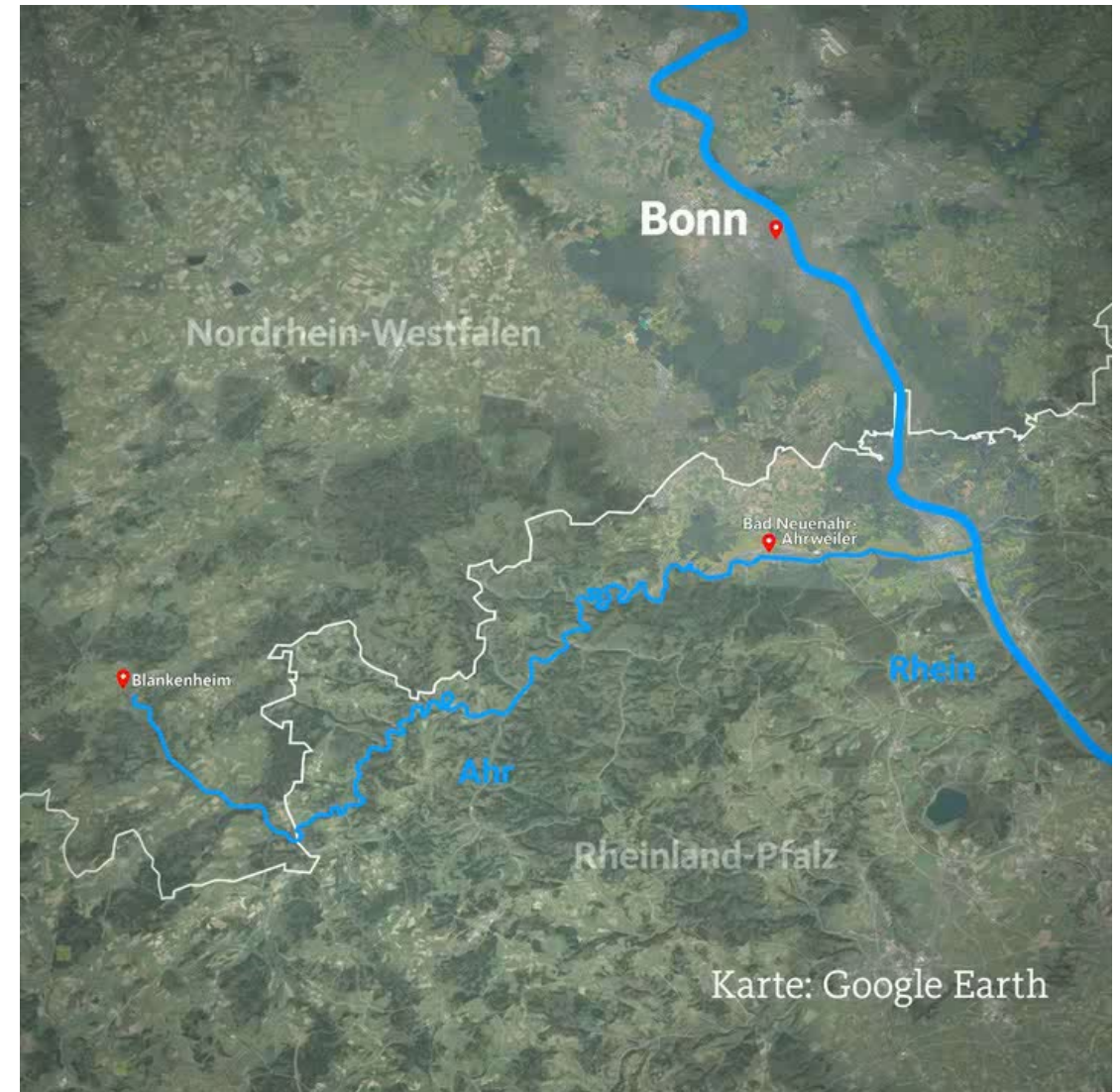


Source: <https://www.bundesregierung.de/resource/blob/974430/1963706/613b934d3f359a5118df16755e9e527c/2021-09-27-zwischenbericht-hochwasser-data.pdf>

- Ahr is a small river
- South of Bonn
- Runs generally eastwards
- In North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate
- 134 dead in the district of Ahrweiler (Rhineland-Palatinate)

Copyright: Westdeutscher Rundfunk

Source: <https://reportage.wdr.de/chronik-ahrtal-hochwasser-katastrophe>





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Source: <https://www1.wdr.de/mediathek/video-chronologie-der-flut-100.html>



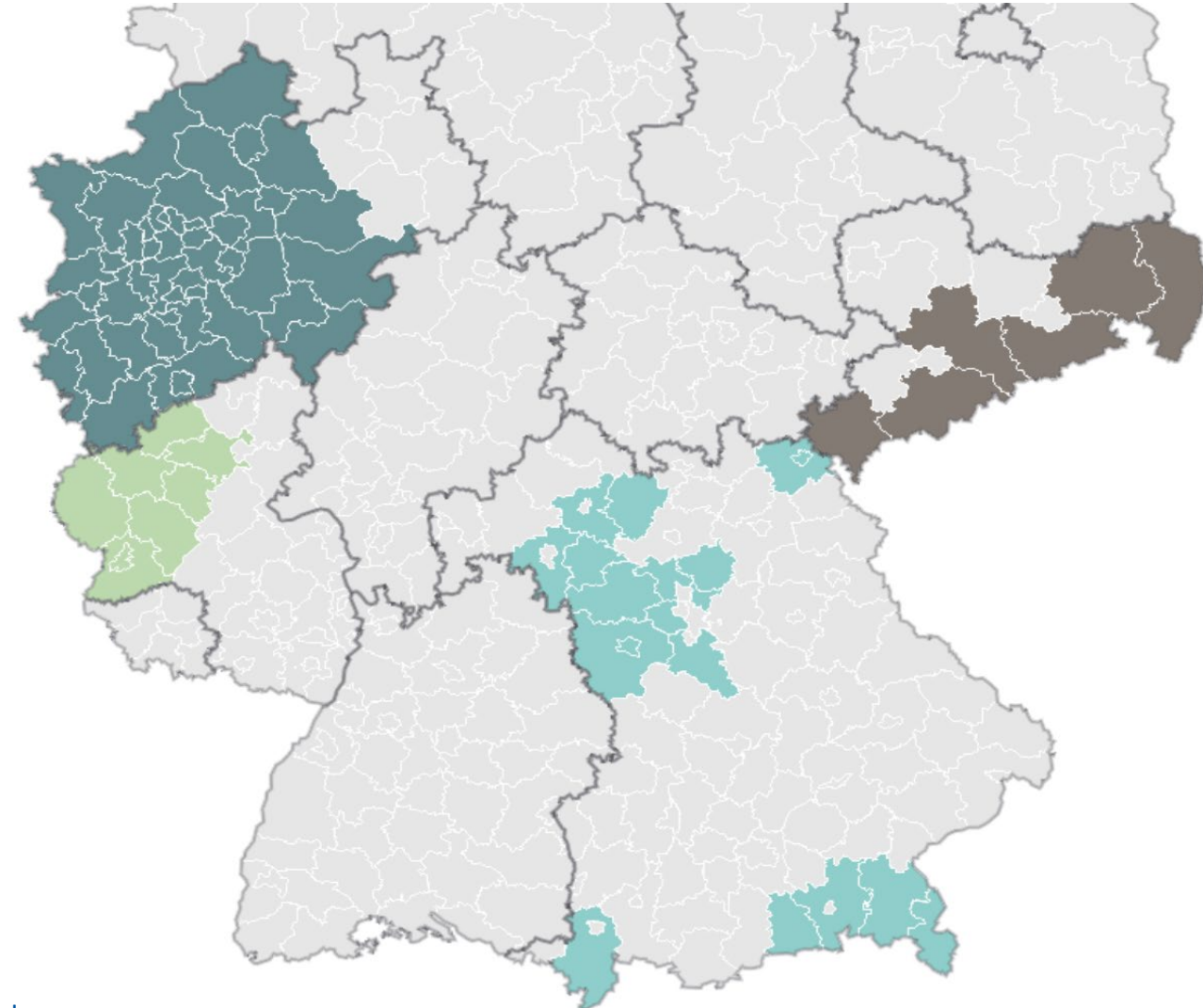
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Source: <https://www1.wdr.de/mediathek/video-chronologie-der-flut-100.html>

02

Political response

- Estimated €30B in damages
- Federal election in September
- Act establishing a special fund entitled 'Reconstruction Aid 2021'
- Regulation on the distribution and use of the resources of the 'Reconstruction Aid 2021' fund



Source: https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/aufbhv_2021/BJNR421400021.html

03

Challenges

Dimensions of conflicting goals:

- Quality/standards vs. time/number of measures:
Risk of quality loss if many measures are implemented quickly.
- Quality/standards vs. costs/resources:
Higher standards require more human resources and higher costs.
- Time/number of measures vs. costs/resources:
Limited resources delay the implementation of measures.

Conclusion: Three goals cannot be fully achieved simultaneously.



Source: picture generated with AI

Olaf Scholz – then finance minister – later chancellor

“As a country, we must now stand together and provide the flood victims with quick, generous, and unbureaucratic assistance.”

Malu Dreyer – then state minister president

“It will take a long time before people can say again, ‘I recognize my home.’”



Source: [spd.de](https://www.spd.de)

- Funds and additional personnel
- Prioritisation of urgency
- Coordination by central authorities
- Simplified funding procedures
- Digitalised application procedures
- Granting of lump sums and tranches
- Simplification of award procedures
- Temporary structures

■ Municipal infrastructure	€1.049M
■ Businesses	€670M
■ Private reconstructions and household goods, buildings	€772M
■ Water/waste management, waterways/flood protection	€355M
■ Healthcare	€127M
■ Other	€20M

Approvals as of 15th May 2025

Source: <https://www.wiederaufbau.rlp.de> - Wiederaufbau-Broschüre „Perspektive Zukunft“

04

Role of the Court of Audit

- Participation in the simplification of funding procedures
- Accompanying audits
 1. Application procedure for private individuals for the reconstruction of buildings
Result: identification of opportunities to speed up the process
 2. Applications for the repair of damage to bridges
In progress

- Significant involvement in the acute crisis is not appropriate
- Exception: participation in shaping the legal framework
- Too much involvement may prevent objective review at a later date
- Clear communication regarding competences and responsibilities
- Develop pragmatic review criteria that take the crisis into account

- Don't create unrealistic expectations.
- Don't make unrealistic statements about timelines or costs.

Thank you for
your kind attention!

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Back-up

