

## **DLRG**

### **974 people saved in 2018**

#### **World's largest water rescue organisation still on course for success**

Last year, the lifeguards of the Deutsche Lebens-Rettungs-Gesellschaft (DLRG) saved 974 lives. This is 218 persons or 28.84 percent more than in 2017. In 64 missions they even had to risk their own lives to bring the victims ashore alive. These figures were announced today by Achim Haag, President of the DLRG.

„Of course, we must not ignore the high number of drowned people last year. After all, at least 504 people lost their lives in the water,“; Haag continued. The balance sheet of the world's largest water rescue organisation shows a total of 92,177 aid operations. Over 45,000 rescuers were deployed by the DLRG last year. On a voluntary basis, they have worked almost three million hours of watchkeeping to make the water recreation of millions of people safe. „In the months of July and August, the rescue operations skyrocketed in particular. Carelessness, overestimation of one's own ability or ignorance of the waters were the most frequent causes,“; said Haag.

A slight increase can now be seen in swimming and lifeguard training. The instructors at the edge of the pool took 225,003 exams last year. Once again, the DLRG proved its position as number one in swimming and lifeguard training. Haag described it as remarkable that, despite the death of the public swimming pools, almost 82,000 lifeguard tests were successfully passed, including almost 8,000 junior rescuers, the entry qualification in lifeguard swimming. In his remarks, the president said, that the DLRG did not yet have to worry about young talents with regard to the water rescue service.

„With over ten million hours of voluntary and unpaid work, our members have done a lot for people's safety and demonstrated the importance of civic engagement for our society. Our concept of education about water hazards, prevention through swimming and lifeguard training and guard service on coasts and inland waters is successful and unique in this form in the world,“; Achim Haag explains.

Haag described the result of a representative forsa survey commissioned by the DLRG on the swimming ability of pupils as a „Pisa disaster of school sport“; It showed in 2017 that 59% of the children at the end of the fourth grade are not safe swimmers. In this context, the DLRG President harshly criticised the further deterioration in the framework conditions for training. The number of closed public swimming pools in Germany that are about to be closed is constantly increasing, warns Haag.

„This development is alarming. The consequences will be felt by all of us. 20 to 25 percent of all primary schools no longer offer swimming lessons because they do not have a public swimming pool available, and training associations such as the DLRG have long waiting lists of one to two years for a swimming course“;. And: „The protests in the municipalities against the development of public pools closing are getting louder and louder. 87.3 percent of the people want to keep their public pools around the corner. That's the vast majority. Politicians should listen to this,“; appeals President Haag. The number of public swimming pools expected to close permanently in 2019 is estimated at at least 70.

#### **Petition for the preservation of public pools**

For years, the DLRG has been vehemently criticising the deteriorating conditions for swimming training. More and more public swimming pools are being closed or converted into so-called fun pools where swimming training is no longer an option. „We must preserve public pools, build public swimming pools, not rationalize away. Closures are at the expense of water security for the population and affordable social services,“; Haag urges.

The possible consequences are already foreseeable: around 60 percent of ten-year-olds are not safe swimmers. Even 25 percent of primary schools no longer have access to a swimming pool - or some have to travel long distances. Against this background, the DLRG launched a nationwide

online petition entitled "Rettet die Bäder" at the end of October 2018 to draw attention to the topic and counteract the continuing negative trend. The quorum of 50,000 signatures was already reached in February of this year and so the petition could be handed over directly to the Petitions Committee of the German Bundestag. In April, however, the petition was extended in order to find targeted supporters over the summer months where swimming skills are so important and to give the petition even more emphasis: at the more than 2,000 bathing sites where the DLRG is present. All further information in addition under <https://www.dlrg.de/baederpolitik.html>

### **About DLRG**

With almost 1.8 million members and supporters, the DLRG is the largest water rescue organisation in the world. Since it was founded in 1913, its mission has been to protect people from drowning. The patron is Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. The DLRG is number one in swimming and lifeguard training in Germany. From 1950 to 2018, it carried out over 22.5 million swimming tests and almost five million lifeguard swimming tests. In around 2,000 divisions, the volunteers work more than ten million hours a year for the people of Germany. The DLRG's core tasks are swimming and lifeguard training, water hazard education and water rescue. More than 45,000 members watch over the safety of bathers and water sports enthusiasts for well over three million hours a year. More information at <https://www.dlrg.de/>

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