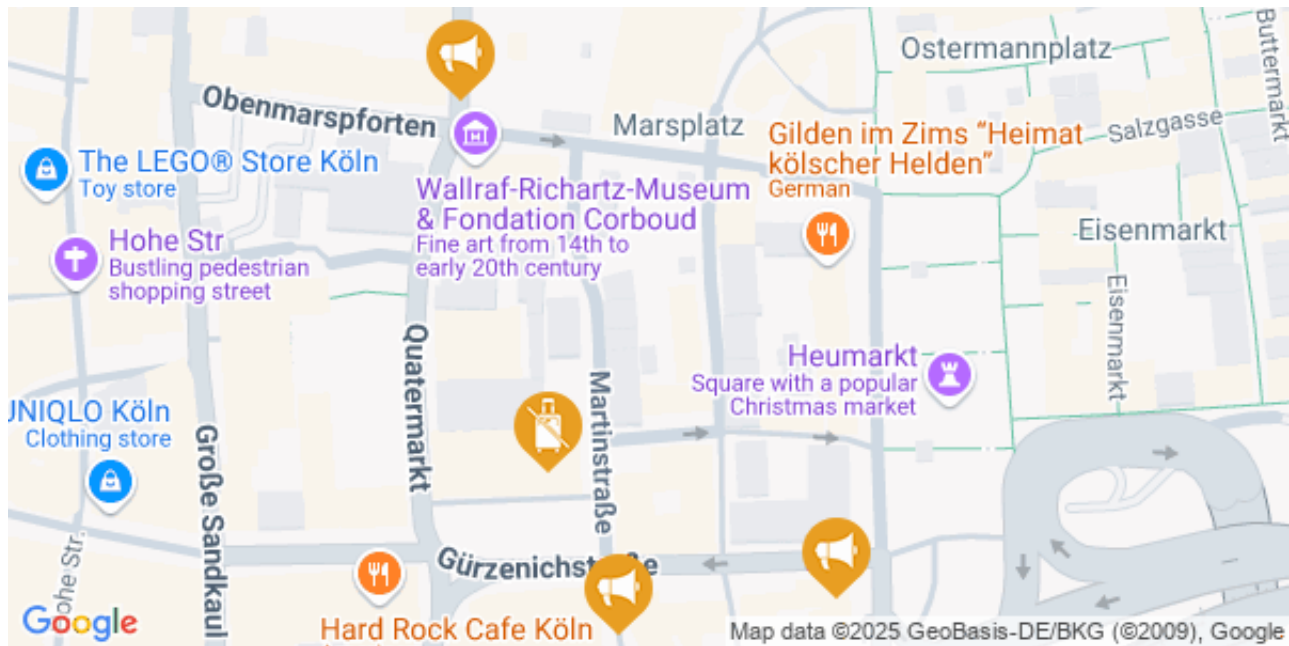


## Protest

**04**

MAR

11:56 UTC

## Germany Tactical: Far-right AfD party event, counterprotests scheduled in Cologne on March 5; maintain heightened vigilance

### Current Situation

- The annual conservative Metropolitan Conference, or Metrokon, will be held in Cologne on March 5. The event is organized by the far-right populist Alternative fur Deutschland (AfD) party's Cologne council group.
- AfD local politicians from Cologne, Berlin, Munich, and Hamburg, as well as members of both federal and state parliaments, are expected to attend.
- The conference will take place at a prominent event venue on Martinstrasse 29-37 from 14:00 (local time).

Source: [Metrokon.de](https://metrokon.de)

- In response to the conference, anti-AfD protests have been organized on March 5, all of which will begin at 13:00. The protests are being held to denounce the use of the venue to host an AfD-organized event. Following the initial gatherings, demonstrators will join in a protest march in the vicinity of the event location. The exact location or timing of the march is not available as of writing.
- Authorities have stated that riot police will be deployed in the vicinity of the event location.
- A protest organized by the anti-right-wing group Omas Gegen Rechts (Grandmas Against the Right) will be held on Unter Goldschmied Street near Haus Neuerburg.

Source: [X/Twitter](#)

- An additional protest will be held by the youth climate group Grune Jugend Koln at the corner of Gurzenichstrasse and Heumarkt.

Source: [Instagram](#)

- Separately, the anti-right-wing group Koln Stellt sich quer (KSSQ) will hold a protest on Martinstrasse between Gurzenichstrasse and Augustinerstrasse.

Source: [Koln Gegen Rechts](#)



## Assessments & Forecast

1. Given the capabilities of the organizing groups, coupled with precedent, the demonstrations are expected to see a turnout ranging from the low to mid-thousands. That said, given the ongoing carnival events in Cologne, authorities may restrict the number of participants due to the lack of available space.
2. While previous protests denouncing the AfD in Cologne have been largely peaceful, given heightened sentiments, unrest cannot be ruled out. This is especially so given the potential involvement of left-wing and climate activists. The risk is further heightened given that activists are liable to harass or attempt to block event attendees from entering the venue. Additionally, climate activists are liable to resort to disruptive protest tactics, such as road blockades, sit-in protests, and throwing paint. The risk of unrest will especially increase if the protests attract counter-protests by AfD supporters or other far-right elements. Given precedent, incidents of unrest are likely to manifest in the form of localized clashes between protesters, potential counter-protesters, and police personnel.
3. In addition to the deployment of riot police, the police are also liable to implement additional checks, including bag and identity checks, and erect bollards. These security measures are due to concerns over potential attacks, given the recent vehicular ramming attacks in Mannheim on March 3 and in Munich on February 13. In the event of escalating unrest, authorities are likely to use forcible crowd control measures, including conducting arrests.
4. Severe disruptions to pedestrian and vehicular movement can be anticipated in the vicinity of the event venue and protest locations during the afternoon hours. Police are likely to implement temporary road closures or traffic diversions in the vicinity of the venue.

## Recommendations

1. Those operating or residing in Cologne on March 5 are advised to maintain heightened vigilance in the vicinity of the aforementioned protest locations due to the heightened potential for unrest.
2. Allot for associated disruptions to travel.

