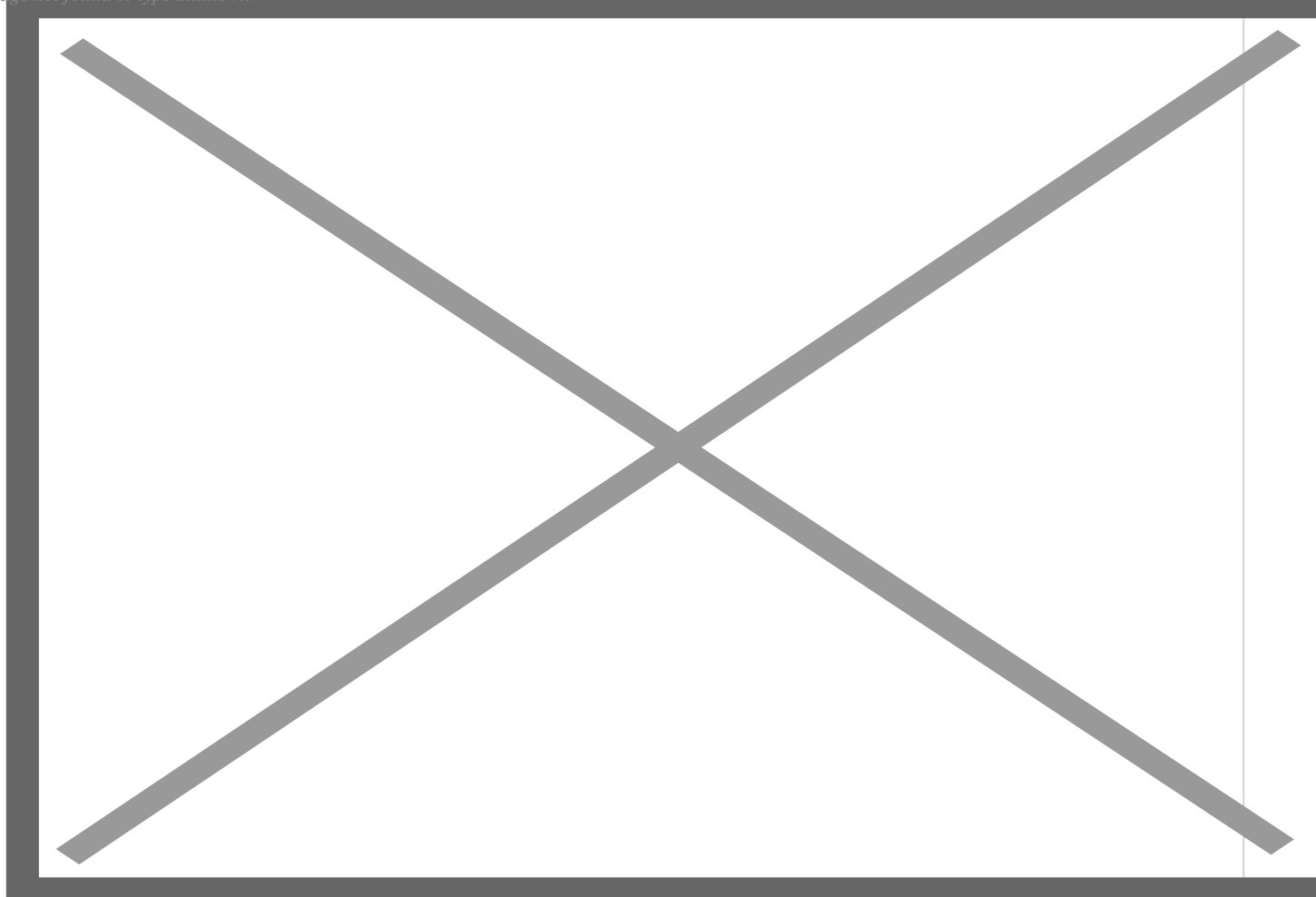


Cologne's Central Mosque sounds call to prayer for the first time

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People stand outside the central DITIB mosque on the 'Day of Open Mosques' in Cologne [File: Martin Meissner/AP]

Berlin, October 15 (RHC)-- The Muslim call to prayer has sounded for the first time from one of Germany's biggest mosques in Cologne, but at limited volume – as part of a project agreed with

authorities in the city that has one of the country's largest Muslim communities.

Authorities in Germany's fourth-biggest city last year cleared the way for mosques to apply for permission to call for prayer for a maximum five minutes between noon and 3pm on Fridays, with a noise limit being set for each mosque according to its location.

The call to prayer was not a first for Germany but Friday's development brought it to a particularly prominent mosque. The Central Mosque, a modern building with two tall minarets, is located on a busy road in Ehrenfeld district just west of the city centre. The massive glass and concrete structure -- designed as a flower bud -- has room for 1,200 worshippers.

Run by the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs, or DITIB, it was inaugurated by Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in 2018. Until now, the call to prayer was heard only inside the building

DITIB said an agreement for a two-year trial of the call was made with the city on Wednesday. Authorities said it would be broadcast by loudspeaker and be audible outside, though it should be limited to 60 decibels for nearby residents. "We're very happy," Abdurrahman Atasoy, DITIB general secretary told reporters on Thursday. "The public call to prayer is a sign that Muslims are at home here."

Cologne's mayor said allowing the call to prayer shows diversity is appreciated in the city. Still, the restrictions imposed on the project point to the sensitivity of the subject. And the construction of the Central Mosque itself drew opposition from right-wing groups, Cologne's then-archbishop and others in the late 2000s.

Germany is home to more than five million Muslims, accounting for about six percent of the population. Cologne, famed for its towering Dom Cathedral, counts more than 100,000 Muslim residents.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/302026-colognes-central-mosque-sounds-call-to-prayer-for-the-first-time>



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