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Laws and rights

Important laws in Germany

What is the German constitution?

In every country there are rules for all people to live together. Everyone must abide by them. The most important law for Germany is the Basic Law (Grundgesetz). It is a collection of 146 articles. Each article stands for a law. These are important rules. These rules determine how we live together in Germany. The fundamental rights protect the freedom of every individual. They are set out in Articles 1 to 19 of the Basic Law.

Where can I find the Basic Law?

You can find the Basic Law here. It is available in German, Arabic, Farsi, English, French, Kurdish-Kurmanji, Russian, Spanish and Turkish.

Where can I find out more about the law in Germany?

A film explains the structure of the German legal system.

What other laws are there in Germany?

German Civil Code (BGB)

The German Civil Code (BGB) (Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch BGB) contains rules for private matters. For example, it deals with family law, sales contracts and tenancy agreements.

Social Code (SGB)

The Social Security Codes SGB I to XII (Sozialgesetzbücher SGB I bis SGB XII) regulate social security in Germany. They help people in difficult situations. This includes, for example, unemployment benefit, health insurance, housing benefit and child benefit. The help someone receives depends on their residence permit, for example. Migration Management explains what support you are entitled to.

Immigration Act, Residence Act, Asylum Act

There are provisions for citizens from EU countries. There are provisions for immigrants from third countries. There are provisions for asylum seekers. The migration social counselling service will help you to understand this.

Road Traffic Regulations (StVO)

The Road Traffic Act (Straßenverkehrsordnung StVO) regulates how to behave in road traffic.

Further information can be found under [>>Mobility](#).

Criminal Code (StGB)

The German Criminal Code (Strafgesetzbuch StGB) regulates what constitutes a criminal offence in Germany and how such an offence is punished. The [police](#) help to investigate criminal offences.

Human rights and voting rights

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Human rights are important. They always apply to all people all over the world. Human rights are rights that every person has because they are human. This was decided by the United Nations. If you would like to read the full text, you can find it here [United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#).

Do children have special rights?

Children need special protection and therefore also special rights. The individual rights of children are set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It was adopted by the United Nations in 1989 and signed by 193 countries. [10 important children's rights](#) are explained here.

The youth welfare office in Germany supports parents and helps them to comply with children's rights. The [>>Youth Welfare Office](#) in the Schleswig-Flensburg district will be happy to advise you.

Do women have special rights?

In addition to the Basic Law, there are other rights that particularly affect women.

These include rights relating to physical integrity. You can find an overview of your rights [here](#).

There is also a video on the topic of [gender equality](#).

Do disabled people have special rights?

People with disabilities have special rights in Germany. [🌐 The Schleswig-Flensburg district administration's integration assistance service](#) will be happy to help you. You can find more information [here](#).

What is discrimination?

Discrimination happens when people are treated badly just because they are different. This can be because of their skin colour, religion, gender, age or other reasons. For example, if someone does not get the same job as someone else just because they are a woman or have a different skin colour, then that is discrimination. It's unfair and hurtful because it judges people based on things they can't change.

Are there laws against discrimination?

The Basic Law provides initial protection against discrimination. There is further legal protection against discrimination and a separate law and an associated state agency. This is the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency. There is also a video on the subject of anti-discrimination. If you feel discriminated against, you are welcome to seek advice from the anti-discrimination organisation ADVSH e.V. in Schleswig-Holstein. You can request counselling in German, English and Arabic.

Can I go and vote?

That depends on your >>residence title and your length of stay in Germany. You may have the right to vote and to stand for election. The right to vote means that you can vote and the right to stand for election means that others can vote for you. As a German citizen, you can vote in all elections from a certain minimum age. As a citizen of the European Union, you can vote in the elections in your municipality after three months of residence in Germany and always in the European elections.

Further information can be found here.

Political participation & parties

If you do not have the right to vote or would like to be politically active in other ways, you can become a member of a political party or work there as a non-member. You can also be politically active through membership and participation in a migrant self-organisation (see >>Culturalinstitutions) or another interest group.