

LAW LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

GERMANY

TRANSLATION OF NATIONAL LEGISLATION INTO ENGLISH

German laws, regulations, and court decisions are published only in German, both at the state and federal level. English translations of German laws and regulations have become more frequent and more up-to-date in recent years, yet many laws are still not available in translation. The only noteworthy collection of translated court decisions is a multivolume set of decisions of the Federal Constitutional Court. Except for free online government sources, subscriptions are required for up-to-date legal databases.

I. Official Publications

The most important official federal law gazette of Germany is the *Bundesgesetzblatt*:

- BUNDESGESETZBLATT [FEDERAL LAW GAZETTE] (1994–), LC Call No. KK 10 .G47.

The gazette is published in several installments each month and consists of volume I, which promulgates domestic laws and regulations, and volume II, which promulgates international agreements. It is paginated consecutively through each calendar year. Laws and amending laws are published as promulgated, without incorporating changes into previously issued laws, except for the occasional repromulgation of a frequently amended law.

II. Court Reporters

Germany has four courts of last resort and a Federal Constitutional Court (FCC). The official court reporters for the Federal Supreme Court, the FCC, and the Federal Administrative Court are:

- ENTSCHIEDUNGEN DES BUNDESGERICHTSHOFES IN STRAFSACHEN [FEDERAL SUPREME COURT DECISIONS IN CRIMINAL MATTERS] (1951–), LC Call No. KK7980.3 .B86.
- ENTSCHIEDUNGEN DES BUNDESGERICHTSHOFES IN ZIVILSACHEN [FEDERAL SUPREME COURT DECISIONS IN CIVIL MATTERS] (1951–), LC Call No. LAW Germany 5.
- ENTSCHIEDUNGEN DES BUNDESVERFASSUNGSGERICHTS [DECISIONS OF THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL COURT] (1951–), LC Call No. KK4446.3 .G47.
- ENTSCHIEDUNGEN DES BUNDESVERWALTUNGSGERICHTS [DECISIONS OF THE FEDERAL ADMINISTRATIVE COURT] (1951–), LC Call No. KK5576.3 .G47.

III. Government-approved Translations of Laws

A reasonably up-to-date collection of translations of statutory law into English is found online:

- GESETZE IM INTERNET, <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/>, (in left-hand column, click on “Translations”). This website is maintained by the German legal database provider Juris, together with the Federal Ministry of Justice. The translations are listed alphabetically, by the German abbreviation of the law.

IV. Court-approved Translations of Court Decisions

Decisions of the Federal Constitutional Court are available in a four-volume translation:

- DECISIONS OF THE BUNDESVERFASSUNGSGERICHT (1992–), LC Call No. KK4446.5 .B86 1992, is a subject-based compilation of the Court’s decisions. Its four volumes include the following:
 - Vol. 1, parts I and II, *International Law and Law of the European Communities 1952–1989* (1992).
 - Vol. 2, parts I and II, *Freedom of Speech (Freedom of Opinion and Artistic Expression, Broadcasting Freedom and Communication Freedom of the Press, Freedom of Assembly) 1958–1995* (1998).
 - Vol. 3, *Questions of Law Arising from German Unification 1973–2004* (2005).
 - Vol. 4, *The Law and Freedom of Faith and the Law of the Churches 1960–2003* (2007).

V. Online Resources

A. In German

- GESETZE IM INTERNET, <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/> (see section I), provides the current, updated version of many federal laws and regulations in German.
- *Bundesgesetzblatt*, BUNDESANZEIGER VERLAG <http://www1.bgbl.de/>, provides a read-only online version of the *Gazette* available free of charge, published by a governmentally owned publisher. Download versions are available by subscription.
- JURIS, <http://www.juris.de> (by subscription), is a comprehensive legal database that provides legislation, court decisions, legal literature, and abstracts.

B. In English

- GESETZE IM INTERNET, <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/>, contains a file of statutes and regulations in English translation (see above).

- CENTRE FOR GERMAN LEGAL INFORMATION, <http://www.cgerli.org/index.php?id=61>, a website maintained by the German Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*), provides translations of statutes and regulations. Its “Judgments” section contains some translated court decisions and some translated press releases of German decisions (the courts occasionally translate press releases on important decisions).
- GERMAN LAW ARCHIVE, <http://www.iuscomp.org/gla/index.html>, is maintained by Oxford University and has files containing translations of laws and court decisions. The laws are not as up-to-date as those of the German website GESETZE IM INTERNET.
- GERMAN LAW JOURNAL (2000–), <http://www.germanlawjournal.com/index.php?pageID=1>, is an English-language periodical covering German law.

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