

# Law Enforcement in Germany

## Federal Law Enforcement Agencies



### Bundespolizei

Originally established in 1951 as a police paramilitary force to secure the East-West border, the Federal Border Guard (*Bundesgrenzschutz - BGS*) was restructured and renamed in 2005 as the **Federal Police** (*Bundespolizei - BPol*), to reflect its transition as a national multi-faceted police agency. Prior to 1994 they had “combatant status”.



The Bundespolizei is principally responsible for domestic security tasks i.e. monitoring the country's borders, which includes checks to prevent the illegal entry of foreigners, transnational and organised crime, smuggling and drug trafficking.

It also protects key public buildings, such as the office of the Federal President and the Federal Chancellor (*Bundeskanzler*), the Ministries, the Federal Constitutional Court, and German embassies worldwide. It supports the Federal Criminal Investigation Office (*Bundeskriminalamt*) in protecting VIPs and in carrying out Maritime security, including environmental protection.

The Bundespolizei also support State authorities cope with personnel intensive operations e.g. state visits, public demonstrations, riots, natural disasters and major accidents. Beyond its statutory functions it carries out international responsibilities, chiefly as part of the police component of EU and UN peace support operations.

The services of the Bundespolizei are directly responsible to the Federal Ministry of the Interior (*Bundesministerium des Innern*).

### Spezialeinheit des Bundes - Federal Police Special Forces

Both the Tactical Response Team (GSG-9) and Mobile Surveillance Response Team (MEK) units are employed at the Federal level.



- **GSG 9** is deployed in cases of extremely violent crime, for example hostage-taking or abduction, terrorist attacks of special significance or that jeopardise public safety and order.
- **MEK** is responsible for surveillance, search and arrests involving high-level serious crime.

### Bundeskriminalamt - Federal Criminal Investigations Office

The Federal Criminal Investigations Office (*Bundeskriminalamt - BKA*) is the central agency for police information, criminal intelligence and investigation. Headquartered in Wiesbaden, with additional offices in Berlin and Meckenheim, the BKA supports the federal (*Bund*) and state (*Länder*) police services in the prevention and prosecution of crimes of a supraregional or international nature, or crimes of considerable significance. This duty comprises the collection and analysis of all relevant information, and the dissemination of that information to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.



Bundeskriminalamt



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The BKA is Germany's central bureau for Europol, Interpol, the Schengen Information System, and the German Criminal Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS).

In general, it is responsible for any correspondence with foreign police and judicial authorities required for the prevention or prosecution of crimes.

Additionally it has primary jurisdiction for:

- coordinating cooperation between the federation and state police services (especially State CID authorities) and with foreign investigative authorities;
- collecting and analyzing criminal intelligence, including the management of the INPOL (de) database of all important crimes and criminals;
- investigating cases of terrorism or other areas of politically motivated crime;
- organized crime: narcotics, weapons, ammunition & explosives, human trafficking, counterfeiting (manufacture/distribution), money laundering and economic crime;
- identifying and cataloging images/information on victims of child sexual exploitation;
- protection of federal witnesses; and
- protection of members of the *constitutional bodies* of the Federal Republic of Germany and their guests.

Furthermore, the Attorney General of Germany can direct the BKA to investigate cases considered to be of special public interest.

As the central agency, the BKA provides assistance to the states in forensic matters, research and organized crime investigations.

## Zollamt - Federal Customs Service



Customs Officers and the Customs Investigation Office come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Ministry of Finance (*Bundesfinanzverwaltung*). The customs administration assists within its field of jurisdiction (monitoring the movement of goods, trade passing the border, fiscal control and prosecution of offences committed in this respect) and also in the suppression and interdiction of drug offences.

German Customs pass on cases to the Customs Investigation Office (*Zollkriminalamt*), which takes the necessary investigative measures until the case is ready to be passed on to the public prosecutor's office.

## Zollkriminalamt - Customs Investigation Service

The Customs Investigation Service (ZKA) has a number of tasks, in particular monitoring foreign trade and payments transactions, exposing violations of EC market regulations and combating drug trafficking.



The Customs Investigation Service has coordination and steering functions in the field of customs investigations.