

## **Information Sheet on the Free Democratic Basic Order**

Today you are declaring your commitment to the Free Democratic Basic Order of the Federal Republic of Germany. This is a prerequisite for applying for a right of opportunity residence (residence permit pursuant to section 104c, paragraph 1, sentence 1, number 1, of the Aufenthaltsgesetz [AufenthG – Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory Residence Act]). The right of opportunity residence gives you the chance to fulfil the requirements for a possible permanent, legal residence in Germany.

In order for you to be able to obtain the right of residence, you need to know the values by which people live together in Germany. Because you are also expected to adhere to these values. At the same time, you will only be able to take advantage of the benefits you have in your everyday life if you understand these values.

The concept of the Free Democratic Basic Order to which you are committing today describes the totality of these values. The values are laid down in the Basic Law, as the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany is called.

**In particular, you must understand the following and unreservedly commit to and adhere to the Free Democratic Basic Order:**

Germany is a parliamentary democracy. The people elect their own representatives by universal, direct, free, equal and confidential ballot. No person entitled to vote may be prevented from casting their vote. Every voice counts and all voices have the same weight. No one may be influenced against their will when casting a vote. No other person has the right to know who someone has voted for.

In Germany, many different political parties are permitted, which can represent very different interests and directions. All parties have the same chances to campaign and stand for election in order to implement their political ideas. The parties must comply with the provisions of the Basic Law in their objectives and in the measures with which they pursue the objectives.

The Bundestag is the people's representative body (the parliament) at the highest level of government. By voting, its majority decides who leads the Federal Government as Federal Chancellor. The Federal Government carries out political activities and is controlled by the Bundestag. Non-governmental parties have an important control function in relation to the government by acting as opposition in parliament. The government may be voted out of office by parliament and in elections, and thereby peacefully replaced.

Germany is a state governed by the rule of law. The Bundestag passes the laws that apply to the whole of Germany. In certain cases, this requires the consent of the federal states. The laws must always be compatible with the Basic Law. Likewise, all judgements and decisions of the German courts must comply with the Basic Law. This is verified by the Federal Constitutional Court as the highest German court. All courts within Germany are bound by the law. However, the courts are otherwise independent and must not be influenced by the government or the authorities in their decision-making. Every person has the same rights in court, regardless of their background, financial situation or position in society.

The tasks of day-to-day administration are carried out by state and municipal authorities. The authorities are also bound by the law and may only act on the basis of a law. The laws apply to all people equally. Any person affected by an administrative measure may have that measure reviewed by a court.

In Germany, no one is allowed to exercise control over the state or over people using force. Coercive measures may only be carried out by state agencies such as the police and only as a last resort. However, this is only allowed on a legal basis. Any measure can be reviewed by the courts and even prohibited.

In Germany, human rights and freedoms are respected and protected by the state. The human rights guaranteed by the Basic Law are inviolable, in particular human dignity and the right to life and physical integrity.

The same applies to the free development of personality, which means that every person determines their own decisions and actions. However, the rights of others must not be impaired and laws must not be violated. All people in Germany are allowed to express their opinions freely, but not to incite hatred or violence against those who think differently than themselves. Public protests and demonstrations are allowed, but must take place peacefully.

The Basic Law also guarantees the equality of all people. No one may be discriminated against, persecuted or disadvantaged in any way, whether on grounds of origin, faith, disability or belief. An action that pursues anti-Semitic, racist, xenophobic or other inhumane objectives is not compatible with this and is contrary to this statement.

All genders are equal. Women, men and people who identify as a different gender have the same rights. No one may be disadvantaged, persecuted or endangered in any way because of their gender or sexual orientation. People whose lifestyles do not correspond to one's own ideas must therefore also be treated with respect and tolerance.

Other important knowledge about the legal system, but also about the culture and history in Germany, will be imparted to you in the orientation course. The orientation course is part of the integration course. After being granted the right of opportunity residence, you are entitled to take part in the integration course or will be obliged to take part.

Find out more about life in Germany yourself from reliable sources, such as the portal of the Federal Government <https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/de/leben-in-deutschland/deutschland-kennenlernen/deutsche-gesellschaft>, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees <https://www.bamf.de/DE/Themen/Integration/ZugewanderteTeilnehmende/ErsteOrientierung/UnserGrundgesetz/unser-grundgesetz-node.html> or the Federal Agency for Civic Education <https://www.bpb.de>.