

Declaration on the police in Germany

Resolution by Germany's interior ministers and the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community on the treatment of and respect for police officers in Germany

The roughly 300,000 police officers in Germany deserve recognition and respect for the courage and dedication they show every day in the line of duty.

Police officers defend our rule of law, our society and the security of each and every one of us, whether on patrol, doing administrative work or investigating crimes; as public order police or in special units. Unfortunately, they themselves often become victims of a lack of respect or even assaults and therefore deserve special protection from the state.

Police officers have chosen this occupation because they see law enforcement as their vocation. They identify to a high degree with the police as an organisation, with the basic values of our democracy and with our open and pluralistic society, all of which they protect.

The interior ministers at federal and state level stand united behind our law enforcement officers, who defend the security of our citizens and our free and democratic state governed by the rule of law.

We strongly condemn the unacceptable cases of police brutality in the U.S. However, we just as strongly reject any attempt to compare the German police with their U.S. counterparts. What we are seeing today in demonstrations, public debates and social media is an unfair generalisation and an unjust and undifferentiated condemnation of the German police.

One thing is certain: This stance does not do justice to our police – police officers must not be put under general suspicion.

Our police officers act as social intermediaries and helpers in everyday life; they protect our borders within an open Europe and safeguard our security and freedom. The police are at the centre of society, impartial and open-minded. Trust in the German police is extremely high by international standards. The police need the support of the public and of our institutions to keep it that way. It goes without saying that every public institution must be open to criticism. That is also true of the police. The police, above all, must serve as role models. For this reason, there is zero tolerance for extremism or racism in their ranks. Our police officers are trained to reflect on and critically analyse their actions. Their training takes several years and is largely at the level of higher education. Unlike the U.S., Germany has no fast-track training for police officers.

We stand united to defend our police should they be defamed. Our police officers are committed to the values enshrined in our constitution, the Basic Law, and are the backbone of our society and our democratic, pluralistic and free country.