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Arrival in Germany. A country that values tolerance and respect in order for everybody to be able to live together in freedom and safety. An attractive country, because it respects the dignity of every human being. And it is supposed to stay that way. Therefore, principles and rules have been put into place by the German constitution and the federal law that have to be observed. What does that mean for the daily life in Germany? Perhaps you already had contact with German female police officers, doctors or judges? It's a common thing here in Germany.

Women and men are regarded as equals - both in professional and family life.

This means: Everyone is entitled to the same amount of respect and recognition. Germany is a free country. Everyone may voice their own opinion freely as long as they don't violate the law for example by inciting hatred and violence or by insulting other people. We call it freedom of opinion.

Freedom of religion and faith is just as important. Everybody may decide freely on their own religion. All religions exist equally side by side and together.

What happens if these freedoms are violated ?

If someone believes they have suffered harm or injustice? In this case, the following applies: Only the state may use police, prosecutors and courts to prosecute crimes and criminals - we call it the state's monopoly on violence. Seeking revenge for oneself or others or committing violence is prohibited and subject to punishment.

Only national courts may dispense justice, which means no self-appointed justices of the peace or clerics - because religion and the state are strictly separated in Germany. It is important to know that police, prosecutors and courts in Germany can be absolutely trusted. They are not corrupt and have to adhere to applicable law. And they do! But where does this law come from? Germany is a democratic constitutional state with separation of powers.

This means: All citizens elect parliaments that adopt laws. The government and its authorities then enforce these laws. The courts dispense justice based on these laws while being completely independent. Three independent divisions – one working state.

Its basis is the human dignity. Every human being must be respected so we can all live together in freedom and safety.

This only works if all of us - you, too, from now on – respect and actively apply these basic values each day.

If you want to learn more, please visit our website [www.justiz.bayern.de](http://www.justiz.bayern.de).

Bavarian State Ministry of Justice. Justice for the people.

