



Living in Germany means: men and women are equals.

Germany is a country that values its freedom and its laws. These laws apply to men and women alike - in professional, matrimonial, partnership and family matters. To emphasise the importance of equal rights for men and women we dedicated the entire third Section of our most profound law - the German constitution - to them. The state takes care that everyone observes this equality in daily life. Just like all men, all women are entitled to go to school, to learn a profession and to go to work.

This is why in Germany we have female politicians, entrepreneurs, doctors, teachers, police officers, judges, and prosecutors, just like we have female nurses, nursery-school teachers, bus drivers, and sales persons.

It is of no consequence whether a woman is single, partnered or married. If she has a legitimate or an illegitimate child is just as inconsequential: she is entitled to the same amount of respect as a man. Both our Family Law and our Law of Succession also grant equal rights. In Germany, women decide for themselves who they marry and if they marry at all.

A marriage in Germany is only legally valid if it is concluded by an official marriage registrar. Only such a legal marriage - as opposed to church, religious and private marriages - includes numerous rights. Joint custody applies to joint children. This means, important matters have to be decided upon by both parents. Of course, the right for women to go to work remains during marriage. What a woman buys from her own money is her decision alone.

Women in Germany who feel threatened or who have marital or family problems can turn to a number of help programs. In any such situation, she can go to the police or consult non-governmental organisations, such as women's shelters. Women and men alike are entitled to file for divorce in case they decide the marriage is over for good. Only official courts may legally execute a divorce in Germany. These are the values and liberties we uphold in Germany and that have to be observed by everyone. For a free and safe life. For the equality of men and women.

Bavarian State Ministry of Justice. Justice for the people.

