



# **Germany's candidacy for a seat on the UN Human Rights Council 2020 to 2022**

## **Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 60/251**

The Federal Republic of Germany has the pleasure to hereby present its candidacy to the Human Rights Council for the period from 2020 to 2022, with elections to be held in New York in October 2019.

Having served on the Council in previous terms, most recently from 2015 to 2018, Germany has demonstrated its strong commitment to the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, in particular by assuming the Presidency of the Council in 2015 and the Vice-Presidency in 2018. Germany strongly believes in cooperation between States in a rules-based, equitable multilateral order - in the field of human rights and beyond, supported by strong voices from civil society, including national human rights institutions. We seek a new term on the Human Rights Council to continue to promote human rights in all appropriate international and UN fora.

Human rights are a cornerstone of Germany's foreign policy and development cooperation. Human dignity and inviolable and inalienable human rights are enshrined in Article 1 of Germany's Basic Law "as the basis of every community, of peace and of justice in the world". The Basic Law thereby not only guarantees human rights in Germany, but also obliges the Federal Government to work to protect human dignity and fundamental freedoms throughout the world. We firmly believe in the universality of human rights as it is laid down by the United Nations in 1948 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Germany also firmly believes that peace, security and sustainable development can only take root where human rights are respected and the freedom and dignity of every individual is protected. In addition, Germany's foreign and development policy remains committed to worldwide

poverty reduction, sustainable growth and ambitious climate policy through forward-looking policies.

### **Human rights at home**

Protection, promotion and respect for human rights begin in our own country. Germany considers the realization of human rights to be a continuous task. Germany is a party to the fundamental human rights conventions and has incorporated them into national law. Germany has entered into extensive commitments concerning the protection of human rights and we appreciate our partners' views on how to better respect, protect and fulfil human rights in Germany. In this regard, we highly value the input from the Universal Periodic Review and the Human Rights Treaty Bodies, and we have issued standing invitations to the UN's Special Procedures to our country.

Germany regards human rights policy as a cross-cutting task affecting all areas of society. The realization of Article 3 of the German Basic Law, which commits to gender equality, as well as the development of a National Action Plan to Implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, our efforts to attain integration and equal opportunities and participation for refugees and migrants, as well as the implementation of our National Action Plan to Fight Racism, Xenophobia, anti-Semitism and Related Intolerance are just a few examples of our ongoing commitment to improving the domestic human rights situation.

The German Institute for Human Rights, established in March 2001, is Germany's independent National Human Rights Institution and adheres to the Paris Principles (A Status). It monitors the Government's human rights activities closely and critically, e.g. by publishing an annual report about the domestic human rights situation submitted to the German Bundestag.

### **Germany's international commitment to human rights**

Germany strives to protect and foster respect for human rights throughout the world by addressing human rights issues in its bilateral political dialogues and consultations, by providing support and technical cooperation for projects aimed at improving human rights situations and by systematically taking human rights into account in Germany's development cooperation policy programmes, humanitarian aid projects and conflict prevention activities.

The Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid is our point of contact for all human rights issues, travels the world to engage in

human rights dialogues and liaises closely with civil society representatives and the German Bundestag.

As part of Germany's strong commitment to the multilateral order, we are pursuing a comprehensive approach to security during our non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council in 2019/20; it consistently takes human rights into account and recognizes that in many instances human rights violations are among the root causes of conflict.

Germany is a staunch supporter of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and will continue to do its utmost to ensure that the ICC can work as effectively as possible and that it receives broad support from the international community. In addition, Germany continues to politically and financially support other ad-hoc mechanisms that contribute to stopping impunity, such as the International Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) on Syria or the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar.

Germany has been a committed supporter of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms since its establishment. It has shown leadership in a number of key human rights areas, helping to create, inter alia, four mandates to Special Rapporteurs: on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living as well as on the right to privacy.

**Germany pledges to:**

- continue working for the universality and indivisibility of human rights;
- continue its efforts to strengthen a multilateral system that promotes and protects human rights and to engage in dialogue and cooperation with other Member States as well as civil society;
- make full use of a possible one-year overlap of its membership in the UN Security Council and the Human Rights Council in the year 2020, by closely connecting issues of peace and security with human rights and thus strengthening the link between the UN in Geneva and New York;
- support and strengthen the framework of the Human Rights Council as the primary UN forum for human rights and to actively participate in discussions on the efficiency and the institutional status of the Human Rights Council;

- continue its support for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the independence of her role;
- continue its close cooperation with the OHCHR, inter alia by providing substantial political and financial support for its work;
- closely cooperate with the mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, in particular by upholding its standing invitation to the Special Procedures to visit Germany;
- continue to work actively on the UPR by offering recommendations to all States;
- actively support the UN Treaty Body strengthening process with a view to furthering their effectiveness and efficiency while securing the independence of the Treaty Bodies and their experts;
- continue to promote the role of civil society in the Human Rights Council and to actively support human rights defenders worldwide;
- continue to implement the Sustainable Development Goals and to pursue a rights-based approach to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- continue leading engagement on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, building on more than 10 years of experience, with a future focus on sustainable implementation and concrete projects at the local level to ensure that populations in need can enjoy their human rights to water and sanitation;
- use its membership on the UN Commission on the Status of Women and in other international fora to promote equal participation, as well as to support norm setting and the implementation of women's rights;
- adopt a national programme of action on violence against women and girls, by pursuing a comprehensive approach that also takes into consideration sexual and gender-based violence;
- fulfil our second Action Plan on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security 2017-2020, and develop a third national action plan on women, peace and security;
- as a member of the Equal Rights Coalition, engage against violence and discrimination against LGBTI persons and support the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as to promote the Yogyakarta Principles on the

implementation of human rights in reference to sexual orientation and gender identity;

- remain committed to the right to freedom of expression and to fight for press freedom, the protection of journalists and against hate speech;
- continue to advocate for the freedom of religion and belief and for inter-faith dialogue, inter alia as promoted by the German Federal Commissioner for Global Freedom of Religion;
- continue its engagement – both on the national and international level – for the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, inter alia by developing an ambitious follow-up programme to the current National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights 2016-2020;
- continue to protect and promote children’s rights, in particular those affected by armed conflict, within the UN and the EU;
- actively engage in the discourse on future challenges to human rights that derive from climate change, environmental disasters and the use of artificial intelligence, to name but a few;
- continue to every two years present before the German Bundestag the Federal Government’s comprehensive human rights report including a Plan of Action for Human Rights;
- fully implement the Federal Government’s Plan of Action for Human Rights 2018–2020 and to continue generating whole-of-government support for Human Rights.