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## Kurzinformation

### The Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid

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In many countries, there exists the office of ombudsman for human rights, to whom citizens can voice their concerns about perceived human rights violations and who can address these grievances and hold the government or other state actors responsible.

In Germany, there is no ombudsman, but a Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid, an office that was created in 1998. All information pertaining to the Commissioner and her/his duties can be found at <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aamt/koordinatoren/mr-koordinatorin>.

Though the Commissioner is formally affiliated to the Foreign Office, her/his responsibilities extend to HR matters within Germany, as well.

Further institutionalized protection of human rights in Germany exists in the form of the Petitions Committees of both the Bundestag and the parliaments of the 16 Länder. According to Article 17 of the Constitution, everyone (not just German citizens) has the right to hand in a formal petition in the case of perceived violations of his or her human rights. Art. 45c of the Constitution regulates the setting up of a Petitions Committee at the Bundestag. Similar provisions can be found in the constitutions of the Länder.

Furthermore, there exists a basic right for everyone to petition all relevant administrative bodies, from purely administrative bodies (such as the local public health administration agency) to more political offices (such as the local mayor).

The basis for all of this are the relevant articles of the Constitution that bind all powers of the State (legislative, executive and judicative) to the preservation, support and protection of fundamental rights (Art. 1 - 17 and 102 GG), most of which are also human rights and thus extend beyond mere civil rights.

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