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## Kurzinformation

### Military Service in Germany

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On 24 March 2011, the German parliament decided to suspend conscription from 1 July 2011 onwards.

However, it is worth mentioning that the suspension of the compulsory military service applies only in peacetime and that conscription can be reactivated by the Parliament if deemed necessary.

Article 12a of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany (“Grundgesetz”), providing that every German male “may be obliged to serve in the armed forces, in the Federal Border Guard or in a civil defense association from the age of eighteen”, remains unaffected by the said suspension.

The German Constitution (Article 4) provides that “No one may be forced to do military service with a weapon against her/his conscience” (“Niemand darf gegen sein Gewissen zum Kriegsdienst mit der Waffe gezwungen werden”), so that in case of conscription it is possible to perform unarmed military service.

In Germany, the law doesn’t provide for the conscription of female personnel.

With the suspension of conscription, the Bundeswehr has become a volunteer only army staffed with Professional Soldiers (“Berufssoldaten”), Regular or Temporary Soldiers (“Zeitsoldaten”), who serve a limited term, as well as Volunteers who serve a short term.

Regular Soldiers can commit themselves to a service term of between two and 25 years. Volunteers can enlist for a term between seven and 23 months. Military Service is open to women and men alike aged 17 and over. Minors (aged under 18) are requested to produce a parental permission and are not allowed to be trained with weapons until they reach majority age. The age limit depends on the professional and educational record of the applicant as well as on the intended military career and can be (exceptionally) as high as 50 years.

At the time of writing, the Bundeswehr has almost 184,000 military and 81,000 civilian personnel. Among the military personnel, around 53,350 are Professional Soldiers and 121,860 are Regular Soldiers. Around 8,600 Soldiers are Volunteers. A total of around 23,600 women (13 percent) serve in the armed forces.