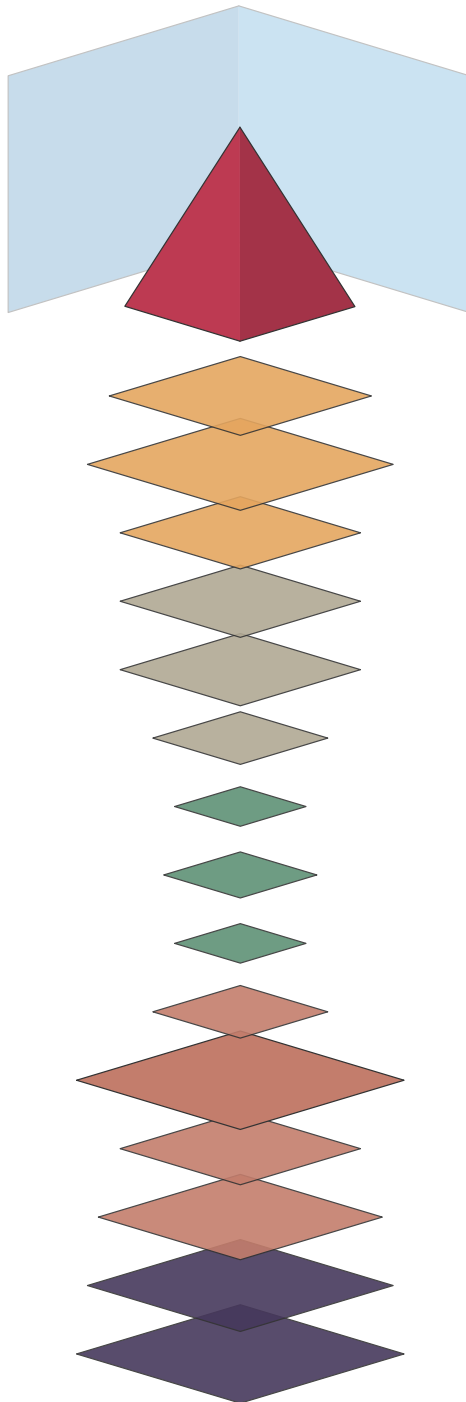




GERMANY



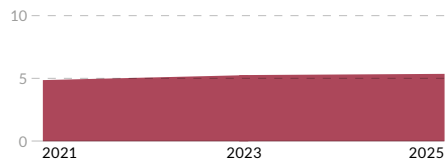
5.35 $\nearrow 0.02$

CRIMINALITY SCORE

82nd of 193 countries $\searrow 2$

14th of 44 European countries -

3rd of 11 Western European countries -



CRIMINAL MARKETS

5.40 $\searrow 0.07$

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	6.00	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	7.00	0.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	5.50	0.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	5.50	$\searrow 0.50$
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	5.50	0.00
ILLCIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	4.00	$\searrow 0.50$
FLORA CRIMES	3.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
FAUNA CRIMES	3.50	$\searrow 0.50$
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	3.00	0.00
HEROIN TRADE	4.00	$\searrow 0.50$
COCAINE TRADE	7.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
CANNABIS TRADE	5.50	$\searrow 0.50$
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	6.50	0.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	7.00	$\nearrow 0.50$
FINANCIAL CRIMES	7.50	0.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS

5.30 $\nearrow 0.10$

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	5.00	0.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	6.00	$\searrow 0.50$
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	2.00	0.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	7.50	$\nearrow 0.50$
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	6.00	$\nearrow 0.50$



This project was funded in part
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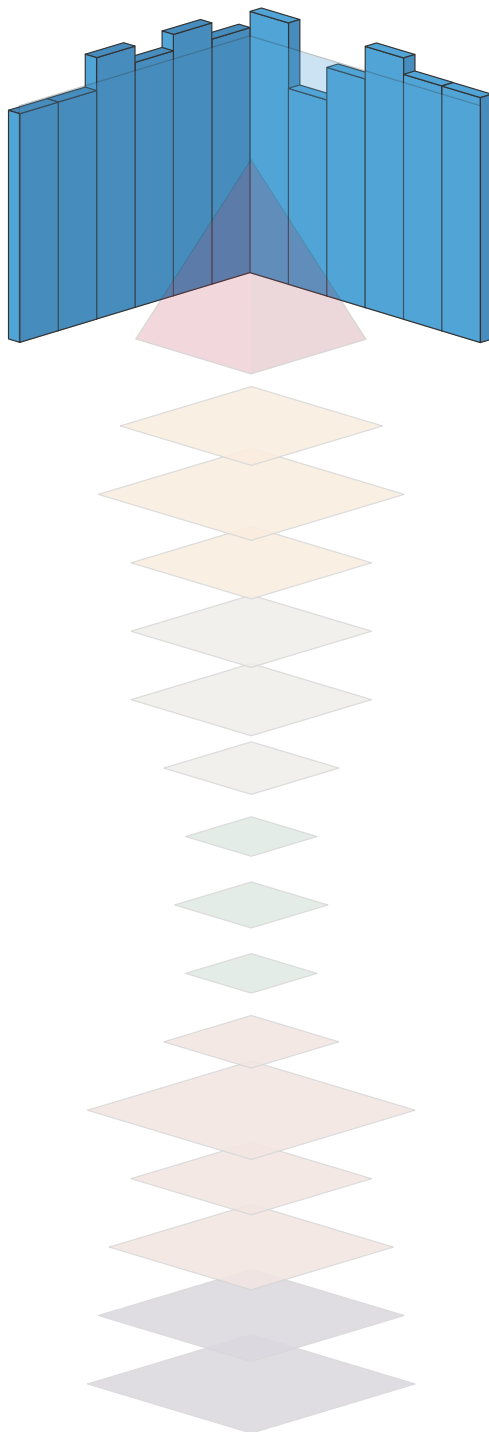


Funded by
the European Union

ENACT is funded by the European Union
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GERMANY



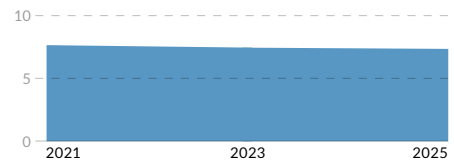
7.42 $\downarrow 0.08$

RESILIENCE SCORE

18th of 193 countries $\downarrow 5$

12th of 44 European countries $\downarrow 2$

6th of 11 Western European countries $\downarrow 2$



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	7.00	$\uparrow 0.50$
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	7.00	0.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	8.00	0.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	7.50	$\downarrow 0.50$
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	8.00	0.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	7.50	0.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	8.00	$\downarrow 0.50$
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	6.00	0.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	7.00	0.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	8.00	0.00
PREVENTION	7.50	$\downarrow 0.50$
NON-STATE ACTORS	7.50	0.00



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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Germany remains a significant destination and transit country for human trafficking, with organized crime groups controlling various elements of the market. These groups, predominantly composed of ethnic and local criminal networks, exploit regulatory deficiencies in Germany's legal sex work industry, leading to severe cases of labour and sexual exploitation. Human trafficking networks mainly originate from Vietnam, Thailand, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and Brazil, using deceptive recruitment tactics to coerce victims. The demand for cheap labour in industries such as meat processing, construction and agriculture continues to fuel the exploitation of trafficked individuals, with victims frequently subjected to poor working conditions and low wages.

Germany also serves as a central hub for human smuggling operations, facilitated by a mix of organized crime groups and independent networks. Syrian, Turkish, Romanian and Vietnamese actors play a critical role, using document forgery, irregular banking systems and sophisticated logistics to run smuggling operations. Entry points include border regions with Austria, Poland and the Czech Republic, with smuggling routes extending across the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. Joint operations between German and French authorities targeted Iraqi-Kurdish smuggling networks involved in transporting migrants to the UK. But legal loopholes and geopolitical factors continue to be exploited by smugglers.

Extortion and protection racketeering in Germany are predominantly carried out by Italian mafia-style groups and clan-based criminal networks. These groups target small and medium-sized businesses, particularly in cash-heavy industries such as auto repair and restaurants. The fear of retaliation discourages victims from reporting cases, resulting in widespread under-reporting. Despite law enforcement efforts, extortion continues to be a lucrative market, with funds often laundered through legitimate businesses and real estate investments.

TRADE

Arms trafficking in Germany is driven by the availability of illicit firearms through online marketplaces, converted weapons and transnational supply chains. The majority of illicit firearms originate from the Western Balkans, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. Germany's regulatory framework has enabled law enforcement success in addressing gun law violations; however, illicit

firearms continue to circulate, empowering criminal groups engaged in extortion and drug trafficking. Investigations into encrypted communication platforms have revealed the growing use of firearms by drug traffickers, indicating the strong connection between the arms trade and other forms of organized crime.

Germany is a hub for counterfeit goods due to its large market size, strategic location and extensive infrastructure, with organized crime groups, including the Italian Camorra, controlling the distribution of fake electronics, luxury items and cosmetics. The rise of e-commerce has deepened the problem, with social media platforms playing a growing role in illicit transactions. Customs enforcement at major entry points like Frankfurt Airport is effective, but online counterfeit markets remain difficult to regulate. Counterfeit products are gaining acceptance among certain population groups, particularly younger consumers. Some accounts on social media platforms actively moderate and promote counterfeit content.

The illicit trade in excise consumer goods, particularly tobacco, remains a persistent challenge. Criminal networks operate transnational smuggling routes, often using Germany as a transit country for illicit tobacco destined for neighbouring countries such as the Netherlands and France. Law-enforcement seizures highlight the scale of the market, with excise fraud schemes continuing to incur significant tax revenue losses for the state.

ENVIRONMENT

Germany plays a role in flora crimes, particularly through the illegal timber trade. German markets are key consumers of illegally sourced timber. Investigations have uncovered evasion of sanctions on restricted timber sources, exposing persistent vulnerabilities in enforcement mechanisms. Rising energy prices have also fuelled illegal timber harvesting in Germany, further complicating law enforcement efforts.

The illegal wildlife trade in Germany revolves around criminal networks, often from Eastern Europe, exploiting legal ambiguities to traffic animals. Illegal wildlife products, including reptiles and exotic pets, are frequently intercepted at Frankfurt Airport, making Germany a wildlife trafficking hub.

Non-renewable resource crimes in Germany include tax fraud schemes involving diesel fuel and illicit gold trafficking. Cases of fraudulent VAT declarations on lubricant oil disguised as diesel fuel point to the intersection of organized crime and financial fraud. German authorities continue to intercept gold smuggling operations, with recent seizures of high-value assets. Germany's strong regulatory environment has limited the market's overall impact, but transnational smuggling routes continue to operate.

DRUGS

Germany serves as both a transit and destination country for heroin, with supply chains originating from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Western Balkans. Shipping routes often include the Black Sea and South-Eastern Europe, using vehicles such as trucks for land transport. Southern routes also include East Africa, with heroin occasionally discovered in shipping containers entering through German and Benelux ports.

Cocaine trafficking has escalated, with Germany becoming one of Europe's largest markets. Western Balkan criminal networks, local gangs, the 'Mocro Mafia' and Italian mafia-style organizations dominate the trade. Ports such as Hamburg serve as major entry points, with recent seizures uncovering multi-ton shipments hidden in cargo containers. Increasing violence among competing groups suggests escalating competition for control of the lucrative cocaine trade.

Cannabis is the most consumed drug in Germany. The cannabis trade is undergoing significant shifts in the country following its legalization for recreational use in 2024. Despite legalization, demand continues to outstrip legal supply, allowing organized crime groups to maintain control over illicit distribution networks. The absence of licensed retail shops has fragmented the legal market, keeping homegrown and association-sourced cannabis out of legal retail and sustaining the dominance of illicit supply. Spain, the Netherlands and Morocco remain key import sources, while domestic cultivation has expanded.

Synthetic drug trafficking remains a growing concern, with Germany serving as a major hub for the production and distribution of amphetamines, MDMA and emerging synthetic opioids. While the Netherlands and Belgium remain the primary production centres in Western Europe, smaller labs in Germany have increased in number. The entry of fentanyl and synthetic opioids into the market has raised alarm over its public health risk, with rising overdose cases linked to contaminated heroin supplies.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Germany faces a significant cybercrime threat, with ransomware and data theft costing businesses billions annually. Organized crime groups, including Russian and Chinese state-affiliated hackers, operate ransomware-as-a-service schemes, targeting corporations and critical infrastructure. Platforms facilitating illicit transactions make Germany both a hub for cybercrime and a target for international actors. Law enforcement responses have included international joint operations to dismantle cybercrime marketplaces, but prosecution rates remain inadequate, and this gives criminals the opportunity and motive to continue operating.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes in Germany are among the most lucrative organized crime markets, with fraud schemes, VAT carousel fraud and investment scams contributing to substantial economic losses. Authorities have dismantled large-scale investment fraud networks, exposing the complexity of transnational financial scams. VAT fraud remains a major issue, with schemes involving luxury goods and high-value electronics continuing to exploit tax loopholes. Despite efforts to combat financial crime, the scale and sophistication of these operations make for persistent enforcement challenges.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Mafia-style groups in Germany mainly consist of outlaw motorcycle gangs such as the Hells Angels, Bandidos and Gremium MC, which are heavily involved in drug trafficking and other organized criminal activities. These groups maintain a hierarchical leadership structure and are well-documented in law enforcement records. Despite their prominence, their overall numbers remain relatively limited.

Criminal networks in Germany encompass a broad spectrum of illicit actors, including family-based groups, cybercriminals and drug-trafficking organizations. These networks exploit Germany's geostrategic location and robust infrastructure to engage in human trafficking, drug smuggling and cybercrime. The country serves as a significant distribution hub for drugs entering Europe via ports such as Antwerp and Rotterdam, with the Rhine-Ruhr Valley acting as a key transit and retail centre. Efforts have been made to dismantle these networks, but their fluid and decentralized nature enforcement.

There is limited evidence to suggest that state-embedded actors play a major role in organized crime in Germany. However, isolated cases have triggered concern about political figures engaging with extremist and criminal elements.

Foreign actors exert a strong influence on Germany's organized crime landscape. The country has long been a stronghold for Italian mafia groups, including the 'Ndrangheta, Cosa Nostra and Camorra, which are deeply entrenched in drug trafficking and money laundering operations. Germany's financial sector is characterized by high cash flow – due to a widespread public reluctance to use credit cards or digital payments. Combined with regulatory shortcomings, this provides a conducive environment for illicit financial activities. Russian-Eurasian organized crime groups, particularly those composed of Russian and Georgian nationals, are also active, with Berlin identified as a major hub for their operations. These groups engage in cybercrime, human smuggling and drug trafficking. Clan-based criminal enterprises originating from Western Asian and North African communities, including the Mhallami, Turkish and Arab clans, continue to play a role in the drug

trade and money laundering. Foreign actors have well-established strongholds in urban centres such as Berlin, Bremen and the Rhine-Ruhr Valley, where they control illicit markets and exert significant influence. Western Balkan organized crime groups, particularly ethnic Albanians, are also key players in Germany's drug trade, and Nigerian criminal groups, including the Black Axe Confraternity, have expanded their operations in recent years. Cross-border criminal collaboration remains a persistent issue, with Dutch groups emerging as major actors in Germany's organized crime landscape.

Private-sector actors in Germany contribute to organized crime through financial and commercial facilitation, particularly in money laundering. Banks and real estate markets are frequently exploited by criminal groups seeking

to launder illicit proceeds. Cryptocurrency exchanges, gambling establishments and high-value assets, such as luxury goods and professional sports clubs, are also used to launder illicit funds. Organized crime groups wield significant control over parts of the hospitality and retail industries, with protection rackets reportedly affecting businesses such as restaurants and shisha bars. Structural weaknesses in anti-money laundering (AML) regulations have contributed to Germany's reputation as a 'money laundering paradise', with minimal oversight over large cash deposits. While regulatory efforts to strengthen compliance have been made, enforcement of these reforms remains inconsistent, allowing organized crime to continue exploiting financial loopholes.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Germany maintains a strong commitment to combating organized crime, as demonstrated by its implementation of structural investigations, judicial prosecutions and AML initiatives. The government has undertaken significant measures to enhance prevention strategies and integrate organized crime issues into law enforcement training. But decades of political neglect, budget reductions and fragmented legislative and educational structures have contributed to an uneven landscape of investigation and prosecution. Technological asymmetries and limited integration policies have made the situation worse. Nevertheless, Germany has recently increased its efforts to address organized crime, particularly in the drug sector, through initiatives such as the European Port Alliance, its participation in the Maritime Analysis and Operation Centre (Narcotics), and the establishment of the Port Security Centre in Hamburg. The government is also preparing legislation to launch a unit that will be called the Dedicated Agency to Counter Financial Crime. Germany has generally strong governance standards; the country performs well on indicators such as regulatory quality, control of corruption and rule of law. Nonetheless, public trust in government has declined, fuelled by anxieties over migration policies, integration challenges and the rise of right-wing populist movements. While organized crime has not significantly infiltrated political institutions, opposition parties frequently criticize the coalition government's handling of organized crime-related issues, linking these to broader socio-political challenges.

Germany has a high degree of transparency and accountability in public institutions. The government has implemented mechanisms such as an annual report on corruption

prevention and the appointment of ombuds to oversee anti-corruption efforts. However, the country faces criticism regarding financial contributions to political parties and the potential conflicts of interest among politicians, particularly as a result of lobbying activities. Flags have also been raised about the handling of suspicious transactions by the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), including allegations of obstruction of the reporting of illicit financial activities.

Germany actively participates in international efforts to combat organized crime through multilateral agreements and law enforcement collaborations. The country is a signatory to key treaties, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the UN Convention against Corruption. Germany co-operates with international organizations such as Europol, Interpol and the Financial Action Task Force. Recent initiatives, including Germany's role in the European Financial and Economic Crime Centre at Europol and its candidacy to host the European AML Authority in Frankfurt, demonstrate its commitment to international cooperation. However, Germany's effectiveness in tackling mafia-related crime has been questioned. Italian authorities have criticized its level of cooperation in organized crime investigations.

Germany's legal framework for organized crime includes provisions under the German Criminal Code (StGB), but difficulties persist in the prosecution of modern criminal networks. The legal definition of organized crime remains somewhat ambiguous, complicating enforcement efforts. Recent amendments, such as the introduction of laws targeting cybercrime and illicit online marketplaces, reflect an evolution in Germany's approach to fighting emerging threats. Such progress has been offset by procedural

hurdles, however, such as the difficulty in establishing criminal group membership under current legislation. The second pillar of Germany's cannabis legalization – the establishment of licensed retail shops – was expedited by the outgoing government due to concerns over potential violations of European and domestic law.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Germany's judicial system is widely regarded as one of the most effective and independent in the world. But it does face growing challenges, notably personnel shortages and case backlogs, which have led to delays in the prosecution of organized crime cases and inappropriately lenient sentences. Specialized units within the judiciary focus on organized crime, but the strain on resources curbs their overall effectiveness. Germany's prison system meets international standards, though some reports point to security shortcomings in detention facilities, including inmates' unauthorized access to telecommunications devices.

Law enforcement agencies in Germany, particularly the Federal Criminal Police Office, play a central role in tackling organized crime. The country has developed specialized investigative units and digital tools to enhance data-sharing and intelligence gathering. While German law enforcement has successfully dismantled some major criminal networks, it has not overcome some longstanding deficiencies in recruitment and training. Critics have highlighted the need for a more coherent national police training framework to ensure consistent capabilities across states. The FIU has also faced scrutiny for its inefficiencies in handling money laundering cases, which point to systemic weaknesses in Germany's financial crime enforcement.

Germany's central location in Europe and extensive borders make it a focal point for transnational crime. Ports such as Hamburg and Bremerhaven are critical transit points for illicit goods, and law enforcement has struggled to maintain firm control over these logistical hubs. Border security efforts have been enhanced in response to rising public anxieties over irregular migration and organized crime, yet challenges persist due to resource constraints. Authorities remain vigilant in monitoring vulnerabilities, particularly to the infiltration of criminal actors into critical infrastructure such as major ports and transport networks. The country's central role in the EU and NATO makes it also a key target for cybercrime. Rapid digitalization adds to security challenges, while growing reliance on third-party service providers in the financial sector increases vulnerability to cyberattacks.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Germany's AML framework faces ongoing scrutiny due to persistent shortcomings. The absence of a cap on cash transactions and regulatory loopholes in the financial sector leave the country vulnerable to large-scale money

laundering operations. Although the government has pledged to strengthen oversight by enhancing the transparency register and monitoring real estate transactions, systemic weaknesses remain. The FIU has often been criticized for inefficiency and limited capacity, leading to calls for institutional reform. Increased attention from the Financial Action Task Force and the European Commission has prompted improvements in AML enforcement.

Germany maintains a robust economic regulatory environment that generally protects legitimate businesses from criminal interference. However, certain sectors, including real estate, hospitality and luxury goods, remain vulnerable to substantial threats, including economic espionage, cyber-attacks and money laundering. The prostitution sector, where voluntary sex work is legal under specific conditions, represents a significant area where illicit activities can intertwine with legitimate operations. Reports indicate that criminal groups have imposed control over elements of the hospitality industry, with protection rackets affecting bars, restaurants and shisha establishments. The proposed introduction of a national cash transaction cap aims to shore up some of these vulnerabilities, but the critical issue will be the effective enforcement of such a measure.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Germany offers a well-developed framework for victim and witness support, incorporating both governmental and non-governmental initiatives. The country's witness protection programme has been largely successful, ensuring the safety of individuals co-operating with law enforcement. However, access to specialized services for victims of human trafficking and organized crime remains uneven across regions. Funding constraints limit the reach of victim assistance programmes, and particularly their service to marginalized populations.

Germany places a strong emphasis on crime prevention, with various initiatives led by government agencies, research institutions and civil society organizations. The German Forum for Crime Prevention and the European Crime Prevention Network contribute to national and international efforts to combat organized crime. However, some prevention strategies, including the use of state-sanctioned digital surveillance tools, have sparked fierce debate over privacy concerns.

Civil society organizations play an active role in monitoring and addressing organized crime-related issues. Groups such as Mafianeindanke advocate for stronger anti-organized crime policies, while research institutes conduct studies on illicit financial flows. Germany's media landscape remains a crucial watchdog in exposing organized crime activities, though investigative journalism has been weakened by harassment and threats against reporters. The country performs well on press freedom indices. While the legal environment supports journalism, recent security law

reforms have expanded intelligence agencies' powers to the extent of threatening journalists' rights. Other media risk factors include fragmented access to information, a narrowing of the range of mass media perspectives, and rising violence against journalists.

This summary was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.