Women's Rights are Human Rights

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The Convention is a binding international treaty and often referred to as the International Bill of Rights for Women.

There are nine UN human rights agreements. These include the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). (Pronounced: si-daw).

C **Convention on the**
E **Elimination of all Forms of**
D **Discrimination**
A **Against**
W **Women**

CEDAW prohibits discrimination based on sex and gender. Women and girls must have the same rights and opportunities as men and boys in all areas of life. To date, 189 countries have committed to implementing CEDAW, including the Federal Republic of Germany.

CEDAW ALLIANZ
DEUTSCHLAND

The CEDAW Alliance Germany consists of over 30 non-governmental organizations (e.g., women's organizations and associations) and critically monitors the implementation of CEDAW in Germany.

Contakt

www.cedaw-allianz.de
kontakt@cedaw-allianz.de
CEDAW-Allianz Deutschland
@cedaw_allianz

Website:

Alternative Report:

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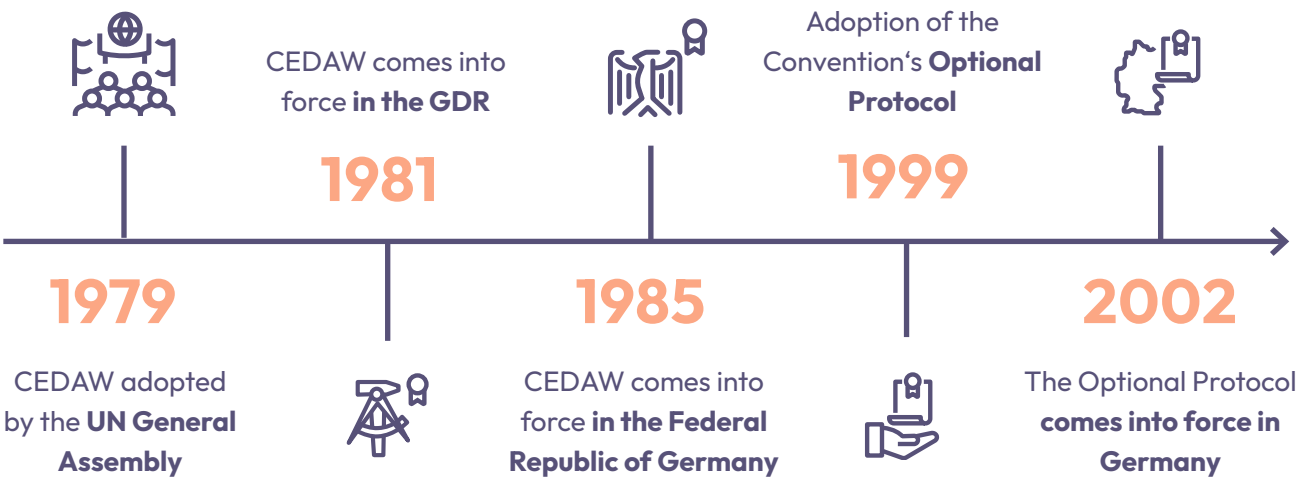
The Convention in Germany



The CEDAW Optional Protocol is an additional document. It allows individuals or groups to inform the UN CEDAW Committee about cases of discrimination. However, this is only possible once all domestic legal remedies have been exhausted. In cases of serious violations, a complaint can also be submitted to the Committee. If it is accepted, an investigation procedure will be initiated.

Human Rights are...

inalienable
They cannot be taken from anyone or given away.

indivisible
They are equivalent and cannot cancel each other out.

universal
They apply to all people everywhere and unconditionally.

CEDAW has been applicable law in the Federal Republic of Germany since 1985.

CEDAW therefore obliges the government to prohibit discrimination against all women and girls by law and to actively counteract discrimination. Women's rights should exist on paper (de jure) and be actively protected and realized (de facto).

CEDAW does not only apply to the federal government. Federal states, local authorities, and courts are also obliged to implement the Convention. Individuals, companies, and public authorities must also comply with it.

CEDAW prohibits discrimination in all areas of life, for example at school, at work, and also at home.

In total, CEDAW has 16 articles that describe women's rights at all levels of society (political, social, economic, and before the law).

Implementing these rights requires systematic and targeted measures. Here are a few examples of discrimination against women in Germany that must be tackled:

...in the workplace

Women have the right...

> *„to equal remuneration (...) and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value“.*
> CEDAW Article 11

The federal government must close the wage gap between women and men (= gender pay gap) and ensure that all women earn the same as men for work of equal value.

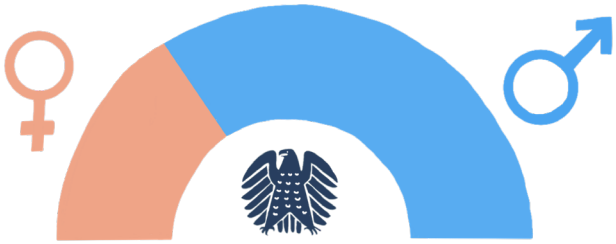
Men earn 6 % or € 1,52 more per hour

The **adjusted gender pay gap** refers to the wage gap that still exists even when qualifications, job duties, and scope of work are equal.

Source: Federal Statistical Office 2025

32,4 %

is the proportion of women in the German Bundestag in the current legislative period.



Source: German Federal Parliament, 2025

...in Politics

Women have the right...

> *„to participate in (...) government policy (...) and to hold public office and perform all public functions“.*
> CEDAW Article 7

The federal government must ensure that women are appointed to political offices and parliaments to the same extent as men. To this end, so-called „temporary special measures“ are possible, such as quotas for women.

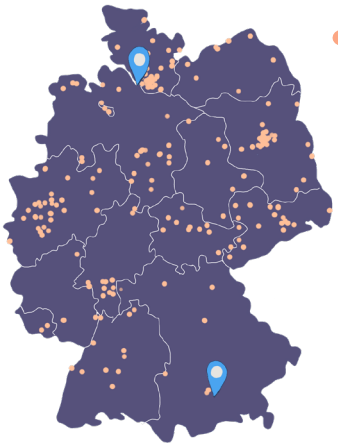
...and at home

Women have the right to decide for themselves:

> *„on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information (...) to exercise these rights“.*
> CEDAW Article 16

The federal government must ensure that all women are able to make their own decisions regarding family planning. To do so, they need access to counselling, contraceptives, and safe abortions, for example.

935 **Practices and clinics in Hamburg for 950,677 women**



- Practices and clinics listed with the German Medical Association that perform abortions.

4 **Practices & clinics in Munich for 805,111 women**

Sources: German Medical Association 2025; Statistics North 2025; Munich Statistical Office 2024

The State Reporting Procedure

The fact that CEDAW has the same legal status as a federal law gives political demands from civil society more weight. This means that social changes for greater gender equality can be initiated at the highest political level.

To ensure that CEDAW is implemented, the federal government must regularly submit a state report on the status of implementation to the UN. In this report, it must answer questions from the CEDAW Committee and list its measures against issues such as the gender pay gap and domestic violence.

Civil society also has the opportunity to give its assessment of how the convention is implemented. It can criticize the government and, for example, call for faster and stronger action. Civil society organizations can publish an alternative report, just as CEDAW Alliance Germany does on a regular basis. The alternative report describes the areas in which the German government is not adequately implementing CEDAW and what still needs to be done to improve women's rights in Germany.

The CEDAW Committee consists of 23 independent human rights experts. It monitors the implementation of CEDAW by reviewing country reports and also takes into account the assessments of civil society (alternative reports). It invites governments and civil society to hearings. It then formulates recommendations for the implementation of women's rights.

Gefördert vom:

CEDAW ALLIANZ DEUTSCHLAND

Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend