



## Freedom and rules

Europe—the so called “Christian West”—has a common history. Its culture developed over centuries from a foundation of common beliefs. One of these is a belief in Jesus Christ, based upon the Bible. Though many people in Europe and in Germany no longer share in a wholehearted belief in Jesus, their behaviour patterns, and many conventions of daily life, can be traced back to this foundation.



One aspect of this foundation is freedom. Jesus has always left people free to choose whether they will follow him or not. God loves us in a way that makes each person immeasurably valuable. Therefore every person is free, has equal rights, and receives the same worth. Many of these human freedoms are secured by the law in Germany. Everyone can hold his or her own opinion and enjoys freedom of religion expression. The press is independent of state intervention. The courts are subject to enacted legislation, not to the whims of civic officials.

Personal freedom remains extremely important in Germany. People can express their individuality and lead their lives as they see fit. However, this vast personal freedom does have limits. One individual's freedom should not be to another's disadvantage.

### **People who follow the rules are well-respected**

In Germany, many of these limitations are put into laws. For example, there are rules about when you can and cannot listen to loud music in to your flat. These rules guarantee people the freedom to sleep at certain times without being disturbed. So it is usual that no loud work (like in construction or manufacturing) is allowed between 10 at night and 7 in the morning, and between 1 and 3 in the afternoon. The same is true all day for Sundays and holidays.



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Even if this sounds peculiar: Laws can facilitate freedom. In Germany it is normal to obey the laws, even when nobody is looking. So, for example, both drivers and pedestrians wait at a red traffic light, and people throw their trash into trash bins. People who abide by the laws of the land are highly esteemed in Germany. Such citizens are well-respected and considered very trustworthy.