

GERMANY

Continent: Europe

[Population](#): 83.1 million

[Life Expectancy \(at Birth\)](#): 81.9

[Governance System](#):

Capital: Berlin

[Area](#): 349,380 km²

Major Languages: German

[GDP \(2021\)](#): 4,223,116 US\$ Millions

Select Global Rankings

[Human Development Index](#): 9th

[Fragile States Index - Inverted](#): 13th

[Soft Power 30 rank](#): 3rd

[Human Freedom Index](#): 15th

[World Happiness Ranking](#): 14th

[Good Country Index](#): 3rd

Elite Sport System Rankings

[Global Cup Ranking](#): 5th

[Per Capita Cup Ranking](#): 28th

[Olympic Medals – Summer '20](#): 8th

[Olympic Medals – Winter '22](#): 3rd

Football/World Cup Profile

[FIFA Region](#): UEFA

[FIFA Ranking](#): 11

World Cup Appearances: 19

Best World Cup Performance(s): Champion (1954, 1974, 1990 as West Germany; 2014)

Qualification: UEFA Group J winner

[World Cup Group](#): E

Last World Cup Appearance: (2018)

GERMANY in INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (by Anthony Samuels)

Germany is the largest economy and second most populous country in Europe, located right in the centre of the continent. Clockwise from the north, Germany borders Denmark, Poland, Czechia, Austria, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and The Netherlands. Its central geographic position is matched by its central role in European history and international affairs. While Germany did not become a unified state until the late 19th century, the nation's influence on the course of global events cannot be understated.

Germanic peoples lived across northern Europe in ancient times, organized into small tribes. These tribes often came into conflict with the Romans and eventually contributed to the Roman Empire's collapse. Migrating Germanic groups such as the Franks, Goths, and Saxons spread across western Europe, establishing kingdoms and laying the foundations of modern nations like France, Spain, and England. The territory of medieval Germany, however, was characterized by its hundreds of small principalities and duchies, loosely united under the Holy Roman Empire, a political agreement where prince-electors chose an emperor to combat external threats. It was in the territory of the Holy Roman Empire that the Reformation was launched, dividing German states

between Protestants in the north and Catholics in the south. As a result, Germany was devastated and depopulated during the Thirty Years' War. The Holy Roman Empire gradually became dominated by the power of the Hapsburg dynasty of Austria, who emphasized religious tolerance to hold the federation together. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, Austria represented German power on the international stage, however, the Kingdom of Prussia also began to emerge as a challenger for German hegemony. Prussia gained influence and size through martial prowess and competed with Austria for influence over the other German states. Germany was once again a theatre of conflict during the Napoleonic Wars and the Holy Roman Empire was officially dissolved in the war's aftermath. The 19th century saw growing nationalist sentiment across Europe, and Germany was no exception. The Kingdom of Prussia rode this wave of nationalism to unite the many German states under its leadership through successful wars against rival powers Austria and France.

The resultant German Empire, with Berlin as its capital, quickly became one of the world's greatest economic and military powers. The German Empire established overseas colonies in the modern-day African nations of Namibia, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Togo, and Cameroon. German imperial power reached its height at the beginning of the 20th century, but the nation found itself on the losing side of World War 1 alongside Central Powers Austria and the Ottoman Empire. Blame for the war was largely placed on German expansionism, and Germany was punished heavily under the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. Economic hardship and inept governance during the German Weimar Republic period created conditions that allowed the fascist Nazi Party to seize power in Germany in the 1930s, which would then lead to World War 2 and the devastating Holocaust. Despite initially conquering most of Europe, German forces met defeat against the Soviet Union as well as invading Allied troops in Normandy and Italy. After the war, Germany was divided with East Germany becoming a Soviet communist state while West Germany became a democracy. This situation continued throughout the Cold War until the iconic fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marked the reunification of Germany. Today, Germany is a strong democracy with a long list of scientific, cultural, and sporting achievements. The nation is a leading member of the European Union, NATO, and the G7.