The following representations provide some exemplary input to the questions posed by the OHCHR questionnaire on the right to participate in public affairs.

1. **Participation in the Conduct of public affairs**
2. **Participation in political and public affairs, including by reflecting them in the legislative framework / relevant national legislation. Scope and Content of the right to political and public participation (as provided in national law)**
	1. **Constitutional Provisions**

The German Basic Law provides the Participation in political and public affairs in different basic rights laid down in the first section of the Basic Law in articles 1 to 19, first of all the right freely to express and disseminate opinions and freely to inform oneself, which includes the guarantee of freedom of the press (art. 5).

Furthermore article 9, paragraph 3, guarantees “to every individual and to every occupation or profession ... the right to form associations to safeguard and improve working and economic conditions”.

Outside the area governed by article 9, paragraph 3, the freedom of assembly and association, supplemented by the right to form political parties, is guaranteed to all German nationals by means of article 8, as well as by article 9, paragraph 1 and article 21, paragraph 1, second sentence of the Basic Law.

Apart from these basic rights, a number of other rights are protected in the same way as basic rights, as well as the active and passive right to elect (art. 38).

* 1. **Equal Rights**

The general principle that all persons are equal before the law is guaranteed in article 3, paragraph 1 of the Basic Law. Article 3, paragraph 2, stipulates equal rights for men and woman as well as the obligation of the State to promote the actual implementation of equal rights for women and men and to take steps to eliminate disadvantages that now exist. The prohibition of discrimination in article 3, paragraph 3, means that no one may be favoured or disfavoured because of sex, parentage, race, language, homeland and origin, faith, or religious or political opinions, and that no one may be disfavoured because of disability.

In addition, article 33, paragraphs 1 to 3, states that every German has the same civil and political rights and duties and is equally eligible for any public office according to his/her aptitude, qualifications and professional achievements.

* 1. **General Equal Treatment Act**

The Act of 14 August 2006 Enacting European Directives Implementing the Principle of Equal Treatment, Article 1 of which contains the General Equal Treatment Act (Allgemeine Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, AGG), entered into force on 18 August 2006. The Federal Republic of Germany thus transposed four European equal treatment directives (Directives 2000/43/EC, 2000/78/EC, 2002/73/EC and 2004/113/EC) into German law. The objective of the General Equal Treatment Act is to prohibit or eliminate discrimination based on race or ethnic origin, gender, religion or beliefs, disability, age or sexual identity. The Act does not aim to protect certain groups but rather aims to protect each individual from discrimination based on any of these factors. This constitutes an important step towards a society free from discrimination. In order to support those affected, the independent Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (FADA) was established.

The scope of the General Equal Treatment Act extends to labour law and civil law. In the field of civil law, specific prohibitions on discrimination are enshrined not only with regard to factors of race/ethnic origin and gender, as required by the European directives, but, going beyond Community law, the factors of religion, disability, age and sexual identity are brought under the civil law protection from discrimination, because otherwise significant elements of life within society would have been excluded from the protection from discrimination as laid down in law. The civil law prohibition on discrimination applies first to the conclusion of so-called mass transactions. These are business transactions which as a rule occur irrespective of the person concerned or only with subordinate regard to the person concerned, subject to similar conditions, and in a large number of cases. In addition, it also applies to contacts with private insurance companies.

The General Equal Treatment Act contains rules on sanctions that can be imposed in the event of violation of the prohibition on discrimination. In particular, it also contains provisions on damages and compensation. It relaxes the burden of proof for persons who have been discriminated against, and anti-discrimination associations also have the right, in certain circumstances, to represent the victim of discrimination in court hearings within the framework of judicial proceedings. The court decisions given so far with regard to the General Equal Treatment Act indicate that labour law disputes account for most judicial proceedings. In contrast, recourse to the courts has only rarely been sought for claims of a violation of the civil law prohibition of discrimination.

1. **States‘ guarantee to all individuals to take part in the conduct of public affairs: Concrete measures of the State to enable the full and equal political and public participation by members of all groups?**

The declaration of belief in human rights as the basis of every community, as embodied in the Basic Law (art. 1, para. 2), contains not only the commitment to human rights but also the obligation for Germany to contribute to the worldwide implementation of human rights. Accordingly, the Federal Republic of Germany has ratified the international conventions for the protection of human rights: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as well as the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 4 November 1950 and the protocols thereto formulate personal liberty rights and political rights in general terms. These rights have become binding at national level not only through ratification of these instruments. By virtue of article 25 of the Basic Law they take precedence over the ordinary statutes and directly create rights and duties for the inhabitants of the federal territory, to the extent that they can be interpreted as general rules of international law. These international instruments for the protection of human rights provide important suggestions and impulses for national legislation. They must also be taken into account in interpreting the Basic Law, in determining the content and the scope of the principle of the rule of law and of the basic rights, as well as in interpreting the ordinary statutes.

An important instrument serving the protection of basic rights is also the constitutional complaint pursuant to article 93, paragraph 1, No. 4 a, of the Basic Law. According to this provision, any person may file a constitutional complaint by claiming that one of his/her basic rights guaranteed by the Basic Law or one of the rights under article 20, paragraph 4, or articles 33, 38, 101, 103 and 104 has been infringed by public authority. On principle, all sovereign acts of the legislature, the executive and the judiciary may be challenged by this extraordinary legal remedy. The constitutional complaint serves exclusively to protect basic rights and the constitutional rights which have the same standing as the former. As an

extraordinary legal remedy, it is only admissible if the applicant has previously exhausted all other legal remedies in respect of the alleged violation of rights. Exceptionally, a constitutional complaint is admissible immediately, inter alia if there is no other legal remedy, for instance in the case of a statute which directly affects an individual’s rights. A constitutional complaint is conditional on it being accepted for adjudication by the Federal Constitutional Court. It must be accepted if it is of fundamental constitutional significance or if it has been filed in order to implement basic rights or rights which have the same status as basic rights. This may also be the case if the applicant suffers a considerable disadvantage by a decision not being taken in respect of the matter.

1. **State bodies for the protection of human rights in addition to the courts**

Because of the comprehensive judicial protection, it is not considered necessary to create a State body with general competence for the protection of human rights. Under the German legal system, in principle individuals must themselves claim violation of their rights. Assistance is provided by a highly developed network of legal professions and special interest groups. In specific areas, the Basic Law provides for special procedures and institutions such as petition committees serving to protect basic rights.

According to § 27 III of the General Equal Treatment Act, the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency shall take on and independently carry out the following tasks, insofar as no Parliamentary Commissioner of the Bundestag or Federal Government Commissioner is competent in the matter: publicity work; measures to prevent discrimination on any of the grounds of race or ethnic origin, gender, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation; counselling of victims in cases of discrimination,  academic studies into such discrimination.

* 1. **Petition committees**

Pursuant to article 17 of the Basic Law, everyone has the right individually or jointly with others to address written requests or complaints to the competent agencies and to parliaments. Anyone who submits a petition has a right to have it processed and to receive a reply. There are special petition committees in the Federal and Länder parliaments where members concern themselves with the matters brought forward by the petitioners. Also in this way, the Bundestag can examine measures taken by the Federal Government and by other State agencies. The petition committee of the Bundestag can demand information from the Federal Government and from the Federal authorities, as well as hear petitioners, witnesses and experts. In referring petitions to the Federal Government, the Bundestag may not give instructions, but may request that the petition be considered. The President of the Bundestag informs the sender of the decisions of the Bundestag with regard to his/her petition. In processing petitions, shortcomings in legislation or administration may come to light and be remedied by statutory provisions or administrative measures. Similar regulations exist for the petition committees of the land parliaments.

* 1. **Commissioner of the Federal Government for Migration, Refugees and Integration**

The Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration supports the Federal Government in its efforts in respect of policy on foreigners and makes proposals for the further development of the policy of integration, including in the European framework. The Commissioner is a contact for creating the conditions to enable Germans and foreigners to live together without tension. In particular, he/she should suggest and support initiatives for integration in the Länder and in local communities, as well as in groups within society, in order to further the mutual understanding of Germans and foreigners.

* 1. **Commissioner of the Federal Government for the Interests of the Disabled**

The Federal Government Commissioner for the Interests of the Disabled has the task of

working towards the fulfilment in all spheres of life of the Federation’s obligation to ensure equal living conditions for people with or without disabilities. This includes measures to take into account different living conditions of disabled men and women and to eliminate gender-specific disadvantages.

**3.4 Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities**

The office of the Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers was established in 1988 at the Federal Ministry of the Interior. In 2002, the office was expanded to include the national minorities. He serves as the main contact at federal level for ethnic German resettlers; coordinating the Federal Government's relevant policies; coordinating integration measures with the federal, state and local governments and with churches, charities and social organizations active in this area.

The Commissioner also provides assistance to German minorities in their countries of origin, coordinates aid policy measures and serves as co-chair on the government commissions concerning German minority affairs.

1. **Participation of Women in the conduct of public affairs**

Equality between men and women has constitutional status in Germany, is anchored in numerous laws (see above) and is a major goal of government policy. Additionally gender equality was institutionalized. In Germany, gender equality structures are in place. A department of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is dedicated to gender equality policies, and some ministries have units dedicated to gender equality issues. All federal ministries feature equal opportunity commissioners who cooperate via an inter-ministerial working group. Similar structures exist in Germany’s 16 Länder. All these efforts have shown in the last decades a considerable increase in the participation of women in public affairs of Germany. However, there are still gender gaps which are persistent and need to be addressed: the gap in prosperity, the pay gap, the pension gap and the gap regarding women in leading positions. The Federal Government’s equality policy addresses these gender gaps with various methods, non-legislative and legislative, including temporary special methods according to Art. 4 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Woman (CEDAW).

* 1. **Women in Decision-Making Positions in Politics**

On the national level, women are comparatively well-represented in political offices. 36% of the Members of the German Bundestag are female. Germany has a female chancellor, and 5 of 14 ministries are headed by female ministers.

The representation of women on the municipal level is much lower. In honorary municipal representative bodies, they account for an average of 24% of the members. Only 5% of the full-time and honorary mayors in municipalities with over 2,000 inhabitants are female.

The Helene Weber Prize is an award for outstanding female politicians on the municipal level and was first awarded by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in 2009 on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the Basic Law. The Prize will be awarded again in 2015.

The Helene Weber College was launched in 2011, based on the great need for networking, exchange and support. It is the first nationwide, cross-party platform for committed women in politics and stands in the context of the current debate on more women in leadership and decision-making positions.

The goals of the College:

* to recruit more women for (municipal) politics,
* to improve women's chances of entering and rising in politics,
* to promote exchange and cooperation between women in (municipal) politics, including in an international context.
	1. **Percentage of positions of responsibility held by women**

In Germany, women are increasingly paving their way to professional advancement by attaining good qualifications and successfully starting their careers in economically relevant fields. On the whole, nearly a third of the management positions in Germany were occupied by women in 2010. Nevertheless, they are still markedly underrepresented in top management in the private sector. The share of women on the supervisory boards of the 200 largest companies is still only 18.4% (2012: 12.9%). The share of women on the executive boards totals 5.4% (2012: 4.0%) (DIW Female Executive Barometer 2015).

A growing number of companies are becoming aware of the importance of this topic. Since 2010, the German Corporate Governance Code (DCGK) has explicitly included recommendations for taking women into consideration for the first time, including on the executive and supervisory boards of companies listed on the stock exchange. The Federal Government is seeking to accelerate this hesitant development through statutory measures and to make it irreversible for large companies. A gender quota of 30% is to be set for companies fully subject to codetermination (2,000 and more employees) and for companies listed on the stock exchange, as well as binding targets for increasing the percentage of women on the supervisory boards, executive boards and on the top levels of management for companies listed on the stock exchange or partly subject to codetermination (500 and more employees).

Parallel to the introduction of statutory quotas in the private sector, the Federal Act on Gender Equality and the Federal Act on Appointment to Bodies of 2001 and 1994 respectively are to be amended, due to the partly very unsatisfactory implementation levels in the federal public service. The particular goal is to substantially increase the percentage of women in executive positions in federal administrative authorities, courts and enterprises, as well as in bodies to which the Federal Government makes appointments. The existing statutory instruments are to be modernised and tightened for this purpose.

The following measures are accompanying the proposed legislation:

* + The project "Regional Alliances for Equal Opportunities": politics and the economy define specific regional goals and establish measures of personnel policy in order to promote the career development of women and create structures for more equal opportunities.
	+ The project Roadshow "My Future: Female Boss in the Crafts Business" aims to in-troduce women and multipliers to careers as entrepreneurs in the skilled trades and crafts. It is presented at Chambers of Crafts, equal rights offices, employment agencies, economic development agencies, etc., and it is accompanied by target group-specific events.
	+ The "Women-on-Board Index": an instrument through which the success of gender equality policy in terms of increasing the share of women on the executive and supervisory boards of the largest companies is regularly documented.
	+ The "Public Women-on-Board Index": an instrument designed to increase the transparency of, and document changes in, the percentage of women in executive positions in publicly-owned companies.
	1. **Role of non-governmental organisations**

The Federal Government cooperates with non-governmental organisations in the field of gender equality. It affords them an active role, e.g. through regular consultations, membership in interdisciplinary working groups and integration in the legislative process. It supports the work of non-governmental organisations by promoting structures, such as the German Women's Council (National Council of German Women's Organisations), and concrete projects. The non-governmental organisations and their work to foster gender equality is a central driving force in Germany.

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs and UN Women National Committee Germany (UN Women Nationales Komitee Deutschland e.V.) together launched a project in 2011 that networks the national policy on gender equality and equal opportunities with international work on gender equity and the promotion of women. UN Women National Committee Germany is one of 15 national committees around the world that support the work of the UN Women.

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs supports the establishment of a nationwide working group of all associations of female migrants, the purpose of which is to represent the interests of female migrants and their organisations at the national level (DAMIGRA). The aim is to found a nationwide association. Furthermore, the Federal Government cooperates with Weibernetz e.V. on matters relating to women with disabilities (see Section D).

The Federal Government finances the independent German Human Rights Institute (DIMR).

During legislative procedure various stakeholders are consulted during the drafting of laws by the respective government office as well as during delibarations in parliament and its comitees including civil society organisations and experts (Verbändeanhörung).

**4.4 Women with disabilities**

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) should be cited as another milestone. Germany was one of the first countries to sign the UNCRPD and the Additional Protocol on 30 March 2007, ratifying it on 24 February 2009. Also multiple forms of discrimination against women with disabilities were recognised in Article 6 for the first time. The Federal Government drafted a National Action Plan, in which measures to the benefit of women with disabilities were also adopted. One of the focal points is the prevention of violence against women with disabilities.

**II. The Right to vote and to be elected**

In Germany all State authority shall emanate from the people and is subject to control by the people. The structural principle of democracy under the Basic Law is designed as representative and parliamentary democracy. The members of the Bundestag are elected every four years in general, direct, free, equal and secret elections. The members of the Bundestag are representatives of all the people and are not bound by orders or instructions and are only subject to their conscience. Parliament has comprehensive legislative rights and supervises the Government. The deciding principle is the principle of majority. However, a certain degree of protection of minorities is also part of democracy, e.g. the right of minorities in parliament to be heard, the possibility of political opposition and the freedom of assembly as an opportunity for the articulation of discontent and as a contribution towards the formation of political will. Most poltical parties introduced in the meantime gender quotas for their party-lists, in order to ensure a better representation of women in parliament.

1. **Article 38 of the German Basic Law - Principles Governing the Law of Elections**

At federal level, the Members of the German Bundestag, the Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany, are elected in general, direct, free, equal and secret elections. These principles of electoral laware entrenched in the federal constitution for the federal level (article 38 subsec. 1 of the Basic Law) as well as for the Länder and municipalities (article 28 subsec. 1 of the Basic Law).

All elections in Germany are implemented in the context of the timeframe provided by the constitution and by statute. The legislative period at federal level as a rule takes four years unless – as was the case in 2005 – it is terminated by an early dissolution of the Bundestag (article 68 subsec. 1 of the Basic Law) which leads to new elections.

The Basic Law stipulates that its Members be elected in "general, direct, free, equal and secret elections". "General" means that all German citizens are able to vote once they have reached the age of 18. The elections are "direct" because citizens vote for their representatives directly without the mediation of delegates to an electoral college. "Free" means that no pressure of any kind may be exerted on voters. "Equal" means that each vote cast carries the same weight with respect to the composition of the Bundestag. "Secret" means that each individual must be able to vote without others learning which party or candidate he or she has chosen to support.

The Members are representatives of the whole people, are not bound by mandates and instructions and are subject only to their consciences. Accordingly, an elected Member does not lose his/her mandate if he/she leaves the party for which he/she was elected or changes to another party. The popular representation has comprehensive legislative rights and monitors the Government. The decision-making principle in the German Federal Parliament is the majority principle.

**2. Article 38 of the German Basic Law - The Right to vote**

Suffrage is the civil right to vote. Everyone over the age of eighteen is entitled to vote (article 18, para. 2 of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany).

According to article 20, subsec. 2, of the Basic Law all power emanates from the people, that is the people of Germany. Therefore § 12 subsec. 1 of German Federal Elections Act determines in accordance with constitutional law, that only German citizens in the sense of Art. 116, para. 1 are eligible to vote.

There are two exceptions to the fundamental principle that only German citizens are eligible to vote, which are made on the basis of the requirements of the Treaty Establishing the European Community and of the secondary Community law that is based on this. In elections to the European Parliament and in elections at local level, nationals of the other Member States of the European Community who have a place of residence in the Federal Republic of Germany, or otherwise are habitually resident there, may also vote and be elected if they apply to be entered into the German voters register.

**3. Eligibility to stand for election: The right to be elected**

Every German citizen who has reached the age of majority, which nowadays in Germany is 18 years, is eligible to stand for election according to the German Basic Law (article 38, subsec. 2 of the Basic Law BL). Every German citizen who has reached the age of 18 is elegible to stand for election (§ 15 subsec. 1 of the Federal Elections Act).. Citizens who have been sentenced to an imprisonment of more than a year for committing a serious crime automatically loose their elegebility for public office and the right to stand for elections for five years time (§ 15 subsec. 2 No 2 of the Federal Elections Act , § 45, subsec. 1 of the German criminal law). Citizens who are excluded from the right to vote (§ 13 of the Federal Elections Act) are not elegible to stand for elections (§ 15 subsec. 2 No. 1 of the Federal Elections Act).

**4. Scrutiny of Elections**

The validity of an election is ruled on by means of the scrutiny of the election (article 41 of the Basic Law). In Federal Parliament elections, this scrutiny is incumbent on the German Federal Parliament itself, after a preliminary review has been performed by an election scrutiny committee. A complaint to the Federal Constitutional Court is admissible if the complaint is not sustained by Parliament.

**5. Article 29 CRPD – Participation in political and public life of people with disabilities**

In accordance with the constitutional principle of general elections, persons with disabilities may as a matter of course also vote as well as stand in the federal parliament (Bundestag), the regional parliaments (Landtag) and municipal elections in Germany (article 38 and article 28 of the Basic Law). This principle extends to European elections (§ 1 of the German European Elections Act). Persons for whom a custodian has been appointed to take care of their affairs in whole, and not only in parts or by a temporary order, or who are in a psychiatric hospital on the basis of a court order (section 63 of the Criminal Code) because of a crime committed in a state of incapacity to be adjudged guilty (§ 20 of the Criminal Code) are however excluded from the right to vote (§ 13 of the Federal Elections Act), and hence may also not hold elective office (§ 15 subsec. 2 No 1 of the Federal Elections Act).

As a result of the highly-specific definition of exclusion contained in the Federal Elections Act (only a judicial order for custodianship in all matters leads to exclusion from the right to vote; custodianship in part, which is the norm in German custodianship law, is not sufficient for exclusion from suffrage), the group of individuals concerned is kept as small as possible. The provision only covers those cases in which citizens are unable to take a highly-personal decision on who to vote for on their own responsibility.

As envisaged in the National Action Plan to implement the UNCRPD, the Federal Government has commissioned an interdisciplinary study by five professors of various disciplines. The study will show i.e. the extent to which persons with disabilities lose their electoral rights and whether the law needs to be changed in this respect. The study results will be available at the end of 2015.

The Election Acts of the Federation and the Länder, contain a number of provisions facilitating the participation by persons with disabilities in elections. For instance:

• Poling stations are to be selected and equipped in such a way that the entire electorate, in particular persons with disabilities, is enabled to take part in the elections.

• Each member of the electorate is informed on the polling cards whether his or her poling station is barrier-free or not.

• The polling cards contain a hotline number in the municipality to obtain information about alternative barrier-free poling stations in the neighbourhood.

• Voters who are unable to mark the voting slip or to fold or place it in the ballot box may avail themselves of the assistance of another person.

• Character font, size and contrast of ballot papers and envelopes are to be chosen so as to facilitate legibility.

• Blind voters or those with a visual disability may use a ballot slip stencil to mark the ballot slip. Specimens of the ballot papers are to be made available to the Associations of the Blind who produce ballot paper templates.

• Special poling districts are formed for voting for hospitals, old people’s homes and nursing homes, as well as for similar facilities with a larger number of voters.

• Election organisations should provide a variety of information on the Internet in a barrier-free form.

• Every voter, in particular persons with disabilities, can cast his or her vote from home or elsewhere by postal ballot.

For its part, the Federal Government will be investigating the active and passive participation of people with mental and psychical disabilities in elections and developing recommendations for action to improve participation on this basis.

All people in Germany have the right to establish and take an active part in political parties (article 21 of the Basic Law) and associations and societies (article 9 of the Basic Law). Whether or not someone has a disability does not play any role here. Receiving assistance and also having the opportunity to help are rights accruing to citizens in Germany, whether they have a disability or not. Civil commitment makes it possible to experience recognition, as well as to participate in the life of society and in political life. Persons with disabilities are committed to the most varied initiatives. They are naturally addressees of the Federal Government’s commitment policy just as much as persons without disabilities. The commitment of persons with disabilities to the Federal Government’s National Commitment Strategy deserves to be explicitly mentioned and recognised. As a matter of principle, the areas of activity include all fields of commitment. Above all, “godparent” schemes and mentoring models offer individual opportunities for commitment tailored to the specific needs.

**III. Equal access to public service:**

**Equality of men and women in the public service**

The central instrument for achieving equality between women and men in the Federal Administration is the Federal Act on Gender Equality (BGleiG). The Act contains a number of instruments aimed at increasing the equality of men and women, as for instance gender sensitive job postings, discrimation-free recruitment and promotion decisions, a gender equality plan, provisions for the reconciliation of family and work life. The Act also created as a compliance mechanism the position of gender equality commissioners with special competences in order to promote and controle the implementation of the Act within the specific government office. As reports on experience with the Act show, the situation of women in the Federal Administration has markedly improved in some areas. Women are, for example, today equally represented in relation to promotion and classification in higher service grades, and their share of all employees. It has been possible to increase their share of all employees from 45.6% (2001) to 52% (2012), the share of women in executive positions increased from 18.5% (2001) to 30.0% (2012) but there is still no equal participation. Also in Committees and Bodies within the Remit of the Federal Government (Bundesgremienbesetzungsgesetz – BGremBG) the share of women remains since years around 24.5%. Therefore, the BGleiG and the BGremBG will be amended in 2015.

The German Länder have similar acts for their public servces.

The legal position of women in the public service was further improved bythe most civil service law. Section 25 of the Act of Federal Civil Servants (Bundesbeamtengesetz, BBG) comprises an explicit ban on discrimination based on pregnancy, maternity leave, parental leave, part time employment, telecommuting and family-related leave.

**IV. Other:**

**Information and Publications on human rights:**

The Basic Law and the basic rights are covered in detail in school. Each pupil receives a copy of the Basic Law and of the Constitution of his/her Land. Teaching materials in the area of human rights are supplied for non-school education by the German UNESCO Commission in Bonn.

The work of the Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung) is of particular significance. This agency distributes documentation and declarations of the United Nations and of the Council of Europe, as well as portrayals of the protection and support of human rights. A collection of the texts of human rights conventions and other Council of Europe and United Nations documents has appeared as a supplement to the Federal Bulletin (Bundesanzeiger). The text of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Additional Protocols is also distributed in various languages, including German, by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, and can be sent through the post on request. These texts are also available via the Federal Ministry of Justice.