

Dear visitors,

I cordially welcome you to this building which used to accommodate the former Imperial Court of Justice and today houses the Federal Administrative Court of Germany. You are bound to be impressed by its size and splendor. This was indeed what its architects intended: The courthouse was built in Leipzig during the reign of Emperor Wilhelm II to represent the “third power” of state – the judiciary. Moreover, it was meant to be on an equal footing with the building of the Imperial Parliament (Reichstag) which was constructed at the same time and dedicated to the “first power” of state – the legislature. The building survived World War II, albeit with considerable damages, and served as a museum during the period of the German Democratic Republic. In 2002 it became a courthouse again: It now houses the supreme administrative court of Germany, the highest judicial authority to rule on legal action taken by citizens against administrative measures. For this purpose the building was restored, starting in 1998, achieving a synthesis between heritage protection and modern office space architecture.

Please come in: The administration of justice in Germany is a public affair and courthouses belong to all citizens.



**Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c.
Klaus Rennert**
President

Come visit us!

Visits

The great courtroom, the cupola hall and the museum of the Imperial Court of Justice can be visited free of charge: Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Guided Tours

The visitor’s service of the Court organises guided tours through the whole building. For further information visit our website.

Contact

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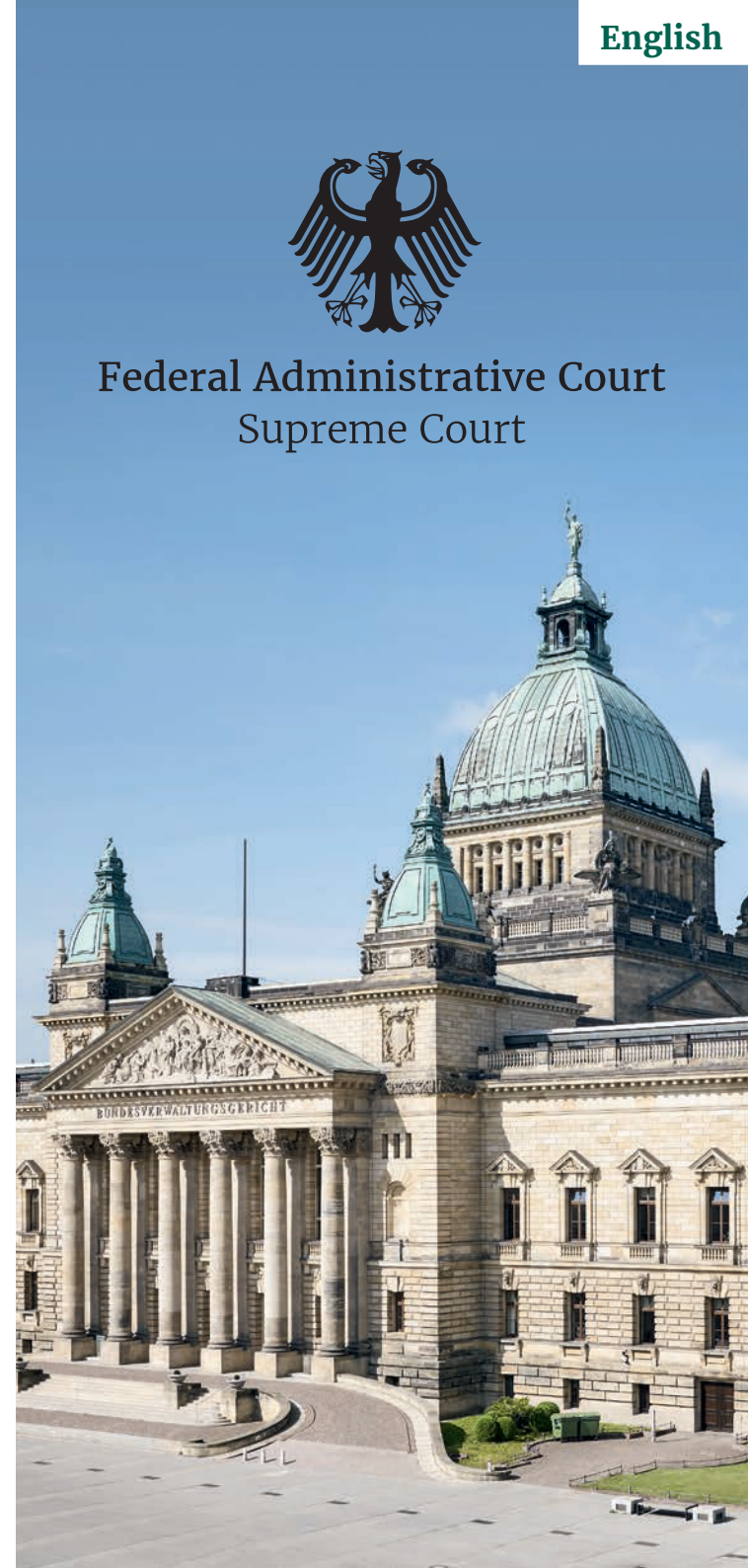
Getting here

S-Bahn lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 11
(stop Wilhelm-Leuschner-Platz)
tram lines 2, 8, 9, 14 or bus 89
(stop Neues Rathaus)

www.bundesverwaltungsgericht.de



Photos: Michael Moser Images



**Federal Administrative Court
Supreme Court**

The Federal Administrative Court

The Federal Administrative Court is the supreme administrative court in the Federal Republic of Germany. It has its seat in Leipzig. The Court rules on disputes in the area of administrative law, unless another court is competent.

In most cases the Federal Administrative Court is a court of appeal deciding upon appeals on points of law. Its primary tasks are to maintain legal unity and to develop the law. It adjudicates on questions of federal law in this regard. It reviews whether decisions by the administrative courts and higher administrative courts are consistent with federal law. In doing so it significantly defines the interpretation and application of the law. It neither ascertains new facts nor does it interpret federal state law. It undertakes an exclusively legal examination in these cases.



In certain disputes (i.e. on the planning and development of particularly important transport routes) the Court delivers final decisions as the court of first and last instance. Then, its purpose is not merely to clarify questions of law, but also to ascertain the facts upon which the decision is based.

In its jurisdiction, the Federal Administrative Court is associated with the European courts. It cooperates closely with other European and international courts.



! In total 56 judges and around 150 members of administrative staff currently work at the Federal Administrative Court.

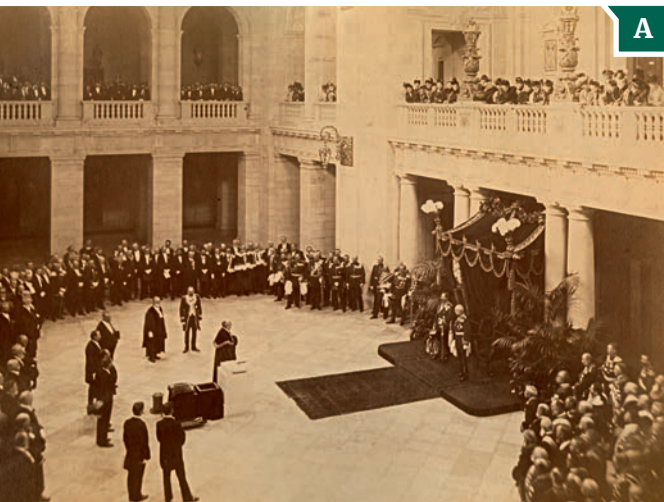
Organisation

The **judges** of the Federal Administrative Court are elected by a Committee for the Election of Judges. They discharge their judicial duties in **senates**. Each senate consists of a presiding judge and several judges. A research associate supports the work of each senate.

There are currently ten senates deciding on appeals on points of law, and two senates deciding on military affairs at the Federal Administrative Court. Five or six judges belong to each senate deciding on appeals on points of law; three judges belong to each of the military affairs senates. A roster allocating court business specifies in advance which judges will belong to a senate and which senate will be responsible for a pending case.

The **President** is the head of the Federal Administrative Court. He represents the Court and is the superior with authority relating to personnel matters affecting judges as well as the administrative staff. The **Vice President** acts in place of him in this function. Yet, the tasks of the President include those of a judge and presiding judge of a senate. In this function he has no authority over other judges.

Court Administration supports the President and the senates in the discharge of their duties. It is divided into the administrative department, the registry, the information services and the presidential department.



A

The building of the Imperial Court of Justice

Since 2002 the building of the former Imperial Court of Justice in Leipzig houses the Federal Administrative Court. The Imperial Court of Justice was the highest court of civil and criminal jurisdiction in the German Empire from 1879 to 1945. Its administration of justice and the architecture of the building reflect the chequered history of Germany during this period.



B

With the end of World War II the activities of the Imperial Court of Justice came to an end. During the GDR era, the building was used for the Museum of Fine Arts, the Georgi Dimitroff Museum, the DEFA film studio as well as the executive branch. After reunification the independent Federalism commission of the federation and the federal states recommended a relocation of the Federal Administrative Court from Berlin to Saxony. Since 2002 – after refurbishment and reconstruction – the building of the former Imperial Court of Justice has become a place for the administration of justice again.



C

Both then and now the building is one of the most impressive courthouses in Germany. It was built in the style of historicism with touches of Italian and French archetypes. Its architecture symbolises in many ways the national and legal unity of Germany as well as the importance of the law and its judicial enforcement.



D

Administrative jurisdiction

The administrative jurisdiction has its origins in the second half of the 19th century. The first German court of administrative justice was constituted in the Grand Duchy of Baden. Prussia also established administrative jurisdiction several years later with, inter alia, the constitution of the Prussian Higher Administrative Court. At imperial level there was no uniform system of legal protection. Only in 1941 the Imperial Administrative Court was established but provided only a curtailed legal protection.

After 1949, each of the western federal states created their own administrative jurisdiction. At federal level, in 1953 the legislator established the Federal Administrative Court in Berlin as appellate court ruling on appeals on points of law. The Code of Administrative Court Procedure which regulates the structure and organisation of administrative courts as well as the procedure on federal and federal state level came into force on 1 April 1960. In contrast, the German Democratic Republic abolished the administrative jurisdiction. Only towards the end of the 1980s people were entitled to have administrative measures reviewed by the courts.

After reunification the newly founded federal states established administrative courts and higher administrative courts as well. Since then, the Code of Administrative Court Procedure has been uniformly applied throughout Germany.



E

- 1879 — Founding of the Imperial Court of Justice
- 1884/85 — Architectural competition
- 1888 — Groundbreaking ceremony
- 1895 — Inauguration of the court building
- 1945 — Dissolution of the Imperial Court of Justice
- 1952-1990 — Building used as museum, film studio and for the executive branch
- 1992 — Recommendation by the Federalism commission of the federation and the federal states
- 1998-2002 — Refurbishment and reconstruction
- 2002 — Moving in of the Federal Administrative Court

A Laying of the capstone, 26th October 1895

B Imperial Court of Justice seen from the Pleißewehr around 1915

C Reichstag fire trial, 21st September 1933

D Destruction of the court building's façade, 1945

E Reconstruction works at the court building, 1998 – 2002

Historic photographs:
A-C: Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig
D: Federal Administrative Court
E: Kunstmann, Krostitz

