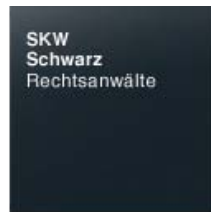


Germany



PLG Member Firm

SKW Schwarz Rechtsanwälte



SKW Schwarz is an independent German law firm. We advise companies of all sizes, from owner-managed firms to listed corporations, and private clients in all major areas of national and international commercial law. With offices at Berlin, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt/Main, Hamburg and Munich, we are present at major German business hubs and can serve our clients all across Germany.

SKW Schwarz is a firm which combines tradition and modernity. Some of our offices have existed for several decades. Many of our client relationships have been in place for years – a clear example of the importance we attach to stability. At the same time our expertise in media and entertainment law, IT law, internet and e-business law shows that we do not just keep in step with the latest trends, but help to shape the future. Both today and in the future we see ourselves as an independent law firm providing the full range of legal services at Germany's leading business locations.

With more than 80 lawyers, we regard ourselves as a medium-sized firm, which can nevertheless take on international assignments that are usually the domain of large law firms. Our cross-location cooperation procedures enable us to set up teams for more complex transactions which are comparable to those of considerably larger competitors.

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Country Facts

Legal Facts:

Constitution: The Federal Republic of Germany is a democracy under the constitution of 1949.

Legal system: German civil law is based on Roman law. Important legislation is mainly federal and usually embodied in general acts. Besides civil law numerous acts of public law exist, i.e. criminal law, civil law, tax law and construction law. The German civil court system is in principle three-tiered with District Courts, Higher Regional Courts and the Federal Supreme Court. Separate courts systems exist in relation to labour law, tax law and other public law. In case constitutional issues are involved the Federal Constitutional Court is competent.

Geographical Facts:

Area: 352,022 square kilometers, app. 885 kilometers (550 miles) from north to south and app. 595 kilometers (380 miles) from east to west.

Natural resources: black and brown coal, wood, natural gas, salts, iron ore

Demographic Facts:

Population: 82,218,000 (December 2007)

Location: Central Europe. Neighbour countries are Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Poland and Switzerland.

Languages: German

Government: Democracy with a Federal President and a Federal Government, led by the Federal Chancellor and the Cabinet. The Capital is Berlin.

Administrative divisions: Germany has 16 Federal States with own elected governments. Each of the states has a directly elected representative in the Council of States which is part of the legislative.

Economical Facts:

GDP: Euro 2,489 billion

Unemployment rate: June 2008: 40.19 million employees and 3.15 million unemployed persons, unemployment rate 7,8 %

Average monthly salary of employees: Euro 3,096.00 gross (in 2008)

Exports: in 2008: Euro 994,870 million

Import partners: France (Euro 96,858.9 million), United States of America (Euro 71,466.8 million), United Kingdom (Euro 66,787.761,681 million)

Imports: in 2008: Euro 818,621 million

Export partners: Netherlands (Euro 72,083.2 million), France (Euro 66,710.3 million), China (Euro 59,377.9 million)

Taxation:

Business Taxation: The tax status of a company depends whether it is a corporation or not. According to German law, corporations are taxable entities subject to corporate income tax as well as to trade tax. Non corporate entities, like partnerships, are not taxable entities. Corporations with a seat in Germany are furthermore subject to income tax.

Individual Taxation: Individuals resident in Germany are subject to individual taxation esp. income tax. In case of an unlimited tax liability individuals are in principle subject to taxation with their world-wide income. Most important part of German income tax is the tax on employment income. The employer is obliged to withhold this tax from the monthly salary and to remit it to the tax authorities.

Links of interest:

www.bundesanzeiger.de, www.bundesregierung.de, www.bmwi.de, www.bmas.de