



Germany

## Searching for documents in Germany

*~ Questions and answers to help lawyers ~*

→ When the existence of a will has been established, who has to be contacted to obtain information about its contents?

If the competent probate court is known, the foreign body should contact the court directly.

Otherwise, the Central Register of Wills of the Federal Chamber of Notaries (ZTR) can be asked for information in accordance with § 78f (1a) BNotO or Art. 66 (5) EU ErbVO. The information can be used to find out the type of deed as well as the depositary and, if applicable, already the probate court. Subsequently, the foreign body can directly contact the German depositary or the competent probate court to obtain further information.

No wills or inheritance contracts are kept or deposited in the Central Register of Wills of the Federal Chamber of Notaries (ZTR). The ZTR (only) records the custody details of succession-relevant documents that are in official custody. The content of a succession-relevant document is not known to the ZTR.

→ Who is entitled to receive the information concerning the contents of the will?

The details should be agreed with the competent probate court.

### **Important note**

These questions and answers represent general information as of 1 May 2025. For specific questions, a notary should be consulted. Information pages produced by ENRWA in cooperation with the European Commission and the Notaries of Europe.





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As a rule, the information contained in a will and also a copy of the will may be provided to authorities and to lawyers entrusted with the administration of the estate anywhere, provided they can prove that they are acting on behalf of a person who has a legal interest in the information. The information may also be given to any person who has such an interest, that is to say, any person who has been intestate or who has been deprived of his or her legal rights of inheritance by will. Evidence of such an interest must be provided.

→ Is there a particular procedure to be followed? If so, which?

Before the information from the will or the copy of the will can be released, the will must be probated in accordance with German law.

→ By what means can the information be sent?

The information contained in the will and/or the copy of the will can be transmitted by post or electronically (with an electronic signature)

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