

German Employment Law — Explained for U.S. Professionals and Companies

You know employment law. But Germany plays by entirely different rules.

If you are an American professional relocating to Germany, a U.S.-based HR manager hiring your first German employee, or a company expanding into the German market — you have likely already noticed: what you know about employment law does not apply here.

In the United States, "employment at will" is the default. In Germany, it does not exist. Once an employee has passed a six-month probation period, terminating their contract requires documented justification, specific statutory notice periods, and in many cases, approval from a works council (Betriebsrat). Getting this wrong is not just an HR headache — it is a litigation risk.

What Makes German Employment Law Different — and Why It Matters to You

German labor law is among the most employee-protective in the world. A few key differences that regularly surprise U.S. clients:

- **No at-will employment.** Dismissals must be justified — operationally, personally, or due to conduct. The Kündigungsschutzgesetz (Dismissal Protection Act) applies to any company with more than ten employees
 - **Statutory severance expectations.** While not automatically required by law, severance of half a monthly salary per year of service is the established market standard — and courts expect it in settlement negotiations
 - **Employment contracts must be written — and specific.** Vague bonus clauses, uncapped overtime expectations, or unilateral change reservations that are standard in U.S. offer letters are frequently unenforceable under German law
 - **Collective agreements may apply automatically.** — even if you never signed one
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Who I Advise

I am Anne Claire Schroeder-Rose, a German Rechtsanwältin and certified specialist in employment law (Fachanwältin für Arbeitsrecht), based in Ravensburg, Germany. I advise both employers and employees — and I work in English.

My clients include:

- **U.S. and international companies.** entering the German market, setting up subsidiaries, or managing cross-border teams
- **American and international professionals.** working in Germany who face termination, bonus disputes, non-compete clauses, or contract questions
- **HR departments and in-house counsel.** at multinationals who need a reliable German employment law contact on the ground

Whether you need a German employment contract reviewed before signing, advice on a termination you are facing, or strategic counsel on restructuring your German workforce — I can help, in English, with a direct and pragmatic approach.

Common Situations I Handle

- ✓ Review and negotiation of German employment contracts (including expat packages, equity provisions, and retention bonuses)
- ✓ Wrongful dismissal — Kündigungsschutzklage before German labor courts
- ✓ Severance negotiations
- ✓ Non-compete and confidentiality clause analysis
- ✓ Cross-border employment
- ✓ Employment due diligence in M&A transactions

The Terminology Gap — and Why This Domain Exists

In the U.S., you search for an "employment lawyer." In Germany, the profession is called Fachanwalt für Arbeitsrecht — a designation earned through additional certification and ongoing specialization requirements that do not exist in the American system. This site exists precisely to bridge that gap: to be findable by those who know what they need, even if the German terminology is unfamiliar.

Get in Touch

I offer initial consultations in English. Whether you are dealing with an urgent situation or planning ahead — reach out and let us assess your matter together.

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