

The Political System of Germany: Historical Evolution and Contemporary Structure

Historical Background

Holy Roman Empire and Confederation (until 1806). Prior to modern Germany, the *Holy Roman Empire* (≈800–1806) was a highly decentralized, multi-ethnic polity with an elective emperor and hundreds of semi-sovereign principalities, duchies, and free cities ¹ ². The Imperial Diet (Reichstag) functioned more as a consultative forum than a modern legislature; it was *theoretically* superior to the Emperor but fragmented into three estates (electors, princes, cities) ². The Empire was dissolved under Napoleon in 1806 (Emperor Francis II abdicated), and in 1815 the *German Confederation* of 39 German-speaking states was created at the Congress of Vienna as a loose successor ³. The Confederation had only a Federal Convention (Bundesversammlung) with representatives of member states, presided by Austria, and required unanimous consent for major decisions ⁴. This arrangement was weak and frequently deadlocked; historians note it “accomplished very little” before its collapse in the Austro-Prussian War (1866) ⁵.

German Unification and Empire (1871–1918). In 1871 Prussia’s victory in the Franco-Prussian War precipitated German unification under Kaiser Wilhelm I as *German Emperor*, inaugurating the German Empire (Second Reich). The Empire was a federal monarchy of 25 states (kingdoms, duchies, etc.) under Prussian dominance ⁶. The Kaiser (King of Prussia) held executive power and appointed the Chancellor (head of government, usually Bismarck initially), who chaired the Bundesrat (council of state governments). Legislation required approval by both the Bundesrat and the elected Reichstag (parliament) ⁶. The Reichstag was elected by universal male suffrage. Thus the Empire combined autocratic elements (hereditary monarchy) with limited parliamentary structures.

Weimar Republic (1919–1933). Defeat in WWI led to revolution, Kaiser Wilhelm’s abdication, and a new democratic constitution in 1919. Weimar Germany was a federal *parliamentary republic*: the Reichstag (elected by proportional representation with universal suffrage, including women) was the main legislative body, and the President was directly elected by the people ⁷. The Chancellor was appointed by the President but required Reichstag support. Notably, the President had sweeping emergency powers (Article 48) to issue decrees when “public safety or order” was threatened ⁷. This allowed the use of emergency decrees and was later exploited by Hitler. The Weimar system also suffered from extreme party fragmentation (many small parties) and unstable coalition governments; these weaknesses contributed to its collapse during economic and political crises.

Nazi Dictatorship (1933–1945). In January 1933, Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor. After the Reichstag fire (Feb 1933), his government used the *Reichstag Fire Decree* to suspend civil liberties and ban political opponents. In March 1933 the *Enabling Act* was passed, which “allowed the Reich government to issue laws without the consent of Germany’s parliament, laying the foundation for the complete Nazification of German society” ⁸ ⁹. In effect, the Cabinet (under Hitler) could legislate by decree, and checks on power disappeared. Hitler quickly outlawed all other parties and institutions. Upon President Hindenburg’s death (Aug 1934), Hitler merged the presidency and chancellorship by law – granting himself absolute power ¹⁰.

Thus the Weimar constitutional framework was torn down, and Nazi Germany became a one-party totalitarian dictatorship with Hitler as *Führer und Reichskanzler*. The judiciary was subordinated, civil rights were void, and the regime was maintained by terror and ideology.

Occupation and Division (1945–1949). WWII ended with Allied occupation (US, UK, France in west; USSR in east) and Germany's unconditional surrender (May 1945). The country was devastated and divided. Initially a four-power Allied Control Council governed in theory, but East-West tensions broke cooperation. In 1948 the Soviets blockaded Berlin, highlighting the divide. The Western Allies merged their zones administratively (Bizone 1947; Trizone 1949) and began drafting a West German state. In May 1949, the Western Allies approved the *Basic Law* (Grundgesetz) creating the *Federal Republic of Germany* (FRG, West Germany), a "liberal, parliamentary democracy and a federal and social constitutional state" ¹¹. In October 1949 the Soviet zone proclaimed the *German Democratic Republic* (GDR, East Germany), a socialist state under Soviet influence ¹². Thus two German states emerged in 1949. (Saarland rejoined FRG in 1957.)

Evolution of the Federal Republic (1949–1990)

Founding of the FRG and the Basic Law (1949). The FRG's constitution – the Basic Law – was authored by a Parliamentary Council representing all Western states (Länder). On 23 May 1949, Konrad Adenauer (chair of the Council) proclaimed the Basic Law ¹¹. Adenauer hailed it as "probably the first happy day for us Germans since 1933" ¹³. The Basic Law established key principles: democracy (power from the people), rule of law, federalism, social welfare, and fundamental rights. The Federal Republic was thus defined as a "parliamentary democracy" ¹¹. Power was divided between the federal (Bund) government and the states (Länder) ¹⁴. Adenauer became the first Chancellor (1949–1963), leading a center-right (CDU-led) government committed to *Westbindung* (alignment with Western Europe and the US, NATO membership, integration into what became the EU).

Constitutional and Political Developments. Over time the Basic Law was amended to meet new needs. In 1968, under a grand coalition (CDU/SPD), Germany passed the controversial *Emergency Acts* (Notstandsgesetze) – the 17th amendment – which equipped the federal government with powers to act in crises (natural disasters, uprisings, war) ¹⁵. These had been a sticking point for the Allies, but once ratified (May–June 1968) they came into effect and marked the end of Allied veto powers ¹⁶. Other notable amendments include: adjustment of Länder boundaries (e.g. incorporation of Saarland 1957), introduction of electronic voting safeguards, and a 2009 reform adding a "debt brake" (Schuldenbremse) to limit structural budget deficits ¹⁷. The structure has also evolved to deepen democracy: e.g. voting age was lowered from 21 to 18 in 1970 (effective 1972) ¹⁸. The Basic Law was originally termed provisional (Article 146) until a future "German constitution" could be drafted by the people; in practice it has become Germany's permanent constitution.

Ostpolitik and Bipartisan Government. Politics in the FRG was dominated by two large parties: CDU/CSU (center-right Christian Democrats and Bavarian CSU) and SPD (center-left Social Democrats). From 1949–1969 Adenauer and his CDU led the government (with liberal FDP support). In 1969 SPD leader Willy Brandt became Chancellor in a social-liberal coalition (SPD–FDP). Brandt pioneered *Ostpolitik* – rapprochement with East Germany and the Soviet bloc – and enacted reforms at home (expanded welfare, relaxed social norms). After Brandt's resignation, Helmut Schmidt (SPD) continued until 1982. In 1982 a constructive vote of no-confidence (see below) brought CDU leader Helmut Kohl to power, initiating 16 years of CDU rule. Kohl oversaw German reunification (1989–90) and deepened European integration. In 1998 Gerhard Schröder

(SPD) became Chancellor in a SPD–Green coalition, implementing economic and social reforms (Agenda 2010).

German Reunification (1989–1990). The fall of the Berlin Wall (Nov 1989) led to rapid political change. Free elections in East Germany (March 1990) brought pro-unification leaders. The *Unification Treaty* (31 Aug 1990) outlined accession of the GDR into the FRG. Under Article 23 of the Basic Law, East German states joined the FRG “as five new Länder” on 3 October 1990 ¹⁹ ²⁰ . Concurrently, the *Two Plus Four Treaty* (Sept 1990) among the FRG, GDR, US, USSR, UK, and France restored full German sovereignty (effective March 1991) and settled post-war issues ²¹ . Reunification enlarged the federal system by adding Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia (plus reunified Berlin). The Basic Law remained in force (with appropriate amendments) over the now-unified Germany.

Key Political Leaders. Over its history the FRG has had a small number of long-serving leaders. Adenauer (CDU, 1949–1963) set the course for the new republic. His successors included Ludwig Erhard (CDU, 1963–66), Kurt Georg Kiesinger (CDU, 1966–69) in a grand coalition, Brandt (SPD, 1969–74), Schmidt (SPD, 1974–82), Kohl (CDU, 1982–98), Schröder (SPD, 1998–2005), Merkel (CDU, 2005–2021) and Scholz (SPD, 2021–present). Merkel, notably, became Germany’s first female chancellor and served four terms; observers remarked that “few would have predicted that Angela Merkel could become one of the most broadly influential and widely respected leaders of our time” ²² . Kohl led reunification; Brandt and Schmidt reshaped social policy and East relations; Schröder implemented economic reforms; Merkel steered Europe through crises (EU debt crisis, 2015 refugee influx, COVID-19). Each chancellor exerted strong influence over policy, reflecting the *Kanzlerprinzip* (Chancellor Principle) embodied in the Basic Law: the Chancellor sets government policy direction and leads the cabinet.

Structure of the Contemporary Political System

Basic Law and Constitutional Order. Germany’s constitution, the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law, 1949), remains its supreme law. It establishes Germany as a federal, democratic, and social state. Article 20 states that “Germany is a democratic and social federal state,” with all state authority emanating from the people (via elections and referenda). Human rights and fundamental freedoms are enshrined in a chapter of “Grundrechte” (Basic Rights). (For example, Article 1(1) declares, “Human dignity shall be inviolable,” obliging all state power to respect and protect it.) The Basic Law also guarantees separation of powers and a rule-of-law order. As Britannica notes, the Basic Law drew on British parliamentary tradition while instituting American-style federalism and a formal bill of rights ¹⁴ . Key constitutional mechanisms include: legislative initiative by both parliament and government, checks by the Federal Constitutional Court (power to void unconstitutional laws), and explicit emergency provisions. Germany’s commitment to democracy and human rights was a deliberate reaction to the Nazi era: the Basic Law’s preamble and Article 20 embed the will to “liberalize” and “decentralize” power ¹⁴ .

Federalism and the Länder. Germany is a *federal republic* composed of 16 Länder (states), each with its own constitution, parliament, and government. **[95†Embed]** Each Land has significant autonomy: by Basic Law Article 30, the states have sovereignty for matters not explicitly assigned to the federal government. Typically, the Länder control education, policing, cultural affairs, and municipal law, while the Bund handles foreign affairs, defense, currency, and other national policies. This division of labor was intended to prevent excessive centralization (a lesson from the Nazi dictatorship) and ensure local representation ¹⁴ . In addition, the Länder exercise federal influence through the *Bundesrat*, Germany’s upper house (see below). Federalism also means that federal laws often require the states’ consent; for

example, amending the Basic Law itself needs Bundesrat approval. (Note: the map above shows the Länder with their flags; e.g. Bavaria's blue-white lozenges, Hesse's red lion, etc., illustrating Germany's federal diversity.)

Bundestag (Federal Diet). The *Bundestag* is the principal legislative body at the federal level. It is directly elected every four years (Basic Law Art. 38) under universal suffrage. In current law it has a fixed size of 630 seats ²³. Elections use a mixed-member proportional (MMP) system: each voter casts two votes. The *first vote* elects a constituency member by plurality (FPTP) in each of 299 districts. The *second vote* is for a party list in each Land, determining overall party strength. The Bundestag's seats are allocated to reflect each party's share of the second votes ²⁴, while ensuring that all directly elected candidates receive seats. This usually results in "overhang" and "leveling" seats above the base 598; recent reforms capped the total at 630 ²³. A party normally needs at least 5% of the second votes (or three direct mandates) to enter the Bundestag ²⁵ ²⁶. (In 2023 law, the three-seat exception was to be removed, although the Constitutional Court has allowed it for the next election ²³.)

[85†Embed] *Figure: The Bundestag in session at the Reichstag building.* The Bundestag has broad powers: it enacts legislation, approves the budget, scrutinizes government, and elects the Chancellor. By constitution, the Bundestag must meet at least once every six months and special sessions can be convened by the President. The Bundestag also supervises the executive through questions and committees. Importantly, the Bundestag elects the Federal Chancellor by majority vote upon the President's proposal ²⁷. No confidence motions against the Chancellor require that a successor has already been chosen ("constructive vote of no confidence" – see below).

Bundesrat (Federal Council). The *Bundesrat* is the representation of the Länder at the federal level. It is not directly elected. Instead, each Land government sends delegates (usually its premier and ministers) to the Bundesrat ²⁸. The total votes per state range from 3 (smallest states) to 6 (largest) based on population. Crucially, each state must cast its votes en bloc (all yes, no or abstain together) ²⁸ ²⁹. Thus the Bundesrat's composition mirrors state governments: for instance, when a Land changes government in elections, its Bundesrat votes immediately reflect that new majority ²⁸.

The Bundesrat plays a key legislative role: all federal laws affecting state competences or finances require its explicit *consent*. Other laws can be vetoed by the Bundesrat, though the Bundestag may override non-consent vetoes by an absolute majority ³⁰. In practice this gives the Länder a permanent say in most legislation. The Bundesrat can also initiate legislation and must be consulted on all bills (it can delay laws by refusing to deliberate). (For example, federal tax or education laws without Länder agreement may fail in the Bundesrat.) The Bundesrat meets at the former Prussian House of Lords in Berlin. It is often likened to an upper house (or senate), though it is unique in that its members have "no free mandate" and must vote per their state government's instructions ²⁸. This structure ensures that the federation's Länder can protect their interests within the national law-making process.

Federal President. The President of Germany (*Bundespräsident*) is the ceremonial head of state. He or she is elected for a five-year term (renewable once) by the Federal Convention – a special assembly consisting of all Bundestag members plus an equal number of delegates chosen by the state parliaments ³¹. The President's powers are mostly representative or formal. He formally *signs* all federal laws, appoints federal judges and officials, and represents Germany internationally (treaty making, accrediting ambassadors) ³² ³¹. The President also proposes a candidate for Chancellor (after elections or resignation) but must then appoint the person the Bundestag elects. The President can dissolve the Bundestag in some rare cases (e.g.

if a Chancellor-elect fails to secure confidence, or after a failed confidence vote) ³¹. Importantly, the President cannot dismiss the Chancellor or unilaterally force elections. By constitutional design, the President is meant to be an apolitical “*elder statesman*” – a guardian of the Basic Law – and over time has developed significant moral authority (e.g. Weizsäcker’s speeches on World War II, Gauck’s on remembrance).

Federal Government (Chancellor and Cabinet). The real executive power resides with the Chancellor and cabinet. The Chancellor (*Bundeskanzler*) is the head of government. He or she is elected by the Bundestag upon nomination by the President, serving a four-year term coincident with the Bundestag ²⁷. Typically the Chancellor is the leader of the largest party or coalition in the Bundestag. Once elected, the Chancellor appoints federal ministers (cabinet members) – usually party members or experts – who run federal ministries and implement policy. Ministers may be dismissed by the President on the Chancellor’s recommendation. The cabinet collectively must maintain the confidence of Parliament; they introduce legislation and manage day-to-day governance. By law, the Chancellor sets the general policy direction (the *Kanzlerprinzip*). The only way to remove a sitting Chancellor is the *constructive vote of no-confidence*: the Bundestag can oust the Chancellor only if it simultaneously elects a new one by majority ³³. This rule has been used once (1982: Helmut Schmidt replaced by Helmut Kohl) and generally prevents hasty government collapses. Otherwise, the government remains in office unless it resigns or loses a confidence vote accompanied by a successor. The Chancellor may also request Bundestag dissolution (leading to new elections) if a confidence vote is lost, as happened in 2005.

Judiciary. Germany’s judiciary is independent of the executive and legislature. The Federal Constitutional Court (*Bundesverfassungsgericht*) in Karlsruhe is the highest authority on constitutional matters. Its main task is judicial review: it can declare federal or state laws unconstitutional and thus void ³⁴. The Court has two senates of eight judges each ³⁵. Judges serve 12-year non-renewable terms. Half of the Court’s judges are elected by the Bundestag and half by the Bundesrat, each requiring a two-thirds majority in their respective body ³⁶. In practice this gives both federal and state legislators a role in selecting judges, promoting broad consensus. The Court’s decisions cannot be appealed. Other federal courts (e.g. Federal Court of Justice, Administrative Court, Social Court) handle civil, criminal, administrative, labor, and social law, but do not have constitutional review powers. Local and Landes courts (at state level) handle ordinary cases. The judiciary as a whole is considered a co-equal branch; the Basic Law explicitly provides courts the power to review state action against constitutional guarantees, reinforcing the rule of law.

The Party System, Electoral Rules, and Government Formation

Major Political Parties. Germany has a competitive multi-party system. The largest parties are:

- **CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union):** A center-right bloc, historically the leading party in most federal governments. The CSU operates only in Bavaria and forms a joint parliamentary group with the CDU in the Bundestag.
- **SPD (Social Democratic Party):** A center-left party, the other traditional major party. It governed alone or in coalition for many years (e.g. Brandt, Schmidt, Schröder, Scholz).
- **Alliance 90/The Greens:** Green/ecologist party, progressive on environment and social issues. Often kingmakers in coalitions; in government with SPD (1998–2005) and currently (2021–).
- **FDP (Free Democratic Party):** A classical-liberal party advocating free markets and civil liberties. Traditionally junior coalition partner (e.g. with CDU/CSU from 1949–69, 1980s, 2009–13).

- **Die Linke (The Left):** Democratic socialist party, originated from the East German ruling party (SED) and West German left-wing dissidents. Represents leftist platform (social justice, pacifism); in government only at state level.
- **AfD (Alternative for Germany):** A right-wing populist party, founded 2013. It entered the Bundestag in 2017 and is now the largest opposition party in parliament. AfD stands for anti-immigration and Eurosceptic policies; it has never been part of a governing coalition at federal level.

Coalitions are usually necessary because no single party wins a majority under proportional representation. Common coalition “brands” include the *Grand Coalition* (CDU/CSU + SPD), *Black-Yellow* (CDU/CSU + FDP), *Red-Green* (SPD + Greens), *Traffic Light* (SPD + Greens + FDP), and the aspirational *Jamaica* (CDU/CSU + Greens + FDP). Coalitions are negotiated after elections, typically taking weeks or months. The coalition agreement sets joint policy goals. Because of this consensus culture, policies tend toward the center (e.g. a CDU-SPD government usually tempers right-left extremes).

Elections and Recent Results. Federal elections occur every four years or when the Bundestag is dissolved. Voter turnout is typically high (often 70–80%). Recent notable elections:

- **2017 Federal Election:** Chancellor Angela Merkel's CDU/CSU won ~33% of votes, SPD ~21% ³⁷. AfD surged to ~12.6% (entering the Bundestag), FDP recovered ~10.7%, Left ~9%, Greens ~8.9% ³⁷. No party achieved a majority, and after failed “Jamaica” talks, Merkel formed her fourth *grand coalition* with the SPD ³⁷.
- **2021 Federal Election:** SPD regained first place with ~25.7% (best result since 2005); CDU/CSU fell to ~24.1% (its worst ever) ³⁸. The Greens achieved ~14.8%, FDP ~11.5%, AfD ~10.3%, Left just below 5% (4.9%, keeping only one seat via a direct constituency). After prolonged talks, the SPD, Greens and FDP formed a “*traffic light*” coalition under Chancellor Olaf Scholz ³⁸ ³⁹.

These results illustrate fluid party fortunes: for example, the SPD's lows in 2017 were reversed in 2021, while the CDU's decline reflects leadership changes post-Merkel. The AfD's rise has pressured other parties to adjust stances on immigration and EU issues. At the state level, various coalitions prevail (e.g. SPD-Green in Bremen and Rhineland-Palatinate, CDU-Green in Saxony, ‘Red-Red-Green’ in eastern states, etc.), reflecting regional diversity.

Coalition Politics and Governance. Coalition building is a defining feature of German politics. Since proportional representation often leaves no majority, parties must negotiate. This brings both stability and compromise. For instance, the 2021 traffic-light coalition had to reconcile SPD's social-democratic priorities, Greens' climate agenda, and FDP's fiscal conservatism. Coalition agreements cover budgets and major reforms. Rarely do we see single-party governments at the federal level (only CDU in 1950s briefly). In contrast, the German system disallows ad hoc no-confidence: a Chancellor can be voted out only if a successor is ready (constructive vote), so governments are relatively stable once formed ³³. This system has produced long-serving Chancellors and only one mid-term government change (1982).

Analysis of Stability, Efficiency, and Democratic Quality. Germany's political system is widely regarded as stable and robust. The “grand coalition” after 2017 and the orderly handover in 2021 exemplify continuity. Some attribute this to institutional design: the constructive vote rule prevents weak minority governments from falling arbitrarily ³³, and the multi-party consensus model means broad coalitions average out extremes. The constitutional court adds a legal check that courts can strike down laws violating democracy (Grundgesetz) ³⁴. Freedom and democracy indices rate Germany highly (classified as a “full democracy” by

sources like the Economist and Freedom House). Turnout is higher than in the US or many EU countries, reflecting civic engagement.

However, critics note some inefficiencies: coalition negotiations can be lengthy (e.g. 5 months after 2017 election) and coalition governments may dilute bold policies. The Bundestag has grown large due to overhang seats (up to 736 members in 2021), prompting a 2023 reform to fix it at 630 ²³. The multitude of veto players (federal-state divide, Bundesrat participation, strong judiciary) can slow legislation, though proponents argue this ensures careful deliberation. Compared to the US or UK, German lawmaking involves more consensual bargaining. For example, unlike the UK's more majoritarian parliament, German coalitions require cross-party agreement, and unlike the US's separation of powers (with the president independent of Congress), Germany's executive is fully parliamentary and must command legislative support. France's system, by contrast, features a powerful directly-elected president (who can dissolve parliament), whereas Germany's federal President is constrained to ceremonial roles ³¹.

In sum, Germany's system combines British-style parliamentarism with American-style federalism and an American-style bill of rights ¹⁴. Its distinctive features include the federal structure (strong Länder autonomy), the mixed-member proportional electoral system (leading to multi-party coalitions), and the strong constitutional safeguards (basic rights, judicial review, constructive no-confidence) ¹⁴ ³⁴. These traits underpin a political order that is seen as stable and democratic, especially when contrasted with fragile regimes or winner-takes-all systems elsewhere. While debates continue – for example, whether to lower the electoral threshold or simplify fiscal federalism – overall Germany's political model is often cited as a successful postwar democracy with high efficiency in governance relative to its complexity.

Comparative Perspectives. Compared to other democracies, Germany is a parliamentary republic like the UK (prime minister accountable to parliament) but federal like the US. Its Basic Law explicitly embodies human rights and court oversight (akin to the U.S. Constitution) ⁴⁰, whereas the UK lacks a single written constitution or court of the sort. Germany's Chancellor system is reminiscent of the British PM, but Germany's constructive confidence rule and formal coalition agreements differ from the UK's first-past-the-post two-party dynamic. In contrast to the U.S. president (both head of state and government), Germany has a ceremonial president and a chancellor who must maintain parliamentary support. France's semi-presidential system (with a strong president and a prime minister) is also distinct: in France the president can directly influence government policy (e.g. dissolving the Assembly), while in Germany the president cannot. Moreover, Germany's proportional elections tend to produce multiparty parliaments, whereas the U.S. and UK's plurality systems favor two-party outcomes. These differences highlight Germany's emphasis on broad representation and checks within its polity.

Data and Scholarly Views. Empirical data support Germany's high democratic quality: for example, it routinely scores near the top in indices of political rights and civil liberties. Voter turnout (often ~75–80%) outpaces that of the U.S. (historically ~55–60%) and is comparable to other Western democracies. The media environment is free and diverse, and civil society is active (including influential labor unions and industry associations). Scholarly assessments note that Germany's "consensus democracy" model (power-sharing, veto points) tends to produce moderate, incremental policy outcomes ³⁰. Critics caution that many veto players can make reform slow, but supporters argue this prevents radical swings. Major constitutional excerpts illustrate these priorities: e.g. Article 20 mandates a "social state" (emphasizing welfare) and direct democracy via elections or referenda (though national referenda are rare) ⁴⁰. The "social market economy" ethos, enshrined by postwar leaders, blends free markets with social safety nets – another distinct feature.

In sum, Germany's political system is built on a federal parliamentary constitution with strong legal checks. It has evolved through historical crises into a stable democracy. The Basic Law's design (checked executive power, guaranteed rights, federal balance) and the mixed electoral rules ensure wide representation and continuity. While no system is perfect, Germany's model is widely studied as a blend of the British, American, and continental traditions, with institutional choices aimed at preventing past abuses and fostering stable governance ¹⁴ ³³ .

Sources: Authoritative sources have been cited throughout (see footnotes) to support this analysis. (For example, Britannica and historical accounts outline Germany's political evolution ³ ¹⁴ ; official and academic texts describe constitutional roles ³⁰ ³⁴ ; election results are given by electoral data ³⁸ ³⁷ .) These sources affirm the structures and facts detailed above.

¹ ² Holy Roman Empire - Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire

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⁸ Enabling Act of 1933 - Wikipedia

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⁹ The Enabling Act | Holocaust Encyclopedia

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¹⁷ New majority in the German Bundestag could make "debt brake" reform more difficult

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22 **Angela Merkel—Striking the Right Note on Leadership**

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