

Germany profile - Timeline

A chronology of key events:

800 - Emperor Charlemagne, Frankish ruler of France and Germany, crowned Roman emperor by Pope Leo III.

843 - Break-up of Frankish empire; Germany emerges as separate realm.

962 - German King Otto I crowned Roman emperor after gaining control of northern Italy; beginning of what became known as Holy Roman Empire centred on Germany.

1250 - Death of Emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen marks virtual end of central authority and acceleration of empire's collapse into independent princely territories.

1438 - Election of Albert I marks beginning of Habsburg dynasty based in Austria.

1517 - Martin Luther proclaims Ninety-Five Theses against traditional church practices; start of Protestant split from Catholic Church.

Early modern Germany

1618-1648 Thirty-Years' War: failure of Habsburg emperors' attempt to restore Catholic dominance and imperial authority against opposition of Protestant princes; 1648 Treaty of Westphalia confirms near total independence of territorial states.

1806 - Napoleon's armies impose French rule over much of Germany; Francis II declares abolition of Holy Roman Empire and adopts title of emperor of Austria.

1871 - Otto von Bismarck achieves unification of Germany under leadership of Prussia; new German Empire's authoritarian constitution creates elected national parliament, but gives emperor extensive powers.

1888 - Start of William II's reign; start of trend towards colonial expansion and build-up of navy to compete with Britain's; rapid growth of economic power.

1890 - Growing workers' movement culminates in founding of Social Democratic Party of Germany.

1914-1918 - World War I

1918 - Germany defeated, signs armistice. Emperor William II abdicates and goes into exile.

1919 - Treaty of Versailles: Germany loses colonies and land to neighbours; pays large-scale reparations.

Beginning of the Weimar Republic, based on a new constitution. Its early years are marked by high unemployment and rampant inflation.

1923 - Adolf Hitler, head of the National Socialist German Workers' (Naz Party), leads an abortive coup in a Munich beer hall.

France, Belgium occupy the Ruhr over failed reparation payments; Hyperinflation leads to economic collapse.

1929 - Global depression, mass unemployment.

Third Reich

1933 - Hitler becomes chancellor. Weimar Republic gives way to a one-party state. Systematic persecution of Germany's Jews escalates. Hitler proclaims the Third Reich in 1934.

1935 - Germany begins to re-arm. Nuremberg Laws deprive German Jews of citizenship.

1938 - Annexation of Austria and Sudetenland. Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass) - systematic persecution of Jews.

Millions of people of all ages, mostly Jews but also large numbers of Gypsies, Slavs and other races, the disabled, homosexuals and religious dissenters, die as the Nazis implement an extermination policy in the death camps of eastern Europe.

1945 - Germany defeated, Hitler commits suicide. Allies divide Germany into occupation zones.

1945-1946 - Nuremberg war crimes trials see major Nazi figures executed or imprisoned.

Country splits

1949 - Germany is divided. The US, French and British zones in the west become the Federal Republic of Germany; the Soviet zone in the east becomes the communist German Democratic Republic.

Konrad Adenauer, of the Christian Democrats is West Germany's first chancellor. East Germany is led by Walter Ulbricht.

1950s - Start of rapid economic growth in West Germany.

1955 - West Germany joins Nato; East Germany joins the Warsaw Pact.

1957 - West Germany joins the European Economic Community.

1961 - Construction of the Berlin Wall ends steady flight of people from East to West.

1969 - Social Democrat Willy Brandt becomes chancellor and seeks better ties with the Soviet Union and East Germany under Ostpolitik (eastern policy).

1971 - Walter Ulbricht is succeeded in East by Erich Honecker.

1973 - East and West Germany join the UN.

1974 - Brandt resigns after spy revelations surrounding one of his aides. New Chancellor Helmut Schmidt continues Ostpolitik.

Wall tumbles

1982 - Christian Democrat Helmut Kohl becomes chancellor.

1987 - East German leader Erich Honecker pays first official visit to West.

1989 - Mass exodus of East Germans as neighbouring Soviet bloc countries relax travel restrictions. Protests across East Germany lead to rapid collapse of Communist rule. Germans from East and West tear down Berlin Wall.

1990 - East Germans elect pro-unification parliament, state merged into Federal Republic.

1994 - Russian and Allied troops finally leave Berlin.

Schroeder years

1998 - General election victory for Social Democrat leader Gerhard Schroeder leads to coalition with Green Party.

2001 June - Government decides to phase out nuclear energy over next 20 years.

2001 November - Chancellor Schroeder survives parliamentary confidence vote over the government's decision to deploy 4,000 troops in the US-led campaign in Afghanistan, Germany's largest deployment outside Europe since World War II.

2002 January - Euro replaces Deutsche Mark.

2002 March - Government pushes controversial immigration bill through upper house of parliament. It allows a limited number of skilled non-EU workers into the country.

Schroeder re-elected

2002 September - Schroeder coalition re-elected with sharply reduced majority.

2004 May - Opposition CDU-backed candidate Horst Koehler, former IMF head, elected president.

2004 August/September - Tens of thousands protest in streets, particularly in eastern regions, over government plans to cut unemployment benefit and other welfare and labour reforms.

2005 May - After his party suffers defeat in North Rhein-Westphalia regional election, Chancellor Schroeder announces that he will seek early general elections.

Parliament ratifies EU constitution.

First female chancellor

2005 November - Christian Democrat leader Angela Merkel becomes chancellor in "grand coalition" with Social Democrats after inconclusive elections in September.

2006 November - Unemployment falls below 4 million for the first time in four years.

Financial crisis

2008 October - Germany agrees a \$68bn plan to save one of the country's largest banks, Hypo Real Estate, from collapse.

Germany says it will make as much as 500bn euros available in loan guarantees and capital to bolster the European banking system.

2008 November - Germany is declared to be officially in recession.

2009 February - Parliament approves \$63bn stimulus package aimed at shoring up recession-hit economy.

2009 August - Figures are released showing that economy grew by 0.3% in last quarter, bringing country out of recession.

2009 October - Mrs Merkel's CDU seals coalition deal with pro-business Free Democrats (FDP) after parties reach agreement on major tax cut proposals following September general election.

2010 - Official data shows the German economy shrank by 5% in 2009, hit by a slump in exports and investment.

Eurozone woes

2010 May - Parliament votes to approve a 22.4bn euro contribution to bail out debt-ridden Greece, prompting widespread public anger.

Chancellor Merkel's governing centre-right coalition suffers a defeat in regional elections in North-Rhine Westphalia, thereby losing its majority in the upper house of the federal parliament.

2010 September - Cabinet approves controversial plan to extend lifespan of Germany's nuclear reactors, reversing 2001 decision to phase out nuclear energy by 2021.

2011 January - Provisional figures show the economy grew by 3.6% in 2010, its fastest pace since reunification in 1990. Economists attributed the rate to a recovery in exports.

2011 March - Setback for Chancellor Merkel as her Christian Democrats lose the key state of Baden-Wuerttemberg for the first time in six decades.

2011 May - In further u-turn on nuclear power following crisis at Japan's Fukushima plant, German government says all nuclear power plants will be phased out by 2022.

2011 July - Chancellor Merkel defends her decision to back second huge bail-out for Greece, insisting that it is Germany's historic duty to protect the euro.

Growth slows

2012 August - The Federal Constitutional Court partly reverses severe restrictions on military deployments enshrined in the constitution after World War Two, giving the military the right to use weapons in Germany in the event of an assault of "catastrophic proportions", but not to control demonstrations.

2013 May - Figures show that in 2012 Germany experienced its biggest surge in immigration in almost 20 years, with 400,000 "permanent migrants" - people who have the right to stay for more than a year - arriving.

2013 October - Germany withdraws most of its troops from Afghanistan, following a decade in which it was responsible for security in the northern province of Kunduz.

2013 December - Mrs Merkel begins a third term of office as chancellor at the head of a grand coalition with the other main party, the centre-left Social Democrats, after falling short of an overall majority in the September elections.

2014 April - Germany adopts a minimum wage for the first time, setting it at 8.50 euros an hour.

Migrant crisis

2015 September - Chancellor Merkel offers temporary asylum to refugees, prompting mass movement of people through Balkans towards Germany in autumn and winter, and stretching European Union Schengen Agreement on abolition of border controls to breaking point in many countries.

2016 January - Sex attacks on hundreds of women in Cologne and other German cities during New Year celebrations by men largely of North African or Arab appearance prompts public backlash against Chancellor Merkel's welcome to migrants. Government takes steps to curb influx.

2016 March - Anti-migrant Alternative for Germany party makes strong showing in three state-level elections, beating Christian Democrats into third place in Chancellor Merkel's home state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

2016 July - Attacks by migrant Islamic State sympathisers in Wuerzburg and Ansbach leave 17 people injured.

2016 March - Alternative for Germany party makes strong showing in Berlin state elections.

2016 December - Tunisian migrant Anis Amri kills 12 people by driving a hijacked lorry into a crowded Berlin Christmas market.

2017 September - The Alternative for Germany exploits social tensions over migrants to surge into third place at parliamentary elections, behind the much-weakened Christian Democrats and Social Democrats.

2018 March - Chancellor Merkel reforms the "Grand Coalition" with the Social Democrats, after her failure to assemble a government with the pro-business liberal Free Democrats and left-leaning Greens.

2018 August - Violent anti-immigrant protests in the eastern city of Chemnitz after two migrants were detained over a fatal stabbing.