



What prominent right-wing actors and groups are active in Germany?

Recent years have seen an increase in right-wing groups across Europe and in Germany. The EU funded CHAMPIONS study has mapped the most prominent of them, enabling an understanding of the current right wing-scene in Germany.

Due to the German history of national-socialism democracy-building and in the opposite end of the spectrum, anti-democratic tendencies, are under particular focus in Germany. In general these factors are perceived to have delayed the rise of right-wing populism in Germany but not prevented. Thus, a variety of right-wing actors are currently active in Germany.

To further its goal of developing effective detection and response solutions to counter polarisation, the CHAMPIONS project has mapped the most prominent right-wing actors in Germany, amongst other states. This enables us to gain a deeper understanding of the current right-wing landscape within Germany.

Right-wing extremism in Germany

The right-wing terrorists of the self-named national-socialist Underground (NSU), who murdered ten individuals between 2000 and 2007 have largely disappeared from the headlines since 2012. Nevertheless, there is a large number of right-wing populists to radical and extremist groups, organizations and other actors active within Germany. However, the boundaries between these groups and actors are becoming increasingly blurred, as the overall scene is becoming more connected. Amongst the most prominent actors are:

- The Alternative for Germany (AfD). The Eurosceptic party was founded in 2013. In the following years the party developed into a right-wing populist party with partly nationalist and right-wing extremist wings. Achieving its strongest results above all in the eastern German states of Brandenburg and Saxony, the party won 12.6% of the vote in the German 2017 federal elections.
- Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident' (PEGIDA). Established since 2014 the movement is now registered as an association. It held weekly demonstrations in Germany cities, like Dresden and offered a platform in which right-wing extremists mixed with citizens led by resentment.
- The Institute for State Policy in Schnellrhoda. Organised around the publisher Götz Kubitschek the Institute functions as a think tank of the so-called "New Right". The weekly newspaper "Junge Freiheit" and the publishing house Antaios, publisher of the magazine 'Sezession', are also closely linked.



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- The nationalist Identity Movement. The movement represents ethnopluralism ideologically and draws attention to itself through contemporary marketing strategies and effective forms of action, focused especially on young people.
- Autonomous nationalists. Coping forms of clothing and action of the left-wing autonomous scene, groups and parties try to address young people for National Socialist ideology with anti-capitalist rhetoric. The neo-Nazi party 'Die Rechte' developed out of this scene.
- Blood and Honour. The group is an international network for the distribution of neo-Nazi rock music with a strong presence in Germany. Its organisation is linked to its militant arm: Combat 18, which is also active in Germany.
- Imperial citizens ('Reichsbürger'). These individuals and groups do not recognise the territory, law or government of the Federal Republic of Germany, but refer to the German Empire or the German Reich within the borders of 1937 under the National Socialists. Driven by right-wing extremism, historical revisionism, anti-Semitism and conspiracy theories, they increasingly appear militant.
- Other extreme right-wing small to micro-parties are the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD), founded in 1964, and its youth organization Young Nationalists with a National Socialist orientation; the nationalist party Der III. Weg; The Republicans; the right-wing German Democratic Party (DP).

Thus, the German right-wing scene is diverse but increasingly connected. As such, networks like Blood and Honour have developed on an international level. Further, the scene has developed think tanks, newspapers and parties. Through movements, like PEGIDA and the nationalist identity movement, the scene appears to attempt to diversify its support base. A similar strategy appears to apply to their tactics as some strands of the scene have copied tactics from the left, like the autonomous nationalists.

Nevertheless, the CHAMPIONS report also shows that resistance to right-wing extremism and racism is highly active in Germany. The Federal Government has launched a number of programmes to promote democracy and social cohesion. These include the Federal Programme 'Living Democracy!' with a funding volume of over 100 million. However, other organisations, like advisory centres for victims of right-wing violence do not receive permanent funding but rather have to reapply after a funding circle is over. Thus, while currently funding for these bodies is fairly good, according to the CHAMPIONS project, the situation could change dependent on the political situation. Nevertheless, funding also arises from a number of private foundations, creating a diverse funding pool.

On the other hand, some prominent figures in media and politics are somewhat non-positioned when it comes to right wing populism and extremism. As such, the CHAMPIONS project identified a tendency of raising the topic of left-wing extremism immediately when the discourse shifts to right-wing extremism.

