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European Case Law Identifier (ECLI)

Content provided by:
Germany

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Introduction and spread of the ECLI in Germany

In Germany, the Federal Constitutional Court (*Bundesverfassungsgericht*), the Federal Court of Justice (*Bundesgerichtshof*), the Federal Administrative Court (*Bundesverwaltungsgericht*), the Federal Fiscal Court (*Bundesfinanzhof*), the Federal Labour Court (*Bundesarbeitsgericht*), the Federal Social Court (*Bundessozialgericht*) and the courts of the *Länder* have introduced the ECLI into their databases of decisions. An ECLI is allocated to all decisions published on their respective websites since the ECLI was introduced. For details, see:

Federal Constitutional Court

<http://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de> (there are plans to retroactively allocate ECLIs to all published decisions);

Federal Court of Justice

<http://www.bundesgerichtshof.de> (for decisions published on the website of the Federal Constitutional Court since 1 January 2016);

Federal Administrative Court

<http://www.bundesverwaltungsgericht.de> (for all decisions published on the website of the Federal Administrative Court);

Federal Fiscal Court

<http://www.bundesfinanzhof.de> (for decisions published on the website of the Federal Fiscal Court since 4 October 2016);

Federal Labour Court

<http://www.bundesarbeitsgericht.de> (for decisions dated after 1 January 2015);

Federal Social Court

<http://www.bundessozialgericht.de> (for decisions published on the website of the Federal Social Court since

1 January 2010);

courts of the *Länder*

<http://www.justiz.de/onlinedienste/rechtsprechung/index.php>.

You can also use the [EU ECLI search engine](#) to search for Federal Constitutional Court and Federal Administrative Court decisions to which an ECLI has been allocated.

Structure of ECLIs

General

ECLIs have five components. Each component is separated from the others by a colon. ECLIs allocated by Germany always start with ECLI (①) followed by DE for Germany (②). The third component, known as the court code (③), shows which court took the decision (e.g. BVerfG for the Federal Constitutional Court). The fourth component (④) indicates the year in which the decision was taken and consists of a four-digit sequence (in the format yyyy, e.g. 2016).

ECLI : DE : BVerfG : 2016 : b s 20160301 c . 2bvb000113
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨

The courts generate the final component, known as the ordinal number (⑤ and upwards), according to their own individual rules. The court codes and ordinal numbers used by each court are explained separately below.

Details for individual courts

Federal Constitutional Court

The court code (③) is always BVerfG. The ordinal number consists of parts ⑤ to ⑨. The second-last and last parts are separated by a point. The exact components of the ordinal number are explained in detail below.

5. Type of procedure:

- b Finding that one or more parties have acted unconstitutionally
- c Appeal against a ruling in an electoral dispute
- e Dispute resolution proceedings between constitutional bodies
- f Abstract judicial review
- g Federal Government / *Länder* disputes
- h Other disputes between the Federal Government and the *Länder*
- k Disputes concerning the constitution of a *Land*
- l Substantive judicial review
- m Review of international law as Federal law
- n Interpretation of the Basic Law following referral by the constitutional court of a *Land*
- p Decisions on other matters referred to it by Federal Act
- q Interim measures
- r Constitutional complaints
- up Full-court decisions
- vb Complaints regarding judicial delay

- 6. Abbreviations for court formations: k for decisions of a Chamber or s for decisions of a Senate (division) (not for full-court cases or complaints regarding delay; in these cases, the court formation is implicitly

indicated by the abbreviations up and vb).

7. Exact date of decision in the format *yyyymmdd*.
8. Optional: an additional distinguishing character (assigned in alphabetical order from a to z). This is used when decisions are handed down by the same court with the same date and file reference (e.g. same date and file reference given for the extension of an interim order and the decision on the substance of the case). A distinguishing character is only added if it is necessary to prevent the allocation of ambiguous ECLIs.
9. Main file reference (consisting of the division identifier, the register reference, the entry number and the year of entry in the format *yy*). There are no spaces between the division identifier and the register reference, nor between the register reference and the entry number. The slash between the entry number and the year of entry is also omitted from the ECLI. The entry number is always shown as a four-digit number in an ECLI. If necessary, leading zeros are inserted before the entry number. The last two digits therefore always represent the year of entry.

Example:

The ECLI for the decision of the Second Division of the Federal Constitutional Court of 1 March 2016 with file reference 2 BvB 1/13 is:

ECLI : DE : BVerfG : 2016 : b s 20160301 c . 2bvb000113

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨

The additional character c indicates that this is the fourth decision with an otherwise identical ECLI.

Federal Court of Justice

The court code (③) is always BGH. The ordinal number consists of parts ⑤ to ⑧. Parts ⑦ and ⑧ are separated by a point. The exact components of the ordinal number are explained in detail below.

5. Exact date of decision in the format *ddmmyy*.
6. Abbreviation for the type of decision (U for judgment (*Urteil*), B for ruling (*Beschluss*), V for order (*Verfügung*), S for other).
7. Main file reference (consisting of the division identifier, the register reference, the entry number and the year of entry in the format *yy*). There are no spaces between the division identifier and the register reference, nor between the register reference and the entry number. The slash between the entry number and the year of entry is replaced with a point.
8. An additional distinguishing character (assigned consecutively from 0 to 9) is always used when several decisions of the same type are handed down with the same date and file reference.

Example:

The ECLI for the ruling of the Second Criminal Division of the Federal Court of Justice of 15 March 2016 with file reference 2 StR 487/15 is:

ECLI : DE : BGH : 2016 : 150316 B 2STR487.15 . 2

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧

The additional character 2 indicates that this is the third decision with an otherwise identical ECLI.

Federal Administrative Court

The court code (③) is always BVerwG. The ordinal number consists of parts ⑤ to ⑧. Parts ⑦ and ⑧ are separated by a point unless the file reference suffix D (judicial protection in the event of excessively long legal proceedings) has been assigned, in which case there is no point between the file reference (⑦) and the

additional distinguishing character (Ⓢ). The exact components of the ordinal number are explained in detail below.

5. Exact date of decision in the format ddmmyy.
6. Abbreviation for the type of decision (U for judgment (*Urteil*), B for ruling (*Beschluss*), G for order (*Gerichtsbescheid*)).
7. Main file reference (consisting of the division identifier, the register reference, the entry number and the year of entry in the format yy). There are no spaces between the division identifier and the register reference, nor between the register reference and the entry number. Older file references have a slash between the entry number and the year of entry; in ECLIs, this slash is replaced with a point.
8. An additional distinguishing character (assigned consecutively from 0 to 9) is always used when several decisions of the same type are handed down with the same date and file reference.

Example:

The ECLI for the judgment of the Ninth Division of the Federal Administrative Court of 17 April 2002 with file reference 9 CN 1/01 is:

ECLI : DE : BVerwG : 2002 : 170402 U 9CN1.01 . 0
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧

Federal Fiscal Court

The court code (Ⓢ) is always BFH. The ordinal number consists of parts ⑤ to ⑧. Each part is separated from the others by a point. The exact components of the ordinal number are explained in detail below.

5. Abbreviation for the type of decision:

VE Request to the Court of Justice of the EU for a preliminary ruling

VV Submission to the Federal Constitutional Court

Ruling in proceedings for interim measures:

BA application for suspension of enforcement [A1] and appeal against a decision to suspend enforcement [A2]

B Ruling, except where BA is to be assigned

U Judgment, legally binding court order, interlocutory order, etc.

6. Exact date of decision in the format ddmmyy.
7. Main file reference (consisting of the division identifier, the register reference, the entry number and the year of entry in the format yy). There are no spaces between the division identifier and the register reference, nor between the register reference and the entry number. The slash between the entry number and the year of entry is replaced with a point.
8. An additional distinguishing character (assigned consecutively from 0 to 9) is always used when several decisions of the same type are handed down with the same date and file reference.

Example:

The ECLI for the judgment of the Tenth Division of the Federal Fiscal Court of 1 June 2016 with file reference X R 66/14 is:

ECLI : DE : BFH : 2016 : U . 010616 . XR66.14 . 0
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧

Federal Labour Court

The court code (③) is always BAG. The ordinal number consists of parts ⑤ to ⑧. Each part is separated from the others by a point. The exact components of the ordinal number are explained in detail below.

5. Exact date of decision in the format ddmmyy.
6. Abbreviation for the type of decision (U for judgment (*Urteil*), B for ruling (*Beschluss*)).
7. Main file reference (consisting of the division identifier, the register reference, the entry number and the year of entry in the format yy). There are no spaces between the division identifier and the register reference, nor between the register reference and the entry number. The slash between the entry number and the year of entry is replaced with a point.
8. An additional distinguishing character (assigned consecutively from 0 to 9) is always used when several decisions of the same type are handed down with the same date and file reference.

Example:

The ECLI for the judgment of the Tenth Division of the Federal Labour Court of 7 January 2015 with file reference 10 AZB 109/14 is:

ECLI : DE : BAG : 2015 : 070115 . B . 10AZB109.14 . 0
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧

Federal Social Court

The court code (③) is always BSG. The ordinal number consists of parts ⑤ to ⑧. The parts are not separated in any way. The exact components of the ordinal number are explained in detail below.



5. Exact date of decision in the format ddmmyy.
6. Abbreviation for the type of decision (U for judgment (*Urteil*), B for ruling (*Beschluss*)).
7. Main file reference (consisting of B for Federal Social Court, the division identifier, the field identifier, the number of the entry in the relevant field and the associated register, the year of entry in the format yy and the register reference). Non-alphanumeric components of the file reference are omitted.
8. An additional distinguishing character (assigned consecutively from 0 to 9) is always used when several decisions of the same type are handed down with the same date and file reference.

Example:

The ECLI for the judgment of the Third Division of the Federal Social Court of 25 January 2017 with file reference B 3 P 2/15 R is:

ECLI : DE : BSG : 2017 : 250117 U B3P215R 0
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧

Courts of the *Länder*

The admissible court codes (③) are listed in the [attached table](#)  (52 KB) . The ordinal number consists of parts ⑤ to ⑦. Each part is separated from the others by a point. The exact components of the ordinal number are explained in detail below.

5. Exact date of decision in the format mmdd.
6. File reference (or file references, if there are multiple file references) of up to 17 characters, beginning with the first character of the main file reference. If there is a point after the 17th character, this point is

omitted. Umlauts are replaced (ä = AE, ö = OE, ü = UE) and non-alphanumeric characters such as spaces or slashes are omitted. If numbers or letters would be displayed next to each other, they are separated by a point (e.g. 9 C 1023/12 becomes 9C1023.12).

7. An additional two-digit distinguishing code (assigned consecutively from 00 to 99) is always used when several decisions of the same type are handed down with the same date and file reference.

Example:

The ECLI for the decision of the Sixth Grand Chamber for Economic Offences of Stuttgart Regional Court of 26 January 2015 with file reference 6 KLS 34 Js 2588/10 is:

ECLI : DE : LGSTUTT : 2015 : 0126 . 6KLS34JS2588.10 . 00
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦

■ Last update: 08/12/2021

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