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Real Estate Agent Fees — Broker Commissions

In Germany, the 'Bestellerprinzip' (ordering principle) applies since 2015: whoever hires the broker pays the commission. Rental fees are capped at 2 months' rent plus VAT, while purchase commissions range from 3-7% depending on region.

Deutsche Begriffe: Maklergebühren | Maklerprovision | Courtage | Bestellerprinzip | Nettokaltmiete | Käuferprovision

Bestellerprinzip — who pays for the broker

Since 2015, **Bestellerprinzip** has been in effect in Germany: whoever orders the broker pays the commission. When renting, the property owner almost always orders the broker, so **the tenant usually pays nothing** — if you commission a mediator yourself, the commission is maximum **2 Nettokaltmieten + VAT** (i.e., 2.38 times net rent).

Renting — what to watch out for

If a rental listing asks you for a commission even though the property owner ordered the broker — this is **illegal**. Don't confuse the commission with the security deposit (Kaution), which you always pay. Search for apartments without a mediator according to the guide apartment search, and check the rental terms in advance in the lease agreement (Mietvertrag).

Buying real estate

The rules are different for purchases. From **23.12.2020**, the broker's commission is **split between buyer and seller** — the buyer of an apartment or house for personal use pays **maximum 50%**. A typical total **Courtage is around 7.14% of the price including VAT**, usually **3.57% for each party**. The rule applies to apartments and

single-family homes (not commercial units or apartment buildings). After purchase or moving in, remember to register at your new place of residence.