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Rundfunkbeitrag (GEZ) — Public Broadcasting Fee in Germany

Rundfunkbeitrag is a mandatory fee in Germany (€18.36/month) for public radio and TV services, charged per household regardless of the number of residents.

Deutsche Begriffe: Rundfunkbeitrag | GEZ | Beitragsservice | ARD | ZDF

Rundfunkbeitrag (GEZ)

What is it?

Rundfunkbeitrag (formerly GEZ) is a mandatory fee for public radio and TV (ARD, ZDF, Deutschlandfunk).

How much does it cost?

€18.36 monthly = €55.08 quarterly

Who must pay?

Every household — not a person, not a TV set, a HOUSEHOLD.

- You live alone: you pay €18.36
- You live with a partner: together €18.36
- You live in a shared flat: one person pays for everyone

Who is exempt?

- **Bürgergeld recipients** (ALG II)

- **BAföG recipients**
- **Deaf/blind persons** (partially)
- **Home caregiver in a household with one disabled person**

Exemption = you must submit an application (Befreiungsantrag)!

How to register?

After registration (Anmeldung) you **automatically** receive a letter from Beitragsservice.

If you didn't receive it — register yourself: rundfunkbeitrag.de

How to pay?

- Bank transfer (Überweisung) — quarterly
- SEPA direct debit (Lastschrift) — more convenient

What if you don't pay?

1. Payment reminder (Zahlungserinnerung)
2. Dunning notice (Mahnung)
3. Enforcement order (Vollstreckungsersuchen)
4. **Bailiff execution!**

Debt can grow very quickly (interest + fees).

Moving

- You deregister: notify Beitragsservice (Abmeldung)
- New apartment: report the change (Ummeldung)
- You move in with someone: you don't pay twice

Can I refuse to pay?

NO. It's a legal obligation. It doesn't matter:

- Whether you have a TV
- Whether you watch public channels

- Whether you have internet/radio

Important!

- Beitragsservice knows about your registration — you can't hide
- GEZ debt can freeze your account
- Arrears don't disappear for 30 years

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Content is informational and does not replace legal advice.