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Germany vs Netherlands: company formation compared

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In short: Germany: GmbH, corporate tax ~30%, registration usually 1–4 weeks after notarisation. The Netherlands: BV, corporate tax 19–25.8%, registration typically a few days after the notary has all documents. Germany and the Netherlands have a double tax treaty. Figures as of November 2026.

This page compares the standard private company in Germany and the Netherlands. Each figure links to the official source; the full rules, step-by-step registration and FAQs are in the Company formation in Germany and Company formation in the Netherlands guides.

Side by side

	Germany	Netherlands
Common form	GmbH (Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung)	BV (besloten vennootschap)
Registry	Commercial register (Handelsregister) [1]	Netherlands Chamber of Commerce (KVK) [2]
Minimum capital	€25,000 (at least €12,500 paid in); UG from €1	€0.01 (no meaningful minimum)
Directors	1 managing director (Geschäftsführer)	1 director
Local director	Not required	Not required
Corporate tax	About 30% combined (15.825% plus municipal trade tax)	19% up to €200,000; 25.8% above [3]
VAT / sales tax	19%	21%
Typical timeline	Usually 1–4 weeks after notarisation	Typically a few days after the notary has all documents

	Germany	Netherlands
Tax treaties	about 94 treaties in force [4]	about 100 treaties [5]
Currency	Euro (EUR)	Euro (EUR)

Tax treaty between Germany and the Netherlands

A double tax treaty caps the withholding tax one country may charge on payments to a company resident in the other. Where two rates are shown (for example 5/15), the lower rate applies only if conditions are met, usually a minimum shareholding.

Payment	Dividends	Interest	Royalties
From Germany to Netherlands [4]	5/10/15%	0%	0%
From Netherlands to Germany [5]	5/15%	0%	0%

Germany withholds at most 5%, 10% or 15% (depending on conditions) on dividends, 0% on interest and 0% on royalties paid to a company resident in the Netherlands. The Netherlands withholds at most 5% or 15% (depending on conditions) on dividends, 0% on interest and 0% on royalties paid to a company resident in Germany.

Treaty benefits require proof of tax residence and are subject to anti-abuse rules. See corporate tax residence and permanent establishment.

Frequently asked questions

Is there a double tax treaty between Germany and the Netherlands?

Yes. Germany withholds at most 5%, 10% or 15% (depending on conditions) on dividends, 0% on interest and 0% on royalties paid to a company resident in the Netherlands. The Netherlands withholds at most 5% or 15% (depending on conditions) on dividends, 0% on interest and 0% on royalties paid to a company resident in Germany. Rates from PwC Worldwide Tax Summaries (reviewed 30 June 2026 and 29 May 2026).

What is the corporate tax rate in Germany and the Netherlands?

Germany: about 30% combined (15.825% plus municipal trade tax). The Netherlands: 19% up to €200,000; 25.8% above. The effective burden also depends on reliefs, the type of income and when profit is distributed.

How long does it take to register a company in Germany compared with the Netherlands?

Germany: usually 1–4 weeks after notarisation. The Netherlands: typically a few days after the notary has all documents. Opening a bank account and tax registrations often take longer than registration itself.

What is the minimum share capital in Germany and the Netherlands?

Germany: €25,000 (at least €12,500 paid in); UG from €1. The Netherlands: €0.01 (no meaningful minimum).

Do I need a local director in Germany or the Netherlands?

Germany: not required. The Netherlands: not required.

See also

- Company formation in Germany
- Company formation in the Netherlands
- UK vs Netherlands: company formation compared
- Ireland vs Netherlands: company formation compared
- Germany vs Switzerland: company formation compared
- Comparison of all 222 countries

References

1. Official Commercial register (Handelsregister) . Germany. Accessed November 2026.
2. Official Netherlands Chamber of Commerce (KVK) . Netherlands. Accessed November 2026.
3. Official Tax authority of the Netherlands . Netherlands. Accessed November 2026.
4. Germany: Corporate – Withholding taxes (reviewed 30 June 2026) . PwC Worldwide Tax Summaries. Accessed November 2026.

5. Netherlands: Corporate – Withholding taxes (reviewed 29 May 2026) . PwC Worldwide Tax Summaries. Accessed November 2026.

General information, not legal or tax advice. Figures as of November 2026; confirm with the official registry, the tax authority or a qualified adviser before filing.

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