

# Germany's Cannabis Model Projects: Where Are They?

## Germany's Cannabis 'Pillar 2' at Risk Amid Political Turmoil

Germany's long-awaited cannabis liberalization project, known as "Pillar 2," faces potential abandonment due to political obstacles and a changing landscape in government. With the rise of right-leaning parties in state elections, there is increasing urgency to advance legislation that would facilitate the next phase of cannabis reform.

### What Is Pillar 2?

Pillar 2 was introduced in summer 2023 as a response to concerns from the European Commission regarding the feasibility of a full commercial adult-use cannabis market in Germany. Initial plans were deemed incompatible with EU regulations, potentially exposing Germany to infringement proceedings.

To address these issues, the German government proposed a dual-structure approach: Pillar 1 would address legal frameworks, while Pillar 2 would permit pilot projects for the legal sale of adult-use cannabis, enabling scientific studies on its impact, including effects on the black market and youth protection. This model has seen success in Switzerland, which currently operates seven pilot projects.

### Current Status of the Legislation

The draft bill for Pillar 2 was initially expected by summer 2023 but has since been delayed to April 2024. Recent developments suggest that this legislation may no longer require a separate secondary law for implementation, as it could be incorporated under the existing Cannabis Act (CanG).

The "Consumer Cannabis Science Responsibility Ordinance" (KCanWV) draft designates the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food (BLE) as the overseeing body for permits and regulation, marking a significant shift from the Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices (BfArM), which previously managed narcotics.

However, the BLE is still waiting for a draft bill from Karl Lauterbach, head of the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG). Lauterbach's office has indicated that complex legal and technical issues have delayed coordination among the involved ministries.

### Political Implications

Ates Gürpınar, drug policy spokesperson for the Left Party in the Bundestag, expressed skepticism about the law being passed before the end of the current legislative period. With the possibility that Lauterbach may submit the draft law to the European Commission for review—an extensive process—time is running out. The leader of the conservative [Christian Democratic Union \(CDU\)](#), Friedrich Merz, has also threatened to

withdraw support for cannabis legalization if his party wins the next federal election.

## **Growing Municipal Support**

Despite the political challenges, several municipalities are keen to participate in the pilot projects associated with Pillar 2. Earlier this month, Wiesbaden announced plans to engage in a nationwide cannabis model project aimed at testing sales through pharmacies. Health Minister Milena Löbcke emphasized the need for a legal sales framework to combat the black market while enhancing health and youth protections.

Wiesbaden's initiative is part of a broader movement that may involve up to 25 cities across Germany. The city is establishing a "Cannabis Coordination Office" and has begun collaborating with major pharmacies. However, the project will be subject to strict regulations.

In a May 2024 study, it was reported that at least 11 cities, including Bremen, Hanover, and Munich, are considering becoming model regions for Pillar 2. Conversely, cities like Nuremberg and Freiburg have opted out of participating in these pilot projects.

## **Next Steps**

The research proposal for Pillar 2 is set to be submitted to the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture in October, but the timeline remains uncertain amid the ongoing political landscape. With the support from various municipalities and increasing public interest, the future of Germany's cannabis model project will depend on swift legislative action and overcoming the current political hurdles.

Email: [info@cannabisriskmanager.com](mailto:info@cannabisriskmanager.com) | Phone: +415-226-4060

© Copyright 2025 Cannabis Risk Manager. All Rights Reserved