

## German PI association finally merged!

by Lothar Mueller Germany

Hard work pays out. The unification of the two German professional associations has now been completed.

On 5 November 2022, the members of the united professional association with overwhelming majority accepted the statutes and their connected official documents for future work. That was the basis for the statutory entry to the competent court in charge and for the registration with the commercial register.

It was a historical day in the German investigation industry. The two biggest German associations of private investigators (BDD and BID) finally merged to BuDEG, Bundesverband des Detektiv- und Ermittlungsgewerbes, a Germany wide professional association.

It was a complicated process of merging.

Already in February 2019, the members of the two associations decided to go their professional path together in the future.



Representatives of the two associations during notarizing of the merger contract on February 23, 2019, Berlin.



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Contrary to the majority of the members, one member unfortunately decided to prevent this path through a judicial decision. From a different point of view, that was not a good decision. Not only that a single vote was asserted against the majority, the work of two associations was blocked about the long period of judicial discussion. Additionally, the COVID-19 epidemic made matters worse and our work was affected.

However, the responsible court decided that the membership decision was in compliance with the legal rules.



The happy leaders of the new German PI association, BUDEG - they really can be proud of what they've done!  
 from left: Friedhelm Oswald, Christian Kölle, Andreas Heim, Engin Akbag (President), Jörn Weber

What was the goal of our unification? Our members wanted to ensure that each member can draw more profit from their membership. This meant concentration on joint efforts for efficient design of our economic interests and thus the interests of our clients. That means we want to achieve:

- More professionalism
- More publicity in the media and with potential clients
- More and better training and further education
- More effort for compliance

The first general meeting was very well attended by the members. We elected the new board and all other necessary officials.

According to our tradition, we combined the general assembly with continuing education. We initiated our own resources from our members and invited top-class guest speakers, one from an auditor organization (BDO) and a high-ranking officer of the German customs authority. The overarching topic: the fight against money laundering.

This way we were able to present and discuss our own experiences. At the same time, we were given the opportunity "with the eyes of the authorities" and with the "interior view of an auditor" to look at this complex problem and to draw our own conclusions for our work. Both the outstanding importance of the first general assembly of the united professional association, but also the topics of our further training program, attracted a big number of foreign members to this event. We registered members from Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovak Republic, Switzerland and Poland.

Our guests from Hungary were very interested in our continuing training program. That was also a result of the talks during the conference of the IKD (International Commission of Detective Associations) in October 2022 in Budapest. We think this is the starting point of a close cooperation in this field.

The President of the Austrian Association, Andreas Schweizer, and our President, Engin Akbag, took the opportunity for discussions about further and deeper cooperation. Last but not least, Vice General Secretary, Georg Hirtl and Third Vice President of WAD Philipp Ryffel, also got involved in the discussion for active association work.



Philip congratulates Engin for the next period of his presidency.

All in all, it was a very successful event, we have gained strength.

Maybe you know, we already created a German standard for private investigative services (DIN SPEC 33452, “Framework conditions and criteria for the provision of commercial private investigative services”), published since November 2017.

And through working together with some different partners, in particular with the support of the IKD and the colleagues of the Association of British Investigators (ABI), we are working on a project to develop an international standard for the business of Investigation Private Sector. That means a new ISO-Standard for our industry.

This will be our next step.