

Press release: German company register now open

Today, OpenCorporates has made the German company register data – a dataset that’s essential for all – available as open data.

This opening up of the company register data is a significant step forward in German corporate transparency and integrity. As part of the analysis, we have identified a number of data quality issues – including problems with corporate identifiers, and directors who were apparently born 950 years ago. We will be writing a report for the Ministry of Justice regarding these data quality issues, and will be making this available under an open data licence too.

We’ve also been working with some of Germany’s leading journalists – sharing both the data and our expertise – and, as a result, they have today published a number of significant stories that show the importance of this data:

- [The Owner Remains Secret](#) by Süddeutsche Zeitung
- [Who is behind which company?](#) by NDR
- [Who owns Hamburg? Rent under palm trees](#) by CORRECTIV

OpenCorporates has also donated this data to Open Knowledge Deutschland, for them to make this available for all, under an open licence at offeneregister.de. This means that journalists, NGOs, investigators, civic activists, even businesses will be able download the data for free, to improve corporate transparency, investigate companies, and create a better business environment.

Over the past 12 months, we’ve collected and analysed the data on the company gazette (Handelsregisterbekanntmachungen), and Handelsregister (trade register) . Converting this information – mostly from gazette notices – took months of writing code, analysis and testing to convert into structured data in a consistent and high-quality form.

Chris Taggart, OpenCorporates’ Co-Founder & CEO, said, *When company data – such as that in the Handelsregister – is available as data only to those who pay, what’s really happening is that thousands of users are being locked out and the criminals and corrupt using companies are shielded from their scrutiny.*

Patrick Alley, co-founder of leading global anti-corruption NGO Global Witness and a trustee of OpenCorporates, said, *Global corruption scandals involving German companies like Siemens show that Germany hasn’t been tough enough on financial crime. A public register of companies, and of their owners, is essential in ensuring Germany is no longer a safe haven for the corrupt activities of gangsters, human traffickers and terrorists.*

ABOUT OPENCORPORATES

OpenCorporates (<https://opencorporates.com>) is the largest open database of companies in the world, and an essential tool for business, governments and society at large. The primary aim is to create a global archive of publicly available records about companies for wider public benefit, including countering money laundering, corruption, fraud and organised crime.

OpenCorporates' data has been central to a number of groundbreaking investigations, including the ICIJ's Panama and Paradise Papers, Thomson Reuters and Transparency International's investigation into money laundering in the London property market, and Global Witness' investigations into money laundering at Trump Ocean Club, Panama and the Myanmar Jade industry.

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