

Dr. Petra Volke

Petra Volke is a German judge and a recognised expert in family law, with extensive experience at national and international courts and institutions. Born in 1975, she entered the judiciary in 2002. She holds a PhD in constitutional law theory and is a trained mediator. She initially served as a judge at the Local Court of Cologne, dealing with a broad range of civil, criminal, guardianship and enforcement matters.

From 2014, Dr. Volke was seconded for several years to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. She subsequently served as a research fellow at the Federal Constitutional Court and at the Constitutional Court of North Rhine-Westphalia. Her work at the European Court of Human Rights and the Federal Constitutional Court focused particularly on children's rights and family law.

In July 2019, she was appointed a judge at the Higher Regional Court of Cologne, where she has since worked primarily in family law. Alongside her judicial work, Dr. Volke has established herself as an author and lecturer. She regularly publishes essays and articles on family law, domestic violence and children's rights. She translates and analyses the case law of the European Court of Human Rights concerning gender-based and domestic violence and contributes to the *Münchener Kommentar zum Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuch*, one of Germany's leading legal commentaries, on provisions relating to child protection. She also teaches family law at the University of Cologne.

Dr. Volke lectures nationally and internationally at the Academy of European Law (ERA), the Council of Europe, the Federal Judicial Academy, the Judicial Academy of North Rhine-Westphalia and UN Women on issues relating to domestic and gender-based violence and family law. She also provides training on these topics to professional associations of family lawyers and family psychologists, as well as to child welfare organisations. In addition, she is a member of the Commission for Children's Rights of the German Family Court Association and of the Scientific Association for Family Law.

Since January 2026, Dr. Volke has again been seconded to the Federal Constitutional Court as a research fellow, where she focuses once more on children's rights and family law.

On 10 June 2026, the German Judicial Selection Committee elected Petra Volke as a judge of the Federal Court of Justice (*Bundesgerichtshof*), Germany's highest court for civil and criminal matters. Her election reflects her longstanding judicial experience and particular expertise in family law, children's rights, and the protection of individuals against domestic violence.