

The Amazon Germany Survival Guide

GPSR, EPR (LUCID & WEEE), VAT, and the Abmahnung trap — the compliance rules that actually get sellers suppressed, suspended, or fined in Germany. Plus why a “correct” translation still loses sales. Plain English, no fluff.

Germany is the biggest e-commerce prize in Europe — and the easiest place to get your listings suppressed, suspended, or fined without realizing why. This guide walks through the four rules that actually get sellers in trouble, the advertising trap that invites lawsuits, and why a grammatically “correct” translation still quietly loses sales.

Educational orientation, not legal or tax advice. Rules change and specifics depend on your product and setup — use this to know what to ask, then confirm with a qualified advisor.

Lesson 1 — The compliance map: four things that get you suspended

Most sellers think the hard part of Germany is the language. The language is the part that loses you *sales*. These four rules are the part that loses you the *listing* — or the account. Amazon now actively enforces all of them, and the penalty is usually instant: suppression or removal, often before anyone tells you why.

1. GPSR EU product-safety rules — a “Responsible Person” and safety details must appear on the listing.	2. EPR — packaging Register your packaging (LUCID) before your first sale, or the listing gets banned.
3. EPR — electronics Electrical items & batteries need a German WEEE registration (Stiftung EAR).	4. VAT Store stock in Germany and you must register for German VAT — at a zero threshold.

There is also a fifth, sneakier risk that is not an Amazon rule at all — German competition law (the Abmahnung trap), covered in Lesson 5.

Lesson 2 — GPSR: the safety rule that hides in your listing text

The EU’s General Product Safety Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2023/988, applicable since 13 December 2024) governs almost every consumer product sold in the EU. Amazon began enforcing it in 2025, and it has real teeth in your listing copy.

The key trigger for most importers: **if the manufacturer is based outside the EU, you need an EU “Responsible Person,”** and their name, postal address, and email must be shown — both on the product/package and in the online listing itself.

- Name + postal + electronic address of the Responsible Person, visible in the listing.
- Clear safety warnings and any required instructions, in the language of the marketplace.
- Traceability details (e.g. model/batch identifiers) where applicable.

Heads-up: Amazon ran its own Responsible Person service for a while, but ended it in 2024 — so you now have to arrange your own EU Responsible Person (your EU distributor, an importer, or a paid

third-party service can act as one) and enter their details in Amazon's compliance dashboard.

Why it bites: without a named Responsible Person and the required safety information, Amazon can suppress or remove the listing — quietly. Many sellers discover GPSR only when traffic vanishes.

Lesson 3 — EPR: register your packaging and electronics before you sell

“Extended Producer Responsibility” (EPR) makes you responsible for the waste your products and packaging create. Germany enforces two flavors, and Amazon checks both.

Packaging — VerpackG & the LUCID register

Anyone placing packaged goods on the German market commercially — including foreign online sellers — must register with the LUCID Packaging Register (run by the ZSVR) before the first sale, get a LUCID number, and license their annual packaging volume with a dual-system provider. Since 1 July 2022, Amazon is legally required to suspend listings without a valid LUCID number.

Electronics — ElektroG & WEEE

For electrical and electronic devices (Germany's ElektroG, transposing the EU WEEE directive), you must register with Stiftung EAR and obtain a WEEE registration number before making products available. Manufacturers based outside the EU must first appoint an authorised representative located in Germany. If the device contains a battery, you register that too (BattG). Since 1 July 2023, online marketplaces like Amazon are legally required to verify your WEEE registration — missing or invalid numbers trigger an automatic sales ban.

Niche note: if you sell kitchen electricals — vacuum sealers, dehydrators, grinders, ice makers — you almost certainly need both LUCID (packaging) and EAR/WEEE (the device + battery). This is the single most common reason a promising German launch gets frozen.

Lesson 4 — VAT & the FBA trap

VAT is where “I'll sort it later” gets expensive. The rule that catches everyone: **the moment your inventory is stored in Germany** — which is exactly what Amazon FBA does — **you must register for German VAT, regardless of sales volume**. Foreign businesses have a zero registration threshold for local taxable supplies.

bullet **Selling from abroad, no German stock:** the EU-wide €10,000 distance-sales threshold applies, and you may be able to use the One-Stop-Shop (OSS) scheme instead of a local registration.

bullet **Holding stock in Germany (FBA / Pan-EU):** OSS no longer covers those sales — they are domestic German supplies and need a German VAT registration and local returns.

The trap: sellers enroll in FBA for fast Prime delivery, not realizing it instantly creates a German VAT obligation. Amazon also expects a valid VAT number on file. Plan the registration before you ship stock in.

This is general information, not tax advice — a VAT advisor or tax accountant should confirm your specific obligations.

Lesson 5 — The Abmahnung trap: the words that invite a lawsuit

This one is not an Amazon rule — it is German competition law (the UWG), and it is uniquely German. Competitors and specialized law firms can send you a formal Abmahnung (cease-and-desist with costs)

over misleading advertising. It is an entire cottage industry, and listings translated from US copy are easy targets.

The classic landmine is the “**Testsieger**” (test winner) or “Nr. 1” claim. German courts (BGH) have held that advertising with a test result must cite the source — the Fundstelle: which test, where and when it was published — and it must be:

- **Easily verifiable** — the source clearly readable, not buried in fine print;
- **From an independent test** comparing multiple products;
- **Accurately represented** (right category, right ranking).

A “Testsieger” badge with no legible source is treated as misleading under §5a UWG — grounds for an injunction and costs. Crucially, German courts have held it is **not enough** to bury the source in the small print, the terms, or on a separate page: the reference has to be directly visible next to the claim (settled BGH case law, e.g. I ZR 26/15 and I ZR 134/20). The same caution applies to unqualified superlatives (“the best,” “Nr. 1”) and to health or efficacy claims that are routine in the US but restricted in the DACH market.

Rule of thumb: if a claim would impress a shopper, a German lawyer can probably challenge it. Either cite a real, legible source — or cut it.

Lesson 6 — Why a “correct” translation still loses

Clear the compliance bar and you are allowed to sell. Whether you actually do is a different game — and it is where machine translation quietly fails. A listing can be grammatically correct and still feel foreign to a German shopper, who clicks away without knowing why. The tells we see constantly in auto-translated listings:

- **Wrong article or case** (“Dieses Vakuumierer”), and switching between the formal Sie and informal du mid-listing.
- **English left untranslated** — mode names, “Smart,” “most” — and invented compound words.
- **Fullwidth punctuation and emoji-style Unicode** copied straight from the source listing.
- **Literal phrasing** that reads like a warning label instead of a benefit a shopper feels.

Localization fixes these by rebuilding the listing around how Germans actually search and buy — keyword choices, tone, trust cues, units — then having a native speaker check it. That is the layer AI gets close to but does not quite reach, and it is the difference between “found by nobody” and “ranks and sells.”

Your pre-publish checklist

Before you push a product live on Amazon.de, run through this:

- ☐ **GPSR:** EU Responsible Person named (if manufacturer is non-EU); safety info & warnings in German on the listing.
- ☐ **Packaging EPR:** registered with LUCID, number on file with Amazon, volumes licensed with a dual system.
- ☐ **Electronics EPR:** WEEE number from Stiftung EAR for the device (and battery, if any).
- ☐ **VAT:** German VAT registration in place if you store stock in Germany; valid number on file.

- ☐ **Claims:** no “Testsieger”/“Nr. 1”/superlatives without a legible, cited, independent source; health claims checked.
- ☐ **Localization:** title, bullets, description & backend keywords rebuilt for German shoppers and reviewed by a native speaker.

Sources & where to go official

Verify anything that affects your business directly with the official registries:

bullet **PSR** — Regulation (EU) 2023/988 (EUR-Lex): eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/988

bullet **Packaging / LUCID** — Verpackungsregister (ZSVR): verpackungsregister.org

bullet **Electronics / WEEE** — Stiftung EAR: stiftung-ear.de

bullet **VAT** — Federal Central Tax Office (BZSt): bzst.de

bullet **UWG (unfair competition)** — gesetze-im-internet.de/uwg_2004

bullet **Localization & buyers** — CSA Research, “Can’t Read, Won’t Buy”: csa-research.com

Want it done for you? Marktreif localizes and compliance-screens one of your listings free, so you can judge the quality first — email hello@markt-reif.com.

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