

Germany expects cannabis-growing program to be going in 2019

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German authorities say they expect to have a cannabis-growing program up and running in 2019 after the country approved legislation allowing some patients to get the drug as a prescription medication.

Germany's Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices said Friday that it's setting up a "cannabis agency" to oversee the growing program. It plans to solicit bids from throughout the European Union to find companies to run it.

The program's first cannabis is expected to be available in 2019. Until then, prescriptions will be fulfilled with imported marijuana, which currently comes from the Netherlands and Canada.

The government has stressed Germany's new rules don't mean marijuana will be legal for non-medical purposes.

Patients in Germany previously had to seek special authorization to use the drug. About 1,000 people did so.

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