# Two German teens detained and deported after being denied entry to the US



Two German teenagers embarking on a global trip experienced a sudden disruption to their travel plans when they were denied entry to the United States and detained by border officers who cited their journey as “suspicious,” according to reports.

Charlotte Pohl, 19, and Maria Lepère, 18, both from Rostock, a city approximately 140 miles north of Berlin, had been travelling since graduating from high school. Their itinerary included stops in New Zealand and Thailand before they attempted to visit Hawaii as part of their island-hopping hopes. The incident occurred on March 18 at Honolulu International Airport, where they were reportedly refused entry despite holding valid Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) approvals, according to the German newspaper Ostsee Zeitung.

The teenagers were detained and subjected to hours of questioning. They allege undergoing body scans and strip searches before U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials ultimately denied them entry and confirmed they would be deported. Maria Lepère described the experience as surreal, stating, “It was all like a fever dream...We had already noticed a little bit of what was going on in the U.S. But at the time, we didn't think it was happening to Germans. That was perhaps very naive. We felt so small and powerless,” as reported by The Independent.

CBP officers reportedly became suspicious when they learned the pair had not secured accommodation for their entire planned five-week stay in Hawaii. According to Beat of Hawaii, officials viewed their spontaneous travel plans as a potential indicator of intent to work illegally. Charlotte Pohl commented, “They found it suspicious that we hadn't fully booked our accommodations for the entire five weeks in Hawaii. We wanted to travel spontaneously. Just like we had done in Thailand and New Zealand.”

The two women recounted being handcuffed and dressed in green prison uniforms during their detention. They were held in a cell alongside detainees accused of more serious crimes and alleged spending the night on mouldy mattresses in a freezing double cell.

On March 19, Pohl and Lepère were escorted back to Honolulu International Airport in handcuffs, where they requested to be deported to Tokyo, Japan. After three days in detention, they were flown back to Rostock, travelling through Tokyo, Qatar, and Frankfurt am Main, according to Ostsee Zeitung.

The German Foreign Office confirmed its involvement in the case, providing consular support to the teenagers following their detention. The office reiterated that an approved ESTA does not guarantee entry to the United States, as entry decisions are ultimately made by border officials upon arrival.

In light of similar incidents, Germany updated its travel advisory to the U.S. last month, highlighting that holding a visa or entry waiver is no assurance of admission into the country. This follows a series of detainments of German nationals at U.S. borders amidst heightened border enforcement policies initiated during Donald Trump’s administration.

The National Travel and Tourism Office, part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, reported a notable decline in Western European visitors in March, including a 12 percent decrease overall and a more pronounced 28 percent drop in German travellers compared to the same period in the previous year.

The Independent has reached out to both U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the German Foreign Office for further comments regarding this incident.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://economictimes.com/news/international/new-zealand/us-deports-german-teens-upon-arrival-from-auckland/articleshow/120483706.cms> - This article supports the claim about the deportation of German teenagers from the United States, specifically after arriving from Auckland. It mentions the deportation incident without specifying the U.S. entry point.
* <https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/german-tourists-deported-hawaii-cbp-b2736655.html> - This article corroborates the details of the incident, including the detention and deportation of Charlotte Pohl and Maria Lepère at Honolulu International Airport. It highlights their previous travel to New Zealand and Thailand.
* <https://liveandletsfly.com/german-teenagers-deported-usa/> - This article supports the claim that the German teenagers were denied entry to the U.S. and detained, specifically after admitting to remote work during their trip.
* <https://onemileatatime.com/news/backpacking-german-teenagers-denied-entry-us-jailed-deported/> - This piece provides additional details about the detention and deportation of the teenagers, emphasizing the background and the course of events leading to their expulsion from the U.S.
* <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/immigration/3385901/german-tourists-refused-admission-us-honolulu-airport> - This article provides insight into the suspicions raised by the U.S. border officials, focusing on the lack of fully booked accommodations and the general environment of scrutiny faced by German tourists.