

Germany to form government clergy sex abuse panel

Thomas C. Fox | Mar. 24, 2010 NCR Today

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I met with an archdiocesan official here this week who said he could not speak on the record but insisted the church officials can investigate past clergy sex abuse cases on their own -- and truthfully. This official essentially said, "We can be trusted to do a competent job." I replied that competent or not, no one would trust the results short of a truly independent outside investigation.

Now, it seems, the early stages of such an investigation are taking root.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel's Cabinet is meeting today and plans to establish an expert panel to respond to the sex abuse allegations that have erupted here since January.

The proposed panel is to be led by the ministries of Justice, Family and Education and will meet April 23. It is to include 40 experts from the government, the church, charities and educational institutions.

Merkel has said that the panel should examine past abuses and should also reevaluate Germany's current statute of limitations on sex crimes.

It appears church officials are not going to have it their way.

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