The Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy
“There is more to economic affairs than the competitiveness of a few large companies. Our country’s prosperity is also due in no small part to the many people running small and medium-sized businesses, the self-employed and Germany’s millions of workers. It is therefore essential that everyone benefit from the fruits of these joint labours. The benefits of productivity growth resulting from the digital transformation must also be distributed fairly. A suitable framework is needed to enable us to complete the energy transition and achieve climate targets, while international disputes require close European cooperation and strategic alliances. Rules are essential in economic affairs.”

Klaus Ernst, The Left Party Chairman of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy
The German Bundestag’s decisions are prepared by its committees, which are established at the start of each electoral term. Four of them are stipulated by the Basic Law, the German constitution: the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Defence Committee, the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union and the Petitions Committee. The Budget Committee and the Committee for the Rules of Procedure are also required by law. The spheres of responsibility of the committees essentially reflect the Federal Government’s distribution of ministerial portfolios. This enables Parliament to scrutinise the government’s work effectively.

The Bundestag committees
The committees discuss and deliberate on items referred to them by the plenary. They also have the right to take up issues on their own initiative, allowing them to set priorities in the parliamentary debate. When necessary, they draw on external expertise — usually by holding public hearings. At the end of a committee’s deliberations, a majority of its members adopt a recommendation for a decision and a report, which serve as the basis for the plenary’s decision.

The German Bundestag sets political priorities of its own by establishing additional committees for specific subjects, such as sport, cultural affairs or tourism. In addition, special bodies such as parliamentary advisory councils, committees of inquiry or study commissions can also be established. The committees are composed of members of all the parliamentary groups, reflecting the balance of these groups in the German Bundestag. The distribution of the chairs and deputy chairs among the parliamentary groups also reflects their relative strengths in the plenary. In the current electoral term, the committees have between nine and 49 members.
A growing – and socially equitable – economy which is also environmentally compatible does not happen automatically. It requires a certain framework, and policy-makers have a major part to play in establishing this. The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy is responsible for shaping the parameters for economic activity within the framework of the social market economy. The Bundestag’s Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy deliberates on bills from this policy field and scrutinises the Ministry’s work. The 49 members of the Committee, chaired by Klaus Ernst (The Left Party), closely monitor what policies businesses need, what impact legislation has on markets, businesses and people, what factors boost competitiveness and strengthen Germany’s position as a key location for business, and how jobs can be safeguarded.
The draft legislation it examined included the Bureaucracy Reduction Act. In addition, the Committee took up issues arising within its area of responsibility on its own initiative on 85 occasions. Key topics included the acquisition of the supermarket chain Kaiser’s Tengelmann by Edeka Handelsgesellschaft, and the insolvency of the airline Air Berlin. Since the start of the last electoral term, the Committee has also been the lead committee for all aspects of the energy transition, related climate protection issues and energy conservation. One of the key initiatives in this field during the last electoral term was the Renewable Energy Sources Act, which is in the process of being updated.

The Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy is the Bundestag’s largest committee. It accomplished a remarkable amount of work in the last electoral term, acting as the lead committee in deliberations on 63 bills, 95 motions, 16 statutory instruments and 149 EU items. The Committee deals with subjects such as creating opportunities for growth and competition, achieving a high level of employment, strengthening small and medium-sized businesses, promoting new technologies, or balancing economic and environmental objectives. In the last electoral term, the Committee dealt with a total of 1368 items referred to it by the plenary either as the lead committee, a committee asked for its opinion, or in an expert capacity. These items included 730 Bundestag printed papers and 638 EU items. The Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy was the lead committee for 285 Bundestag printed papers.

The Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy was the lead committee for 17 CDU/CSU, 11 SPD, 6 AfD, 5 FDP, 5 The Left Party and 5 Alliance 90/The Greens. The number of members is 49. The Chairman is Klaus Ernst, The Left Party and the Deputy Chairman is Dr Matthias Heider, CDU/CSU.
The energy transition is an ambitious project of historic dimensions. A fundamental transformation of Germany’s energy supply is taking place, with the aim of largely replacing fossil fuels and nuclear energy with renewable energy sources in future; energy consumption is to be lowered through improvements in energy efficiency. The Committee discusses questions such as: what impact is the energy transition having on the German economy? How can the use of renewable and conventional energy sources be combined more effectively? The fields of economic affairs and energy are strikingly and closely interlinked. Grid expansion, the generation of sufficient electricity from renewable sources to meet demand, and measures to boost energy efficiency are also in the spotlight in the current electoral term.

At the same time, issues relating to the labour market, the shortage of skilled workers, the EU’s single market, foreign trade and investment, and global competition also feature on the Committee’s agenda. How can Germany’s competitiveness continue to be safeguarded in future, for example through trade agreements concluded within the framework of the European Union? How can positive labour market trends be ensured and sustainable economic growth achieved? The Committee’s members have to examine a large number of bills, motions and communications from the Federal Government in preparation for their deliberations. In addition to the discussions in the Committee, the members regularly meet delegations from foreign parliaments and governments who are visiting Germany. Furthermore, meetings are regularly held with representatives of the European Commission and the European Parliament.
The Subcommittee on Regional Economic Policy and ERP Budgets

In the current electoral term, the Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy has set up a nine-member Subcommittee on Regional Economic Policy and ERP Budgets, chaired by Frank Junge (SPD). The Subcommittee deliberates on the annual framework for the joint Federation-Länder programme for the improvement of regional economic structures, in particular. The Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy receives regular reports on this subject. The funding provided by the Federation through this programme is intended to help lagging regions to compensate for their disadvantages in terms of location, so that they do not miss out on the wider country’s economic growth. The Subcommittee’s deliberations also cover the European Recovery Program (ERP). The most important legislative initiative in this field is the annual ERP Budget Act, which establishes the key parameters for economic development policy within the framework of the ERP. The ERP’s priority is financial support for the SME sector. The various funding programmes – such as the ERP Innovation Programme, ERP Capital for Business Founders or the ERP Regional Support Programme – are targeted primarily at business founders and rapidly growing, investing companies. The Subcommittee regularly requests briefings on the Federal Government’s economic development policy. The Members also visit various projects to see first-hand whether the funding provided is being used as intended.
Financial affairs, the environment, health, demographic trends, social affairs, education, or research: all of these issues are related to economic affairs. For this reason, rather than simply looking at companies, the Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy focuses on the wider environment in which businesses operate. The Committee is therefore involved in many cross-cutting economic issues as the lead committee or as a committee asked for its opinion. It is thus essential for the members of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy to cooperate closely with their colleagues from other committees at all times. When training courses are adapted to better reflect companies’ needs, politicians specialising in economic affairs, education and labour affairs all need to work together. Politicians specialising in environmental issues have a role to play in the context of energy supplies. And when it comes to tax incentives for businesses, the Committee’s members consult the Bundestag’s politicians specialising in financial policy. They are also keen to engage in dialogue with colleagues from the Committee on European Union Affairs when looking at European directives with an economic dimension. This variety is reflected by the Committee’s agenda, which features items such as the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), other trade agreements, and motions on
the economic forecasts produced by the leading German economic research institutes. Other meetings focus on arms exports – which fall within the purview of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy – or subsidies. The wide-ranging aspects of the energy transition, in particular, are often discussed by the Committee, including the modernisation of the electricity grids and energy price trends. Subjects like these require the Committee’s members to study documentation in detail in preparation for the deliberations. When necessary, the Members consult external experts at public hearings – on the subject of the National Regulatory Control Council, for example, which seeks to help the Federal Government to cut administrative costs. Other meetings may include hearings on the modernisation of foreign trade law, with the invited experts offering their expertise and making a vital contribution to ensuring that the Committee’s members have access to all of the key information as the basis for their decision. To scrutinise the government’s work, the Committee also requests comprehensive reports from the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. These include the Annual Economic Report, the report published by the Bundeskartellamt (Federal Cartel Office) or a communication on the coordination framework for the joint Federation-Länder programme for the improvement of regional economic structures. In today’s world, economic affairs pay little heed to national borders, as is shown by the EU legislative proposals dealt with by the Committee, on matters such as the development of an internal energy market, free movement issues in relation to services, or issues relating to state aid.
Committee members

The 49 members of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy

Klaus Ernst,
The Left Party
Chairman,
The Left Party spokesman on economic
affairs and energy
Economist,
socio-economist,
trade union secretary,
b. 1 Nov. 1954
in Munich;
unmarried.
Bundestag Member
since 2005

Dr Matthias Heider,
CDU/CSU
Deputy Chairman
Lawyer,
b. 18 May 1966
in Lüdenscheid;
marrried; one child.
Bundestag Member
since 2009
Mark Hauptmann, CDU/CSU
Political scientist, b. 29 Apr. 1984 in Weimar; unmarried. Bundestag Member since 2013

Mark Helfrich, CDU/CSU
Business administrator, b. 8 Sep. 1978 in Itzehoe; married; one child. Bundestag Member since 2013

Peter Bleser, CDU/CSU
Agricultural specialist, b. 23 July 1952 in Brachtendorf, Rhineland-Palatinate; married; three children. Bundestag Member since 1990

Hansjörg Durz, CDU/CSU
Business administrator, former mayor, b. 29 July 1971 in Augsburg; married; two children. Bundestag Member since 2013

Astrid Grotelüschen, CDU/CSU
Specialist in nutritional science and home economics, b. 9 Dec. 1964 in Cologne; married; three children. Bundestag Member from 2009 to 2010 and since 2013

Axel Knoerig, CDU/CSU
Specialist in political science and local government studies, b. 1 Mar. 1967 in Bassum; married; one child. Bundestag Member since 2009
Jens Koeppen, 
CDU/CSU
Electrical engineer, entrepreneur, 
b. 27 Sep. 1962 in Zeitz; 
murried; one child. 
Bundestag Member since 2005

Jan Metzler, 
CDU/CSU
Wine grower, business administrator, 
b. 5 July 1981 in Worms; 
unmarried. 
Bundestag Member since 2013

Bernhard Loos, 
CDU/CSU
Economist and political scientist, 
b. 30 July 1955 in Kaufbeuren; 
murried; two children. 
Bundestag Member since 2017

Andreas G. Lämmel, 
CDU/CSU
CDU/CSU spokesman on the Committee 
Pastry cook, engineer, 
b. 19 Apr. 1959 in Falkenstein; 
murried; two children. 
Bundestag Member since 2005

Dr Andreas Lenz, 
CDU/CSU
Business administrator, 
b. 23 Apr. 1981 in Ebersberg; 
unmarried. 
Bundestag Member since 2013

Carsten Müller, 
CDU/CSU
Bank clerk, lawyer, 
b. 8 May 1970 in Braunschweig. 
Bundestag Member from 2005 to 2009 and since 2013
Dr Joachim Pfeiffer, CDU/CSU

CDU/CSU spokesman on economic affairs and energy
Business administrator, b. 25 Apr. 1967 in Mutlangen; three children. Bundestag Member since 2002

Stefan Rouenhoff, CDU/CSU
Economist, b. 23 Dec. 1978 in Goch; unmarried. Bundestag Member since 2017

Peter Stein, CDU/CSU
Urban planning architect, b. 18 Jan. 1968 in Siegen; married; two children. Bundestag Member since 2013

Klaus-Peter Willsch, CDU/CSU
Economist, b. 28 Feb. 1961 in Bad Schwalbach; married; five children. Bundestag Member since 1998

Ulrich Freese, SPD
Trade union secretary, b. 12 Apr. 1951 in Drevenack; married; three children. Bundestag Member since 2013

Timon Gremmels, SPD
Political scientist, b. 4 Jan. 1976 in Marburg. Bundestag Member since 2017

Peter Stein, CDU/CSU
Urban planning architect, b. 18 Jan. 1968 in Siegen; married; two children. Bundestag Member since 2013

Klaus-Peter Willsch, CDU/CSU
Economist, b. 28 Feb. 1961 in Bad Schwalbach; married; five children. Bundestag Member since 1998

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Timon Gremmels, SPD
Political scientist, b. 4 Jan. 1976 in Marburg. Bundestag Member since 2017
Sabine Poschmann, SPD
Business administrator, b. 4 Oct. 1968 in Castrop-Rauxel; married; one child. Bundestag Member since 2013

Florian Post, SPD
Business administrator, b. 27 May 1981 in Neustadt a.d. Waldnaab; unmarried. Bundestag Member since 2013

Andreas Rimkus, SPD
Master electrician in the energy industry, b. 24 Dec. 1962 in Düsseldorf; married; two children. Bundestag Member since 2013

Frank Junge, SPD
Sports teacher, b. 5 May 1967 in Halle (Saale); married; two children. Bundestag Member since 2013

Gabriele Katzmarek, SPD
Trade union secretary, b. 8 July 1960 in Marl; married; two children. Bundestag Member since 2013

Falko Mohrs, SPD
Business administrator, b. 23 July 1984 in Wolfsburg; unmarried. Bundestag Member since 2017
Tino Chrupalla, AfD
Self-employed painter, b. 14 Apr. 1975 in Weißwasser; married; three children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Markus Töns, SPD
Political scientist, b. 1 Jan. 1964 in Gelsenkirchen; three children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Professor Heiko Heßenkemper, AfD
AfD spokesman on the Committee, AfD spokesman on economic affairs and energy
Physicist, b. 11 Jan. 1956 in Hamm; married; three children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Leif-Erik Holm, AfD
Economist, b. 1 Aug. 1970 in Schwerin; married; two children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Johann Saathoff, SPD
Public administration specialist, b. 9 Dec. 1967 in Emden; married; five children. Bundestag Member since 2013

Bernd Westphal, SPD
SPD spokesman on the Committee, SPD spokesman on economic affairs and energy
Trade union secretary, chemical laboratory technician, b. 30 Sep. 1960 in Hildesheim; married; three children. Bundestag Member since 2013

Markus Töns, SPD
Political scientist, b. 1 Jan. 1964 in Gelsenkirchen; three children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Leif-Erik Holm, AfD
Economist, b. 1 Aug. 1970 in Schwerin; married; two children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Johann Saathoff, SPD
Public administration specialist, b. 9 Dec. 1967 in Emden; married; five children. Bundestag Member since 2013
Reinhard Houben, FDP  
FDP spokesman on economic affairs and energy  
Entrepreneur, b. 29 Apr. 1960 in Bensberg; married; two children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Steffen Kotré, AfD  
Industrial engineer, b. 29 Apr. 1971 in Berlin; married; one child. Bundestag Member since 2017

Enrico Komning, AfD  
Lawyer, b. 6 Aug. 1968 in Stralsund; married; four children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Hansjörg Müller, AfD  
Economist, self-employed interim manager, b. 30 Apr. 1968 in Treuchtlingen; married; three children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Professor Martin Neumann, FDP  
FDP spokesman on economic affairs and energy  
Mechanical engineer, b. 27 Jan. 1956 in Vetschau; widowed; two children. Bundestag Member from 2009 to 2013 and since 2017

Thomas L. Kemmerich, FDP  
Lawyer, entrepreneur, b. 20 Feb. 1965 in Aachen; married; six children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Steffen Kotré, AfD  
Industrial engineer, b. 29 Apr. 1971 in Berlin; married; one child. Bundestag Member since 2017

Enrico Komning, AfD  
Lawyer, b. 6 Aug. 1968 in Stralsund; married; four children. Bundestag Member since 2017

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Steffen Kotré, AfD  
Industrial engineer, b. 29 Apr. 1971 in Berlin; married; one child. Bundestag Member since 2017

Enrico Komning, AfD  
Lawyer, b. 6 Aug. 1968 in Stralsund; married; four children. Bundestag Member since 2017

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Economist, self-employed interim manager, b. 30 Apr. 1968 in Treuchtlingen; married; three children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Professor Martin Neumann, FDP  
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Manfred Todtenhausen, 
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Master electrician, 
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Bundestag Member 
from 2012 to 2013 
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Sandra Weeser, 
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FDP spokeswoman on 
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Business administrator, 
b. 8 Sep. 1969 
in Siegen; 
mARRIED; two children. 
Bundestag Member 
since 2017

Lorenz Gösta Beutin, 
The Left Party
Historian, 
b. 18 July 1978 
in Hamburg; 
umARRIED. 
Bundestag Member 
since 2017

Lorenz Gösta Beutin, 
The Left Party
Historian, 
b. 18 July 1978 
in Hamburg; 
umARRIED. 
Bundestag Member 
since 2017

Thomas Lutze, 
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The Left Party spokes- 
man on economic 
affairs and energy
Mechanical engineer, 
b. 23 Aug. 1969 
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mARRIED; one child. 
Bundestag Member 
since 2009

Pascal Meiser, 
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Political scientist, 
b. 7 Mar. 1975 
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Alexander Ulrich, 
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The Left Party spokes- 
man on the Committee
Trade union secretary, 
b. 11 Feb. 1971 
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mARRIED; two children. 
Bundestag Member 
since 2005
Kerstin Andreae,  
Alliance 90/The Greens  
spokeswoman on the Committee,  
Alliance 90/The Greens  
eeconomic affairs and energy  
Economist,  
b. 21 Oct. 1968  
in Schramberg;  
madried; three children.  
Bundestag Member since 2002

Katharina Dröge,  
Alliance 90/The Greens  
Economist,  
b. 16 Sep. 1984  
in Münster;  
madried; two children.  
Bundestag Member since 2013

Dr Ingrid Nestle,  
Alliance 90/The Greens  
Industrial engineer,  
b. 22 Dec. 1977  
in Schwäbisch Gmünd;  
madried; two children.  
Bundestag Member from 2009 to 2012 and since 2017  

Dr Julia Verlinden,  
Alliance 90/The Greens  
Environmental scientist,  
b. 18 Jan. 1979  
in Bergisch Gladbach;  
madried.  
Bundestag Member since 2013

Dieter Janecek,  
Alliance 90/The Greens  
Political scientist,  
b. 25 May 1976  
in Pirmasens;  
madried; three children.  
Bundestag Member since 2013
Information online

The Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy
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The German Bundestag takes decisions on what are at times highly complex and controversial bills and parliamentary initiatives relating to the entire spectrum of policy fields. The committees play a central role in parliamentary deliberations. They are the forum where the Members thrash out compromises and draw on expert advice before submitting their reports and recommendations for decisions to be voted on by the Bundestag as a whole.

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