



Deutscher Bundestag

# **The Committee on Housing, Urban Development, Building and Local Government**

Ausschuss für Wohnen, Stadtentwicklung,  
Bauwesen und Kommunen  
Informationen in englischer Sprache



**New  
2023  
version**  
20th electoral term



“Housing is a basic human need. The Committee on Housing, Urban Development, Building and Local Government grapples with the key challenges of our times relating to building, housing and communities. We discuss strategic decisions relating to tenants, owners, and urban and housing development, with the aim of increasing the supply of affordable housing in future. As climate action becomes a growing priority, we are looking at energy-efficient and sustainable construction and housing. A vibrant residential environment in urban and rural areas requires smart planning and modern forms of public participation. We are working hard on these issues in the Committee.”



Sandra Weeser, FDP  
Chairwoman of the Committee  
on Housing, Urban Development,  
Building and Local Government

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 European Union Affairs and the Petitions Committee.

The Budget Committee and the Committee for the Scrutiny of Elections, Immunity and 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 committees of the German Bundestag**

The German Bundestag sets political priorities of its own by establishing additional committees for specific subjects, such as sport, cultural affairs, human rights 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 19 and 49 members.

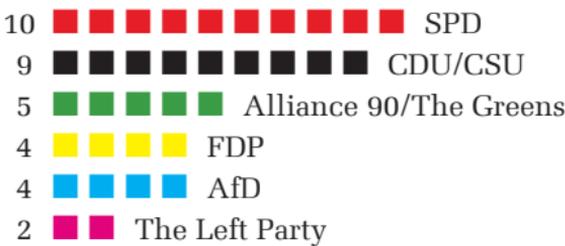
The committees discuss and deliberate on items referred to them by the plenary. They also have the right to take up issues on their own initiative, allowing them to set priorities in the parliamentary debate. When necessary, they draw on external expertise – usually by holding public hearings. At the end of a committee's deliberations – especially on bills and motions for which it is the lead committee – it adopts a recommendation for a decision and a report, which serve as the basis for the plenary's decision.

How can we ensure that sufficient housing is available in cities and densely populated areas? And how do we make sure that rents remain affordable, including for people on low and medium incomes? Against the backdrop of the ongoing digital revolution, our ageing society and the challenges facing us in terms of climate policy, what should the city of the future look like? What action should we take to ensure that rural areas retain their appeal? How can we achieve strong and effective local government?

## **The Committee on Housing, Urban Development, Building and Local Government**

Since December 2021, the 34 members of the Committee, chaired by Sandra Weeser (FDP), have been grappling with these key issues for the future – and often working together with other Bundestag committees. Housing, urban development, building and local government are, after all, cross-cutting issues which also touch on the remits of the committees responsible for the environment, transport or internal affairs, for example. Particularly when it comes to the subject of local government, however, the Committee’s tasks include close cooperation with the *Länder* (federal states) and with towns and municipalities.

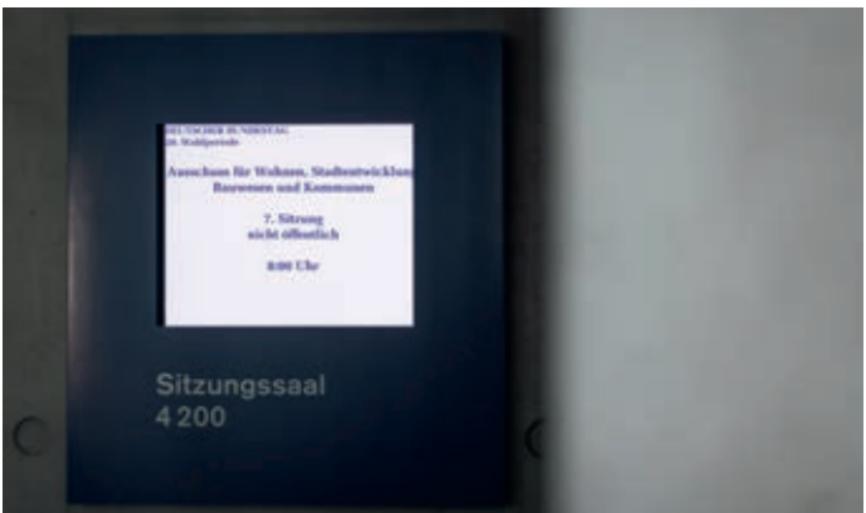
Housing is a basic need and can mean something different for every individual. The resulting challenges thus vary considerably. While some municipalities are having to deal with a shrinking population and vacant properties, the focus in densely populated areas is on creating new and, above all, affordable housing. Then there are the requirements relating to demographic change and climate action. All of these challenges can only be addressed by the federal level, the *Länder* and municipalities working together. What is



Number of members: 34  
 Chairwoman: Sandra Weeser, FDP  
 Deputy Chairperson: Not yet elected, AfD

clear is that still more housing needs to be created in areas where there will be housing shortages in the foreseeable future. The Federal Government therefore wants 400,000 homes to be built each year. Discussing and proposing solutions in this context is one of the Committee's tasks. A key question is how to facilitate the bringing forward of new land for development and how to achieve targeted infill development. To enable more people to become home owners, the Committee will discuss options to make it easier to buy a home. This includes, for example, a more flexible approach to the tax on the acquisition of real estate, and support options in the form of subsidised interest rates and repayment bonuses.

Given that more than half of the German population lives in rented accommodation, the Committee looks at the various options to create affordable housing. New forms of non-profit housing and greater support for social housing will therefore be discussed in this electoral term. Housing for the elderly, accessibility improvements and support for student accommodation also fall within the Committee's remit. The wide range of needs which exist are reflected in the Committee's discussions. At the same time, the stock of social housing is



continuing to shrink as rent control and restricted allocation requirements expire. The Committee will therefore examine how as many publicly subsidised homes as possible can be created. In addition, reviewing and updating the rules protecting tenants is on the agenda. For example, a discussion is taking place on lowering the cap on rent increases and extending the rent control mechanism until 2029.

Improving the energy efficiency of buildings is an important issue in this electoral term. The Federal Government has set itself the aim of achieving a nearly climate-neutral building stock by 2045. Major efforts are needed if this target is to be met. For example, the KfW programmes to foster energy-efficient new buildings and upgrades to existing buildings must be adapted to reflect current climate standards. When it comes to energy efficiency, the Committee will also have the task of ensuring that a balance is struck between climate action and ensuring that housing remains affordable, which is also an important aim.



These housing-policy objectives can only be achieved by working in partnership with the construction industry, a traditionally large sector with more than two million workers. At a time of rising energy prices, growing problems in obtaining building materials and a marked shortage of workers, new strategies are needed to ensure that housing-policy objectives can nonetheless be achieved. In addition to bringing together all important stakeholders, the Committee members engage on a regular basis with the topics of prefabricated construction, digitalisation, standardisation and reducing bureaucracy. Increasingly, issues relating to the energy and cost balance across the whole building life cycle are also becoming a priority.

People want cities, towns and rural areas which are worth living in. Only successful urban development policy and urban development assistance can enable cities, towns and municipalities to maintain their appeal and offer their residents a high quality of life. In this context, a range of assistance programmes exist, for example to finance adaptations to demographic and structural change, to develop liveable neighbourhoods, to improve neighbourhood communities, to promote infill development and historic town centres, or to fund upgrades and renovations to municipalities' social infrastructure.



Where are changes needed, in this context, and where do we need to shift course? The Committee will be examining these questions, as well as the issues of climate action, accessibility and new forms of transport. People want to have a say at local level in how living conditions are shaped. Public participation in municipalities will therefore also be important for cooperative urban development.

Local government is an issue which is closely related to building, housing and urban development. Key topics in this context include municipalities' financial resources and steps to strengthen local self-government. Only empowered local governments can meet people's expectations and fulfil their wishes. The only way to counter rural-urban migration and the emergence of left-behind regions is for municipalities to be able to offer their residents good public services, such as good child day care centres and schools, reliable transport and utility infrastructures, affordable housing, high-speed internet, and appealing cultural and social facilities. Supporting the aim of equivalent living conditions in both urban and rural areas is also part of the Committee's remit.



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## Committee members

The 34 members of the Committee on Housing,  
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## Information online

The Committee on Housing, Urban Development,  
Building and Local Government  
[www.bundestag.de/en/committees/a24](http://www.bundestag.de/en/committees/a24)



Website for downloading and ordering  
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[www.btg-bestellservice.de](http://www.btg-bestellservice.de)



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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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