The Committee on Building, Housing, Urban Development and Local Government
“Housing, building and urban development are issues which invariably have social, cultural, economic and environmental implications. The Bundestag has set up a dedicated committee for these issues again for the first time since 1998. We focus on the interests of both rural and urban communities. Equivalent living conditions and vibrant towns and cities: these are the aims which the Committee will be working to achieve in this electoral term. We deal with topics such as affordable housing, support for property ownership, measures to facilitate the bringing forward of land for development, cutting red tape, and the approach which should be taken with regard to the existing fabric of old buildings.”

Mechthild Heil, CDU/CSU
Chairwoman of the Committee on Building, Housing, Urban Development 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 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 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. 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.
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 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 Building, Housing, Urban Development and Local Government
Since April 2018, the 24 members of the Committee, chaired by Mechthild Heil (CDU/CSU), have been grappling with these key issues for the future – and often working together with other Bundestag committees. Building, housing, urban development 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. For several years, there has been a resurgence in public interest in the issues of building and housing. The challenges in these fields 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 is the need to take action in relation to demographic change and climate change. All of these challenges can only be addressed by the federal level, the Länder and local governments.
working together. What is 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 currently estimates that around 350,000 new properties will need to be built each year over the period to 2020. 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. The various instruments to support home ownership must also be discussed, such as support for saving for building purposes, the inclusion of home ownership in retirement savings subsidy schemes, building-related child benefit, the programmes run by Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), or designing the real property transfer tax in such a way that it supports potential house-builders.
But the Committee is not focusing solely on home owners in the current electoral term. More than half of the German population lives in rented accommodation. Particularly in densely populated areas, demand for housing is high. This is also true of rising demand for social housing and the need for accommodation for students and people on low incomes. The interests of other groups, such as people with disabilities or senior citizens, must also be considered more in future. The number of older people in Germany will continue to rise over the coming decades. Studies suggest that in 2030 around 30 per cent of the population will be over the age of 65. Almost three million homes that meet the needs of the elderly will be required by that date. 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 be examining an amendment of the Basic Law designed to enable the Federation to continue to
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 2050. Major efforts are needed if this target is to be met. KfW programmes to foster energy-efficient new buildings and upgrades to existing buildings are just one element of this. When it comes to energy efficiency, the Committee will also have the task of ensuring that a balance is struck between climate protection and ensuring that housing remains affordable, which is also an important aim.

grant the Länder financial assistance for the construction of social housing. There will also be discussions on whether tax incentives should be introduced for the construction of low-rent housing, and on how the rent-rise cap or support for cooperatives can be successfully developed further.
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, because construction requires specific capacities. The issues dealt with by the Committee in this context include, for example, greater use of mass production in housing, without compromising high standards in the design of buildings. Other areas for fine-tuning include boosting productivity by making greater use of digital technologies in planning and construction processes, or the possibility of updating and streamlining planning and consent procedures. As the Federation is itself responsible for major construction projects, it is also affected by developments in these areas and must respond to them in future.
People want towns and rural areas which are worth living in. Only successful urban development policy and urban development assistance can enable towns and communities 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 carry out urban development adaptation processes required as a result of demographic and economic change, to improve the situation in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, to preserve historic town centres, to safeguard lively inner-city areas, to promote urban green spaces or to strengthen smaller towns and communities.

Where are changes needed, in this context, and where do we need to shift course? The Committee will be examining these issues, as well as the question of what the city of the future should look like. One key concept is that of the “smart city”, which involves using the opportunities of digitalisation and growing interconnectedness to make cities more sustainable, greener, cleaner and more efficient, or in other words: more liveable.
Local government is an issue which is closely related to building, housing and urban development. Key topics in this context include local governments’ financial resources and steps to empower local communities. 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 local governments 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 towns and rural areas is also part of the Committee’s remit.
Mechthild Heil, CDU/CSU
Chairwoman
Architect, b. 23 Aug. 1961 in Andernach; married; three children.
Bundestag Member since 2009

Volkmar Vogel, CDU/CSU
Deputy Chairman
Equipment engineer, b. 18 Jan. 1959 in Gera; married; two children.
Bundestag Member since 2002

Committee members
The 24 members of the Committee on Building, Housing, Urban Development and Local Government
Michael Kießling, CDU/CSU
Civil engineer, b. 29 May 1973 in Rütli (Switzerland); divorced; two children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Torsten Schweiger, CDU/CSU
Electrical engineer, b. 29 Feb. 1968 in Gräfenhainichen; married; one child. Bundestag Member since 2017

Kai Wegner, CDU/CSU
CDU/CSU spokesman on building, housing, urban development and local government Insurance clerk, b. 15 Sep. 1972 in Berlin; two children. Bundestag Member since 2005

Karsten Möring, CDU/CSU
Retired head teacher, b. 30 Aug. 1949 in Schneverdingen; married; one child. Bundestag Member since 2013

Dr Anja Weisgerber, CDU/CSU
Lawyer, b. 11 Mar. 1976 in Schweinfurt; married; two children. Bundestag Member since 2013

Eckhard Pols, CDU/CSU
Master glazier, b. 14 Mar. 1962 in Lüneburg; married; five children. Bundestag Member since 2009
Emmi Zeulner, CDU/CSU
CDU/CSU spokeswoman on the Committee
Registered nurse, b. 27 Mar. 1987
in Lichtenfels; one child.
Bundestag Member since 2013

Bernhard Daldrup, SPD
SPD spokesman on the Committee
Executive, b. 1 June 1956
in Sendenhorst; married; two children.
Bundestag Member since 2013

Elisabeth Kaiser, SPD
Administrative science specialist,
b. 4 Mar. 1987
in Gera; married.
Bundestag Member since 2017

Klaus Mindrup, SPD
Biologist, b. 16 May 1964
in Lienen, Westphalia; divorced.
Bundestag Member since 2013

Ulli Nissen, SPD
Bank clerk, b. 16 June 1959
in Essen; married; two children.
Bundestag Member since 2013

Claudia Tausend, SPD
Geographer, b. 22 July 1964
in Vilsbiburg; married.
Bundestag Member since 2013
Daniel Föst, FDP
FDP spokesman on the Committee
Self-employed, b. 10 Aug. 1976 in Schweinfurt; married; two children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Hagen Reinhold, FDP
Master bricklayer and concreter, b. 23 Mar. 1978 in Wismar; unmarried; three children. Bundestag Member in 2013 and since 2017

Dr Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, FDP
Journalist, b. 10 Mar. 1958 in Düsseldorf; married; three children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Marc Bernhard, AfD
AfD lawyer, MBA, b. 5 Feb. 1972 in Reutlingen; divorced; two children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Udo Hemmelgarn, AfD
AfD spokesman on the Committee
Self-employed businessman, b. 4 May 1959 in Harsewinkel; married; one child. Bundestag Member since 2017

Frank Magnitz, AfD
Property agent, b. 29 June 1952 in Neuenkirchen; married; six children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Udo Hemmelgarn, AfD
AfD spokesman on the Committee
Self-employed businessman, b. 4 May 1959 in Harsewinkel; married; one child. Bundestag Member since 2017

Marc Bernhard, AfD
AfD lawyer, MBA, b. 5 Feb. 1972 in Reutlingen; divorced; two children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Hagen Reinhold, FDP
Master bricklayer and concreter, b. 23 Mar. 1978 in Wismar; unmarried; three children. Bundestag Member in 2013 and since 2017

Dr Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, FDP
Journalist, b. 10 Mar. 1958 in Düsseldorf; married; three children. Bundestag Member since 2017
Kerstin Kassner,  
The Left Party  
Economist,  
b. 7 Jan. 1958  
in Radebeul;  
marrried; two children.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2013

Caren Lay,  
The Left Party  
The Left Party spokes-
woman on the  
Committee  
Sociologist,  
b. 11 Dec. 1972  
in Neuwied.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2009

Christian Kühn,  
Alliance 90/The Greens  
Alliance 90/The Greens  
spokesman on the  
Committee  
Political scientist,  
b. 9 Apr. 1979  
in Tübingen;  
marrried; three children.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2013

Daniela Wagner,  
Alliance 90/The Greens  
Former city councillor,  
b. 4 Apr. 1957  
in Darmstadt;  
marrried; one child.  
Bundestag Member  
from 2009 to 2013  
and since 2017
Information online

The Committee on Building, Housing, Urban Development and Local Government
www.bundestag.de/en/committees/a24
Contact details for the Committee Secretariat

Deutscher Bundestag
Ausschuss für Bau, Wohnen,
Stadtentwicklung und Kommunen
Platz der Republik 1
11011 Berlin
Tel.: +49 30 227-39414
Fax: +49 30 227-36123
Email: bauausschuss@bundestag.de
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.

www.bundestag.de/en/committees