



Deutscher Bundestag

The Committee on Foreign Affairs

Auswärtiger Ausschuss
Informationen in englischer Sprache



New
2023
version
20th electoral term



“Our membership of the EU and NATO and our participation in the United Nations and many other international organisations are the foundation of German foreign and security policy. We firmly believe in international and European teamwork. However, international influence does not come free of charge; it requires a readiness to take on responsibility, especially in difficult times. In a democracy, public support for this must constantly be sought and renewed. Parliament, and in particular the Committee on Foreign Affairs, has an extremely important role to play in the relationship between the government and the population.”



Michael Roth, SPD
Chairman of the Committee
on Foreign Affairs

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.

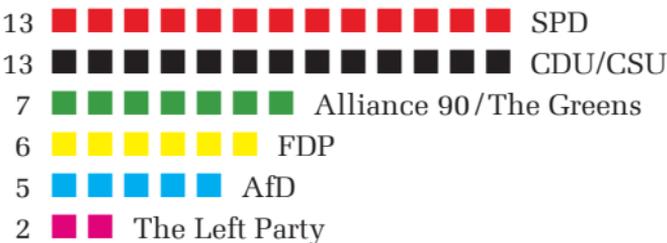
The committees discuss and deliberate on items referred to them by the plenary. They also have the right to take up issues on their own initiative, allowing them to set priorities in the parliamentary debate. When necessary, they draw on external expertise – usually by holding public hearings. At the 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.

Foreign policy is traditionally the preserve of the Federal Government, but the Bundestag's influence in this area is growing. In practice, the Committee on Foreign Affairs is responsible for this policy field within the Bundestag. It ranks among Parliament's largest committees and is one of just four committees whose establishment is required by the Basic Law. Its 46 members, chaired by Michael Roth (SPD), discuss sensitive matters of foreign policy – and so the Committee's meetings take place behind closed doors.

The Committee on Foreign Affairs

The parliamentarians request briefings from the Federal Government on foreign-policy issues and set out their views in debates. The Committee's agenda generally reflects world political affairs from a German perspective. The work of the Committee is determined both by the fundamentals of German foreign policy, such as cooperation within the European Union, relations with Germany's European neighbours, the transatlantic partnership and Germany's special relationship with Israel, and by current events and developments, such as the war in Ukraine and its implications for relations with Russia and Europe's security, the situation in the Middle East, China's growing influence on world

politics, and the situation in the areas where the Bundeswehr is deployed. As a rule, the Committee's discussions are objective rather than confrontational, with the aim of reaching a consensus. When it comes to cross-cutting issues such as the work of the United Nations and civilian crisis prevention, disarmament policy, cultural and education policy abroad, and international climate and energy policy, the Committee on Foreign Affairs has set up special subcommittees.



Number of members: 46

Chairman: Michael Roth, SPD

Deputy Chairman: Thomas Erndl, CDU/CSU

The Bundestag's role in foreign policy has been bolstered significantly by decisions of the Federal Constitutional Court. For example, the Court has ruled that the Bundeswehr's deployment on armed missions outside Germany may not be decided by the Federal Government alone; instead, such decisions require democratic legitimacy in the form of the Bundestag's consent. The Committee on Foreign Affairs takes the lead when it comes to preparing decisions of this kind, and to date the Bundestag's plenary has not deviated from its recommendation in a single case.

Taking the right decisions on foreign-policy issues requires a wealth of detailed knowledge. Complex matters have to be analysed and assessed in the Committee's deliberations. The Members of the Bundestag specialising in foreign affairs often have to deal simultaneously and at short notice with sometimes widely differing problems and events, as international developments do not abide by the Bundestag's calendar of sittings. As a result, the Committee has a heavy workload and works under tremendous time pressure. Obtaining and analysing information – including confidential information – in good time is a prerequisite for the success of the Committee's work.



The members draw on a wide range of information sources in their work. While written documents are essential, they are no substitute for directly sharing information and exchanging views in talks and discussions. Where necessary, the Committee on Foreign Affairs or its subcommittees organise public hearings with external experts on complex issues. The parliamentarians travel abroad to form their own first-hand impression of current events and developments, and make a wide range of contacts, which can be helpful not just in the Committee's work, but also in advancing German interests across the world.

In turn, a large number of often high-level figures from around the world are keen to meet with the Committee on Foreign Affairs in Berlin – including heads of state and government. The Committee also maintains close contacts with parliamentarians worldwide; it engages in a regular dialogue with its counterpart committees in the French, Polish and Israeli parliaments. Members of Parliament have a key advantage on the international stage: they are not bound by diplomatic niceties and can send messages more discreetly – or more forthrightly – than is often possible in official diplomacy.



The subcommittees of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

The diverse nature of foreign policy is reflected in the remit of the four subcommittees set up by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, each of which has eleven members.

The Subcommittee on Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, which is chaired by Armin Laschet (CDU/CSU), deals on the one hand with long-term issues, such as the role of disarmament and arms control as elements of a global security architecture, the maintenance and strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and control of the global arms trade, and on the other hand with current challenges, such as the future of arms control in Europe, the enforcement of the ban on the development, production and use of chemical and biological weapons, and effective control of new kinds of autonomous weapons systems.

As a member of the United Nations and many other international organisations and groups, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the G7 and G20 groups of leading economic powers, Germany can influence the process of shaping an international order based on common rules. The Subcommittee on the United Nations, International Organisations and Civilian Crisis Prevention, chaired by Professor Monika Grütters (CDU/CSU), follows the work of these organisations and groups and discusses German policies in the relevant bodies, institutions and conferences. The spectrum of topics dealt with by the Subcommittee is accordingly wide, stretching from the UN's role in peacekeeping, to issues relating to crisis prevention and management, to the future of the world trade system.

Foreign and security policy are closely connected to issues relating to climate and energy. The decisions taken in energy policy can, like climate change, have a major influence on peace and secu-



rity. For example, droughts and floods, together with conflicts over scarce resources, threaten human lives and the stability of countries and entire regions. The international climate negotiations on the reduction of CO2 emissions are thus also directly linked to foreign-policy issues. In view of these connections, the Committee on Foreign Affairs has established a Subcommittee on International Climate and Energy Policy in this electoral term for the first time, chaired by Lisa Badum (Alliance 90/The Greens). Its members follow the international climate negotiations, engage with the foreign-policy implications of climate change, and discuss the impacts of energy policy on international stability.

By once again establishing a Subcommittee on Cultural and Education Policy Abroad, the Committee on Foreign Affairs is underlining the fact that this policy field, which is regarded as the third pillar of foreign policy, is of fundamental importance, especially in

view of the crises taking place and the continuing shifts in the global political order. Crucially, it can be successful even in situations where other options have already been exhausted.

This Subcommittee, which is chaired by Michelle Müntefering (SPD), requests regular briefings from the Federal Government about cultural and education work carried out abroad. Its members focus in particular on examining and supporting the work of the intermediary organisations commissioned by the Federal Government. These include, for example, the Goethe Institute, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen), German schools abroad, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the German Archaeological Institute (DAI), and a wide range of other organisations and foundations.





04:00



Michael Roth,
SPD
Chairman
Political scientist,
former Minister of State,
b. 24 Aug. 1970 in
Heringen.
Bundestag Member
since 1998



Thomas Erndl,
CDU/CSU
Deputy Chairman
Electrical engineer,
b. 22 July 1974 in
Osterhofen.
Bundestag Member
since 2017



Committee members

The 46 members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

Dr Nils Schmid,
SPD
Parliamentary-group
coordinator
Former Minister,
b. 11 July 1973 in Trier.
Bundestag Member
since 2017



Jürgen Hardt,
CDU/CSU
Parliamentary-group
coordinator
Economist,
b. 30 May 1963 in
Hofheim, Taunus.
Bundestag Member
since 2009



Jürgen Trittin,
Alliance 90/The Greens
Parliamentary-group
coordinator
Social scientist, former
Federal Minister,
b. 25 July 1954 in
Bremen.
Bundestag Member
since 1998



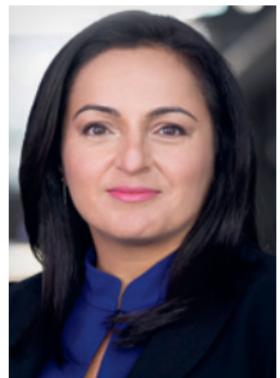
Ulrich Lechte,
FDP
Parliamentary-group
coordinator
Business administrator,
b. 26 Aug. 1977 in
Sinsheim.
Bundestag Member
since 2017



Petr Bystron,
AfD
Parliamentary-group
coordinator
Entrepreneur,
b. 30 Nov. 1972 in
Olmütz (Czechia).
Bundestag Member
since 2017



Sevim Dağdelen,
The Left Party
Parliamentary-group
coordinator
Journalist,
b. 4 Sep. 1975 in
Duisburg.
Bundestag Member
since 2005



Adis Ahmetovic,
SPD
Employee,
b. 27 July 1993 in
Hanover.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Jürgen Coße,
SPD
Employee,
b. 16 Aug. 1969 in
Neuenkirchen.
Bundestag Member
from 2016 to 2017 and
since 2021



Dr Karamba Diaby,
SPD
Chemist,
b. 27 Nov. 1961 in
Marsassoum (Senegal).
Bundestag Member
since 2013



Andreas Larem,
SPD
Wholesale and foreign
trade clerk, former
mayor,
b. 25 Sep. 1964 in
Dieburg.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Bettina Lugk,
SPD
Geoscientist, public
administration
specialist,
b. 3 Feb. 1982.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Michael Müller,
SPD
Former mayor of Berlin,
b. 9 Dec. 1964 in Berlin.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Michelle Müntefering,
SPD
Journalist, former
Minister of State,
b. 9 Apr. 1980 in
Herne.
Bundestag Member
since 2013



Dietmar Nietan,
SPD
Employee,
b. 25 May 1964 in
Düren.
Bundestag Member
from 1998 to 2005 and
since 2009



Aydan Özoğuz,
SPD
Research assistant,
former Minister of
State,
b. 31 May 1967 in
Hamburg.
Bundestag Member
since 2009



Frank Schwabe,
SPD
Tour guide,
b. 12 Nov. 1970 in
Waltrop.
Bundestag Member
since 2005



Dr Ralf Stegner,
SPD
Political scientist,
former Minister,
b. 2 Oct. 1959 in
Bad Dürkheim.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Knut Abraham,
CDU/CSU
Diplomat,
b. 4 June 1966 in
Hamburg.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Peter Beyer,
CDU/CSU
Lawyer,
b. 25 Dec. 1970 in
Ratingen.
Bundestag Member
since 2009



Manfred Grund,
CDU/CSU
Electrical engineer,
b. 3 July 1955 in Zeitz.
Bundestag Member
since 1994



Roderich Kiesewetter,
CDU/CSU
Business administrator,
former colonel,
b. 11 Sep. 1963 in
Pfullendorf.
Bundestag Member
since 2009



Markus Koob,
CDU/CSU
Political scientist,
b. 5 Dec. 1977 in
Kronberg im Taunus.
Bundestag Member
since 2013



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b. 18 Feb. 1961 in
Aachen.
Bundestag Member
from 1994 to 1998 and
since 2021



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CDU/CSU
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Neustadt an der
Weinstraße.
Bundestag Member
since 2013



Alexander Radwan,
CDU/CSU
Lawyer,
b. 30 Aug. 1964 in
Munich.
Bundestag Member
since 2013



Dr Peter Ramsauer,
CDU/CSU
Former Federal
Minister, business
administrator, miller,
b. 10 Feb. 1954 in
Munich.
Bundestag Member
since 1990



Dr Norbert Röttgen,
CDU/CSU
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Minister,
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Meckenheim.
Bundestag Member
since 1994



Annette Widmann-Mauz,
CDU/CSU
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b. 13 June 1966 in
Tübingen.
Bundestag Member
since 1998



Tobias Bacherle,
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Student,
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Bundestag Member
since 2021



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Alliance 90/The Greens
Sales manager,
b. 7 Jan. 1963 in
Mallersdorf.
Bundestag Member
since 2017



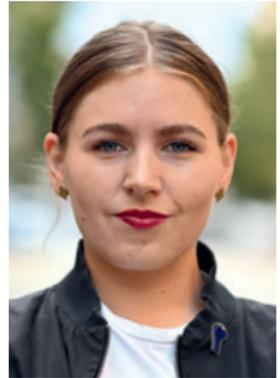
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Alliance 90/The Greens
Employee,
b. 19 Apr. 1997 in
Gelsenkirchen.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



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Alliance 90/The Greens
Student,
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Bundestag Member
since 2021



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Student,
b. 13 Nov. 1996 in
Höxter.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Robin Wagener,
Alliance 90/The Greens
Judge,
b. 16 Aug. 1980 in
Bielefeld.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



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Lawyer,
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Bundestag Member
since 2017



Bijan Djir-Sarai,
FDP
Business administrator,
b. 6 June 1976 in
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Bundestag Member
from 2009 to 2013 and
since 2017



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FDP
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b. 25 Mar. 1982 in
Havelberg.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



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Bundestag Member
since 2017



Rainer Semet,
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Industrial engineer,
b. 4 Sep. 1957 in
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Bundestag Member
since 2021



Dr Alexander Gauland,
AfD
Former State Secretary,
columnist and
journalist,
b. 20 Feb. 1941 in
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Bundestag Member
since 2017



Stefan Keuter,
AfD
Bank clerk,
b. 19 Aug. 1972 in
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Bundestag Member
since 2017



Matthias Moosdorf,
AfD
Musician,
b. 20 Apr. 1965 in
Leipzig.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Joachim Wundrak,
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Former lieutenant
general,
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(now Kerpen-Buir).
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Dr Gregor Gysi,
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Lawyer,
b. 16 Jan. 1948 in
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Bundestag Member
from 1990 to 2002 and
since 2005



Information online

The Federal Foreign Office
www.auswaertiges-amt.de



The EU
http://europa.eu/index_en.htm



The UN
www.un.org



NATO
www.nato.int



Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik – German Institute
for International and Security Affairs (SWP)
www.swp-berlin.org



The German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP)
<https://dgap.org/en>



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The Committee on Foreign Affairs
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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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