



Deutscher Bundestag

The Committee on Digital Affairs

Ausschuss für Digitales
Informationen in englischer Sprache



New
2023
version
20th electoral term



“Attacks on our critical infrastructure, information warfare and the coronavirus pandemic have once again exposed our vulnerabilities. The Committee on Digital Affairs, now a fully fledged committee, will devote all its energy to the tasks ahead in the field of digital policy, whether that is the expansion of digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, the modernisation of the public administration, or digital consumer protection. It is essential for us to take a joined-up approach to digitalisation and the climate crisis, the two biggest challenges of our time, in order to create the foundation for sustainable development.”



Tabea Rößner,
Alliance 90/The Greens
Chairwoman of the Committee
on Digital 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.

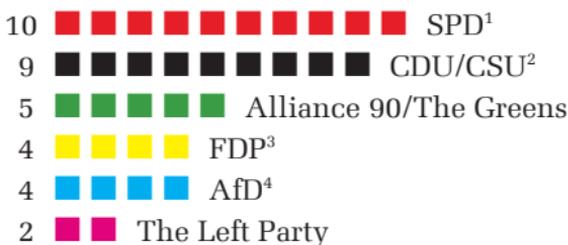
The committees discuss and deliberate on items referred to them by the plenary. They also have the right to take up issues on their own initiative, allowing them to set priorities in the parliamentary debate. When necessary, they draw on external expertise – usually by holding public hearings. At the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

Digitalisation can help to make Germany a stronger and more modern country. In various areas of everyday life, including the economy, the public administration, communication, work, health and sustainability, digitalisation can lead to greater progress and open up new opportunities. This requires an effective digital infrastructure that covers the entire country, which is the key to a successful digital transformation in Germany.

The Committee on Digital Affairs

In the 18th electoral term (2013–2017), the Bundestag established the Committee on the Digital Agenda, setting up a permanent parliamentary body for digital policy for the first time. The development of digital media was a recurring issue in the work of various committees during earlier electoral terms. A milestone was finally reached with the work of the Study Commission on the Internet and Digital Society in the 17th electoral term (2009–2013). Among the many recommendations set out in its final report was the suggestion that a permanent committee on digital policy should be set up in Parliament.

In the current 20th electoral term, the Committee on Digital Affairs will continue to discuss far-reaching issues relating to digitalisation and pave the way for our country to develop into a strong digital hub. The 34 members of the Committee took up their work at its constituent meeting on 15 December 2021. The Committee on Digital Affairs has taken on a bigger role in this electoral term. As there is now a Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport, with digital coming first in



Number of members: 34 plus one advisory member
 Chairwoman: Tabea Rößner, Alliance 90/The Greens
 Deputy Chairwoman: Anna Katharina Kassautzki, SPD

¹ Social Democratic Party of Germany

² Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union

³ Free Democratic Party

⁴ Alternative for Germany

the Ministry's name, the Committee on Digital Affairs is also the lead committee for certain bills. Federal Minister Dr Volker Wissing was the first minister invited to the Committee's meetings, and reported on digital projects at the Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport at the Committee's fifth meeting. The Committee also examines cross-cutting issues which touch on various policy fields and aspects of people's lives, and for which no single ministry at government level or committee in Parliament is responsible.

The Committee sees itself as an important catalyst for Parliament's work on all digital policy issues. This is shown in particular by the public hearings and consultations to which experts from the business community and academia are invited. The subjects on the agenda include the EU regulation on artificial intelligence, digital warfare, or the Digital Services Act (DSA). Many documents and opinions are published online.



The Federal Government has set ambitious goals in its coalition agreement: investment in artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, cybersecurity, robotics and other emerging technologies. In the spirit of a learning government which promotes technology, digital innovations are to be implemented in the public administration, and the necessary legal foundations are to be created to make life easier for the public. A fundamental transformation will enable the government to act more rapidly and effectively, and to foster innovation in the economy and society. Open standards – open source and European ecosystems – are to be supported.

The potential offered by the digital revolution is to be used to give people opportunities to flourish, and to promote prosperity, freedom, social participation and sustainable development.

In the framework of Parliament's scrutiny of the Federal Government's work, these are also key issues for the Committee on Digital Affairs. The large number of topics means that the Committee members have to deal with a wealth of information. They receive bills, motions and reports from across the wide spectrum of areas of digitalisation. Items relating to European and international topics also feature on the Committee's agenda. The Committee thus not only scrutinises the Federal Government's policies, but also participates in the European decision-making process via its recommendations and key issues papers.



The Committee members want to help Germany to usher in a new digital era.

The issues which the Committee wants to drive forward in political terms include digital sovereignty and a clear legal framework combining both data protection and data use in a practical manner that offers legal certainty, as well as efforts to tap into the vast potential of existing data resources, for example to support the green transformation. The sweeping nature of digital policy is shown by the subjects on the Committee's agenda, which

include the Gigabit Strategy, cyber defence issues, product security, disinformation, and digitalisation in the health sector. The Committee members consider the pros and cons of these parliamentary initiatives in the working groups set up by their parliamentary groups and debate them in the Committee.

European and international issues are regularly referred to the Committee. These include, for example, the "Path to the Digital Decade" or a European Digital Identity. Many of these printed papers also involve follow-up documents from the EU or statements from the Federal Government. A European Parliament resolution on



artificial intelligence in a digital age and the European Commission's proposal for a regulation on a European Chips Act might also be among the subjects discussed by the Committee during a week when Parliament is sitting.

The Committee on Digital Affairs attaches particular importance to European and international dialogue with experts from the political field, business and society. It sets its own priorities in this context, studies all aspects of the digital revolution, and is a key point of contact in Germany when it comes to digital policy issues.

Exchanges of experience and various trips abroad are planned in order to explore issues such as cybersecurity, smart cities, digital sustainability, artificial intelligence, digitalisation in the health sector, the digital economy, and digitalisation in the public administration.



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Committee members

The 34 members of the Committee on Digital Affairs

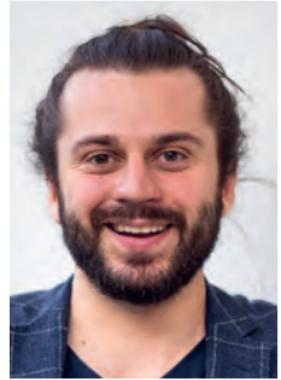
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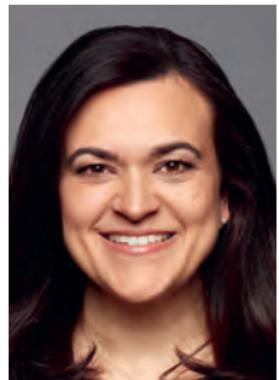
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Information online

The Committee on Digital Affairs
www.bundestag.de/en/committees/a23



Website for downloading and ordering the
German Bundestag's information materials
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.

www.bundestag.de/en/committees



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