The Committee on European Union Affairs
“The Committee on European Union Affairs has a key role to play when it comes to fundamental European matters such as updates to the European treaties, EU enlargement, the Neighbourhood Policy, Brexit, or the continued development of the eurozone. In this context, we engage in dialogue with the Federal Government, the European Commission and our colleagues in the European Parliament.”

Gunther Krichbaum, CDU/CSU Chairman of the Committee on European Union 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 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.
The Committee on European Union Affairs is expressly mentioned in the Basic Law, Germany’s constitution, and must be established in every electoral term. Like the Bundestag’s other committees, it prepares decisions to be taken by the plenary on the items of business referred to it. In addition, the Committee regularly takes up European policy issues on its own initiative. The EU Affairs Committee is the lead committee for all fundamental issues relating to European integration. These range from institutional reform of the European Union, to treaty changes and the EU’s strategies on individual policy areas, to the Multiannual Financial Framework. Given its broad remit, the EU Affairs Committee is the central forum for parliamentary consideration of European policy issues. The Committee is an advocate for joint European answers in areas where this is appropriate and useful. At the same time, it seeks to appropriately assert Germany’s interests. It is essential for Europe, in all its com-
plexity, to be understood and accepted by the people. For this reason, the Committee champions a less bureaucratic Europe which is close to people’s lives.

The Committee’s composition and procedures

The special status of the EU Affairs Committee is also reflected in its composition: in addition to 39 Members of the Bundestag from all of the parliamentary groups, it also includes 16 Members of the European Parliament elected in Germany who are appointed to the Committee by the President of the Bundestag. These MEPs have the right to participate in the Committee’s work, but are not entitled to vote. This approach fosters close links between the Bundestag and the European Parliament. The Bundestag’s participation in matters concerning the EU, which is enshrined in the constitution and the laws accompanying the Treaty of Lisbon, is, in principle, a matter for Parliament as a whole. All of the Bundestag’s committees therefore deliberate on European affairs falling within their own remits. The EU Affairs Committee, as an integrative cross-cutting committee, has a special responsibility for parliamentary participation in and scrutiny of European policy-making. It deals with horizontal European issues and examines whether proposed European legislation is compatible with the principle of subsidiarity.

Besides the general provisions of the Bundestag’s Rules of Procedure which apply to committees, a number of special provisions apply to the work of the EU Affairs Committee. For example, the Committee can, in certain circumstances, take decisions on behalf of the plenary and set out the Bundestag’s position on EU legislative proposals. In addition, the Committee can table amendments in the plenary to recommendations for a decision submitted by other specialised committees.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Number of Members</th>
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<tr>
<td>CDU/CSU</td>
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<td>SPD</td>
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<td>AfD</td>
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<td>FDP</td>
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<td>The Left Party</td>
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<td>Alliance 90/The Greens</td>
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Number of members: 39
Chairman: Gunther Krichbaum, CDU/CSU
Deputy Chairman: Markus Töns, SPD
The subjects covered at the Committee’s meetings reflect the European agenda. In addition, the Committee meets in Brussels at regular intervals, and has close links with stakeholders at European level and the European affairs committees established by the national parliaments of the EU Member States.

The EU Affairs Committee’s key topics

The Member States’ fiscal and economic policies are coordinated and analysed within the framework of the annual cycle known as the “European Semester”. The EU Affairs Committee regularly deliberates on this economic policy coordination at European level and examines the national reform programmes for Germany. Another important topic is the country-specific recommendations proposed by the European Commission, which monitors compliance with the Stability and Growth Pact criteria. As part of this, the Committee deliberates on the focus of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). The Committee’s discussions also cover the subject of a European Pillar of Social Rights. Since the beginning of the sovereign debt crisis, the Committee has been devoting a great deal of attention to measures to stabilise the eurozone, in the framework of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) and the assistance programmes for individual Member States. As part of the debate on various proposals relating to the deepening of economic and monetary union, the Committee also discusses institutional issues, such as those associated with the establishment of a European Monetary Fund. The negotiations on the EU’s new Multiannual Financial Framework and fundamental decisions on how funds are to be distributed have been a priority in the Committee’s discussions since the start of the current electoral term.
examined by the Committee means that it is in contact with almost all of the federal ministries. Its primary partner is the Federal Foreign Office. The Committee also cooperates closely with the Federal Ministry of Finance on all issues relating to the euro-zone, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy in connection with the European Semester, and the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community in relation to the topic of migration. In general, the members of the EU Affairs Committee also sit on other committees as well. This dual membership promotes strong links between specialised policy areas and European policy, to the benefit of both.

Parliamentary participation in EU affairs

The Basic Law states that the Bundestag must receive comprehensive information about key foreign-policy issues examined by the Committee include EU enlargement, the European Neighbourhood Policy and regional cooperation. The Committee regularly analyses the European Commission’s progress reports, which take stock of the reforms undertaken by the candidate countries for EU membership, and follows and supports the preparations for the opening of accession negotiations and, subsequently, the negotiations on the individual chapters. The rule of law is a growing priority in the Committee's work, not only with regard to the candidate countries, but also with regard to the relationship between the Member States. The debate about the EU’s future encompasses, not least, the details of the EU’s future relationship with the United Kingdom. The EU Affairs Committee is engaging with all aspects of the negotiations between the EU and the United Kingdom on its exit from the EU. The diversity of the topics

Parliamentary participation in EU affairs

The Basic Law states that the Bundestag must receive comprehensive information about
all EU initiatives at an early stage. The Bundestag has significantly extended its participatory rights in the laws accompanying the Treaty of Lisbon and in the course of the measures to stabilise the eurozone, with Parliament’s constitutive consent now being required in special cases. The EU Affairs Committee examines the implementation and nature of Parliament’s rights to receive information and participatory rights at regular intervals and submits reports to the plenary.

The Committee’s work in practice

The Committee’s agenda reflects the meetings of the Council in its various configurations, the Eurogroup and the European Council, and the Committee requests oral reports at its meetings as necessary, in addition to the Federal Government’s written reports. The Committee also examines all legislative proposals coming from the European level and checks whether they are compatible with the principle of subsidiarity. The issues under discussion are often highly complex. To ensure it can develop as complete a picture as possible of the item under discussion, the Committee routinely also invites high-ranking representatives of the European institutions, the Member States and the candidate countries to its meetings for an exchange of views. It also sends delegations to the candidate countries so that the Members of Parliament can obtain first-hand information about the implementation of reforms and hold talks with civil society, foundations and journalists. The Committee holds public hearings and talks with experts at which its members discuss selected legal and specialised issues. Their findings feed into the opinions and recommendations for a decision which the Committee submits to the plenary. The EU Affairs Committee
Looking ahead to the German EU Presidency in 2020

In the second half of 2020, Germany will take over the EU Presidency. As each presidency has a parliamentary dimension, the Bundestag and its committees will face special challenges. The EU Affairs Committee will host the COSAC conferences, at which Members of Parliament from more than 35 countries will hold public discussions about selected issues of European policy in various forums. And just as the Bundestag’s EU Affairs Committee visits its counterpart committees in Europe, a large number of delegations from the European Parliament and partner countries will travel to Berlin to engage in dialogue. 

has good international links. It maintains contacts with parliamentarians from other Member States and the EU accession countries, and sends a small delegation to the meetings of the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC). There are several national parliaments with which the EU Affairs Committee has an especially close working relationship. For example, members of the EU affairs committees of the Bundestag and the French Assemblée nationale regularly meet for joint deliberations. In addition, the EU affairs committees of the German, French and Polish parliaments meet in what is known as the Weimar Triangle format. Every six months, the EU Affairs Committee meets its counterpart committee from the country holding the EU Presidency in order to discuss the Presidency’s priorities. In Berlin, the Committee meets in the Paul Löbe Building’s Europasaal each Wednesday in sitting weeks.
Committee members

The 39 members of the Committee on European Union Affairs

Gunther Krichbaum, CDU/CSU
Chairman
Commercial lawyer, b. 4 May 1964 in Korntal; married; three children. Bundestag Member since 2002

Markus Töns, SPD
Deputy Chairman
Political scientist, b. 1 Jan. 1964 in Gelsenkirchen; three children. Bundestag Member since 2017
Florian Hahn,
CDU/CSU
CDU/CSU spokesman on the Committee,
CDU/CSU spokesman on EU affairs
Electronic marketing specialist,
b. 14 Mar. 1974
in Munich;
marrried; two children.
Bundestag Member since 2009

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

Professor Heribert Hirte,
CDU/CSU
University professor,
b. 31 Mar. 1958
in Cologne;
marrried; two children.
Bundestag Member since 2013

Uwe Feiler,
CDU/CSU
Financial administrator,
b. 2 Nov. 1965
in Wipens (Luhe);
marrried;
three children.
Bundestag Member since 2013

Ursula Groden-Kranich,
CDU/CSU
Bank clerk,
b. 24 May 1965
in Mainz;
marrried; one child.
Bundestag Member since 2013

Philipp Amthor,
CDU/CSU
Lawyer,
b. 10 Nov. 1992
in Ueckermünde.
Bundestag Member since 2017
Matern von Marschall, CDU/CSU
Publisher,
b. 3 Aug. 1962
in Freiburg im Breisgau;
mixed; two children
Bundestag Member
since 2013

Axel Müller, CDU/CSU
Former presiding judge
at regional court,
b. 24 July 1963
in Esslingen am Neckar.
Bundestag Member
since 2017

Dr Christoph Ploß, CDU/CSU
Historian,
b. 19 July 1985
in Hamburg.
Bundestag Member
since 2017

Detlef Seif, CDU/CSU
CDU/CSU spokesman on the Committee
Lawyer,
b. 15 Aug. 1962
in Euskirchen;
mixed; one child.
Bundestag Member
since 2009

Katrin Staffler, CDU/CSU
Biochemist,
b. 4 Nov. 1981
in Dachau;
mixed.
Bundestag Member
since 2017

Dr Volker Ullrich, CDU/CSU
Lawyer,
businesm administrator,
b. 14 Oct. 1975
in Illertissen.
Bundestag Member
since 2013

Axel Müller, CDU/CSU
Former presiding judge
at regional court,
b. 24 July 1963
in Esslingen am Neckar.
Bundestag Member
since 2017
Christian Petry,
SPD
SPD spokesman
on the Committee,
SPD spokesman
on EU affairs
Public administration
specialist,
b. 15 Mar. 1965
in Neunkirchen (Saar); married; two children.
Bundestag Member
since Jan. 2019

Axel Schäfer,
SPD
Secretary General,
b. 3 Aug. 1952
in Frankfurt am Main; married; one child.
Bundestag Member
since 2002

Nezahat Baradari,
SPD
Paediatrician
b. 15 Aug. 1965
in Bogazköy, Ankara, Turkey; married; two children.
Bundestag Member
since 2013 to 2017

Angelika Glöckner,
SPD
Public administration specialist, business administrator,
b. 5 Feb. 1962
in Pirmasens; married; two children.
Bundestag Member
since 2014

Nina Warken,
CDU/CSU
Lawyer,
b. 15 May 1979
in Bad Mergentheim; married; three children.
Bundestag Member
from 2013 to 2017
and since Dec. 2018

Metin Hakverdi,
SPD
Lawyer,
b. 25 June 1969
in Hamburg; unmarried.
Bundestag Member
since 2013

Nina Warken,
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in Hamburg; unmarried.
Bundestag Member
since 2013
Johannes Schraps, SPD
Political scientist, b. 17 Aug. 1983 in Bad Pyrmont; unmarried. Bundestag Member since 2017

Claudia Tausend, SPD
Geographer, b. 22 July 1964 in Vilsbiburg; married. Bundestag Member since 2013

Siegbert Droese, AfD
Hotel clerk, b. 7 June 1969 in Leipzig; married; four children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Martin Hebner, AfD
IT consultant, b. 10 Nov. 1959 in Frankfurt am Main; married; four children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Norbert Kleinwächter, AfD
Teacher, b. 22 Feb. 1986 in Augsburg; unmarried. Bundestag Member since 2017

Corinna Miazga, AfD
Employee, b. 17 May 1983 in Oldenburg; married. Bundestag Member since 2017

Claudia Tausend, SPD
Geographer, b. 22 July 1964 in Vilsbiburg; married. Bundestag Member since 2013

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Hotel clerk, b. 7 June 1969 in Leipzig; married; four children. Bundestag Member since 2017

Corinna Miazga, AfD
Employee, b. 17 May 1983 in Oldenburg; married. Bundestag Member since 2017
Professor Harald Weyel,  
AfD  
AfD spokesman on the Committee, AfD spokesman on EU affairs
Professor of business administration,  
b. 30 Aug. 1959 in Herborn, Dillkreis;  
divorced; one child.  
Bundestag Member since 2017

Gerald Ullrich,  
FDP  
Engineer,  
b. 23 Dec. 1962 in Schmalkalden;  
marrried; two children.  
Bundestag Member since 2017

Konstantin Kuhle,  
FDP  
Lawyer,  
b. 11 Feb. 1989 in Wolfenbüttel.  
Bundestag Member since 2017

Michael Georg Link,  
FDP  
FDP spokesman on the Committee  
Former Minister of State,  
b. 6 Feb. 1963 in Heilbronn;  
unmarried.  
Bundestag Member from 2005 to 2013 and since 2017

Dr Diether Dehm,  
The Left Party  
Media entrepreneur, composer, author,  
b. 3 Apr. 1950 in Frankfurt am Main;  
marrried; two children.  
Bundestag Member in 1994 and since 2005

Thomas Hacker,  
FDP  
Business administrator,  
b. 9 Oct. 1967 in Bayreuth;  
unmarried.  
Bundestag Member since 2017

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Alliance 90/The Greens
spokeswoman on the Committee
Social scientist,
b. 24 Aug. 1979
in Lörrach;
one child.
Bundestag Member
since 2013

Claudia Müller,
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Business administrator,
b. 10 Aug. 1981
in Rostock;
mixed; two children.
Bundestag Member
since 2017

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Historian,
b. 6 Feb. 1982
in Dortmund;
two children.
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since 2008

Andrej Hunko,
The Left Party
spokesman on the Committee
Media designer,
b. 29 Sep. 1963
in Munich;
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Thomas Nord,
The Left Party
Cultural studies specialist,
b. 19 Oct. 1957
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mixed; two children.
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Alliance 90/The Greens
Historian,
b. 6 Feb. 1982
in Dortmund;
two children.
Bundestag Member
since 2008
Gerhard Zickenheiner, Alliance 90/The Greens 
Architect, 
b. 1 Apr. 1961 
in Lörrach; 
marrried; two children. 
Bundestag Member 
since Jan. 2019
Information online

The Committee on European Union Affairs
www.bundestag.de/en/committees/a21

COSAC – Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union
www.cosac.eu

The European Parliament
www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en

The European Council

The Council of the European Union

The European Commission
http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm
Contact details for the Committee Secretariat

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Fax: +49 30 227-30014 or -30171
Email: europaausschuss@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