

## Specialist Information Hotline

The Specialist Information Hotline was set up in 1996 in order to expand the range of services on offer to parliamentarians. It is the central point of contact for Members, bodies and parliamentary groups of the German Bundestag who wish to commission the Research Services to produce studies or search for specialist information. The Specialist Information Hotline passes on requests for information to the appropriate units, in particular the research sections, the Library, the Parliamentary Archives, the Parliamentary Documentation Division, or the Press Documentation Division. In addition, the staff of the Specialist Information Hotline deal with requests themselves.

They do so by carrying out extensive specialist searches in databases and on the internet. In addition, they offer training courses for Members' staff on accessing information.

The Specialist Information Hotline cooperates especially closely with the research sections: documents drawn up by the Research Services that have been chosen for publication are issued by the hotline in printed form and on the intranet and internet.



[www.bundestag.de/en/documents/research\\_and\\_documentation](http://www.bundestag.de/en/documents/research_and_documentation)



Deutscher Bundestag

## The Research Services

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## The Research Services

### Service providers

Service providers for Members of the German Bundestag, a parliamentary think tank, knowledge managers – the Research Services of the Administration of the German Bundestag play all these roles. The Members of the German Bundestag need academically sound information for their work. This enables them to adequately perform their primary functions, which are to deliberate on and adopt legislation and exercise oversight over the government. To ensure that the legislative branch remains on an equal footing, the Bundestag established its own independent specialist research service in the early 1960s. Today, the Research Services are organised as a separate directorate within the External Relations, Europe and Analysis Directorate-General. The Research Services work exclusively for Parliament. All the Members

of the German Bundestag and its bodies, such as the parliamentary committees, are entitled to request information from the Research Services. Their work is guided by a number of binding principles: the appropriate presentation of material for parliamentary purposes, an interdisciplinary approach and party-political neutrality.

### Appropriate presentation for parliamentary purposes

From short briefing notes to dossiers that bring together large amounts of material, from informative overviews to in-depth studies: the range of documents the Research Services are asked to draw up is highly diverse. The approach taken is always the same: the first step is to consult the Member who has requested the information in order to clarify the specific kind of research required and agree a deadline for delivery. Every request for information

is dealt with individually – every piece of work is a tailor-made response to the individual question put. Special emphasis is placed on the appropriate presentation of the material for parliamentary purposes.

### Interdisciplinarity

It is increasingly common for parliamentarians to submit requests that do not fall within the remit of a single research section. For example, an interdisciplinary approach is indispensable when it comes to energy policy because it is important for economic, ecological and environmental-law aspects to be taken into account all at the same time, while development and research policy also sometimes need to be taken into consideration. The Research Services also work across disciplinary boundaries when they call on the technical expertise possessed by specialist

research institutions, universities or interest groups. One of the most important points of contact in the context of this kind of ‘knowledge management’ is the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD), a network of parliamentary research services. Currently all 46 member states of the Council of Europe belong to the ECPRD. They are joined by, among others, the European Parliament and the three countries with observer status at the Council of Europe: Israel, Canada and Mexico.

### Political neutrality

The work of the Research Services is characterised by its party-political neutrality. The requests that come in are dealt with in the sequence in which they arrive. Members of the German Bundestag and parliamentary bodies receive the same answer to the same enquiry. The names of those who commissioned the research always remain confidential. Prior to publication,

they are able to exclusively use the results provided by the Research Services for a period of four weeks.

### Proactive briefings

Alongside the on-demand work they are commissioned to carry out, the Research Services have expanded their proactive briefings. These involve the production of subject dossiers and background information for parliamentarians on topics that will foreseeably rise up the political agenda in the near future. The proactive briefings that are produced can be found on the German Bundestag’s intranet, and some are also posted on the internet.



[www.bundestag.de/en/documents/research\\_and\\_documentation](http://www.bundestag.de/en/documents/research_and_documentation)

The concise, informative series Topical Term in particular has become a flagship publication for the Research Services. It meets with great interest not only from parliamentarians, but also from teachers, school pupils, students and journalists.

### Knowledge managers

The Research Services Directorate consists of eight thematic research sections with around 100 staff. The Research Section on European Affairs (EU 6) within Directorate EU is available to answer enquiries on European issues. Together, the Research Sections cover the whole spectrum of political topics.



#### Research sections

**WD 1**  
History, Politics and Culture

**WD 2**  
Foreign Affairs, International Law, Economic Cooperation and Development, Defence, Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid

**WD 3**  
Constitutional Law and Public Administration

**WD 4**  
Budget and Finance

**WD 5**  
Economics, Energy and Environment

**WD 6**  
Labour and Social Affairs

**WD 7**  
Civil, Penal and Procedural Law, Media Law, Building and Urban Affairs

**WD 8**  
Health, Family, Education and Research, Life Sciences