



Deutscher Bundestag

The Defence Committee

Verteidigungsausschuss
Informationen in englischer Sprache



**New
version**
20th electoral term



“War in Europe, national and collective defence in NATO and the EU in the spotlight, a critical review of our military engagement in the Sahel, lessons to be learned from the Afghanistan mission that ended in 2021 after around 20 years, urgent decisions on major defence projects and the reform of outdated procurement structures – rarely have the tasks facing the Bundeswehr been as challenging as at the start of the current electoral term. All of this must be constructively monitored and supported by Parliament so that we can live up to our responsibility to service personnel, given the Bundeswehr’s nature as a parliamentary army.”



Dr Marie-Agnes
Strack-Zimmermann, FDP
Chairwoman of the
Defence Committee

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.

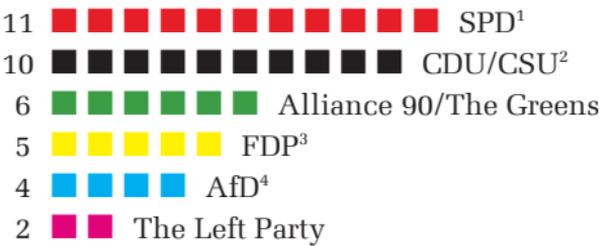
The committees discuss and deliberate on items referred to them by the plenary. They also have the right to take up issues on their own initiative, allowing them to set priorities in the parliamentary debate. When necessary, they draw on external expertise – usually by holding public hearings. At the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

The Defence Committee is a special committee in several respects: it is prescribed by the Basic Law, it always meets in closed session, and it can constitute itself as a committee of inquiry to carry out more in-depth investigations.

The Defence Committee

There are good reasons for this special role, pertaining to parliamentary oversight of the armed forces and the power that the Bundeswehr represents. Furthermore, the topics discussed by the 38 members, chaired by Dr Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann (FDP), are often highly sensitive. After all, they involve Germany's security and that of its military allies, as well as Parliament's responsibility to service personnel, given the Bundeswehr's nature as a parliamentary army.

The Defence Committee is the counterpart at parliamentary level of the Federal Ministry of Defence, the Bundeswehr and the Federal Defence Administration. In the process of democratic oversight, it plays an important role in the adoption of the defence budget and the procurement of equipment and materiel for the Bundeswehr. The Committee is closely involved when the Budget Committee discusses the budgets for the Federal Ministry of Defence and the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces – who also plays an important role in ensuring



Number of members: 38

Chairwoman: Dr Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, FDP

Deputy Chairman: Henning Otte, CDU/CSU

¹ Social Democratic Party of Germany

² Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union

³ Free Democratic Party

⁴ Alternative for Germany

parliamentary oversight. The Defence Committee's recommendations are generally heeded by the Budget Committee. Moreover, the Federal Ministry of Defence must also submit all procurement projects requiring an outlay above 25 million euros to the Defence Committee for discussion. In other words, the Bundestag and the relevant committees have a great deal of influence over the armed forces.

This is particularly true with regard to the missions abroad carried out by the German armed forces within the framework of international security policy. This issue is always on the agenda for the Defence Committee's meetings. In 1994, the Federal Constitutional Court underlined the special character of the Bundeswehr as a "parliamentary army", assigning the German Bundestag a pivotal role in approving missions abroad. Since then, all missions abroad have required parliamentary approval: in other words, the Bundestag's consent is necessary for the Bundeswehr to be deployed as envisaged by the Federal Government.



In addition to examining military and security policy issues, the Committee members also receive reports on the conditions and impacts of missions abroad. In order to gain an impression of the situation on the ground, the Committee regularly requests information from the Federal Government or sends delegations to the mission areas to ensure effective parliamentary oversight. In short, the Defence Committee is one of the most important links between the armed forces and the Bundestag.

A special right – the Defence Committee acting as a committee of inquiry

Committees of inquiry are the Bundestag's most powerful instrument of parliamentary scrutiny. They allow Members of Parliament to question witnesses, consult experts, and obtain files and documents from public bodies and private organisations. In general, a decision by Parliament is needed to establish a committee of inquiry. The Defence Committee is different: it is the only committee which has the right under the Basic Law to constitute itself as a committee of inquiry.



National and collective defence, missions abroad, equipping the Bundeswehr, and internal leadership – the Committee’s work in practice

The fact that the armed forces face major challenges in performing their duties in Germany and abroad is shown by the many topics on the Defence Committee’s agenda. The war in Ukraine has resulted in national and collective defence becoming a renewed focus for defence policy. One priority in the Committee’s work in the current electoral term will be implementing the Special Fund for the Bundeswehr, worth 100 billion euros. The money will be used for necessary investments and armament projects for the Bundeswehr. Equipping our soldiers is an important topic which the Committee examines on a regular basis.

Difficult questions often feature on the Committee’s agenda. For example: what framework is provided by German security policy? How can the Bundeswehr be an attractive employer and hold its own in the competition for qualified personnel? What equipment do the troops need so that they can successfully perform their wide-ranging tasks in Germany and abroad? How can procurement processes be



sped up and made more efficient? The role of the armed forces in society is another subject which features regularly on the Committee's agenda, as does the balance between soldiers' civil rights and military duties – a subject closely related to the concepts of “citizens in uniform” and “internal leadership”, which encapsulate the Bundeswehr's system of values.

Particularly in the case of such issues which affect society as a whole, the Committee members can build on the work of the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces. The Commissioner assists the Bundestag in exercising parliamentary oversight over the Bundeswehr, and investigates potential violations of the fundamental rights of service personnel or infringements of the principles of internal leadership. The Commissioner produces annual reports setting out her assessment of the current state of the troops, and they are regularly discussed by the Committee.



Dr Marie-Agnes
Strack-Zimmermann,
FDP
Chairwoman
Self-employed
publishing house
representative,
b. 10 Mar. 1958
in Düsseldorf.
Bundestag Member
since 2017



Henning Otte,
CDU/CSU
Deputy Chairman
Authorised legal officer,
lawyer,
b. 27 Oct. 1968 in Celle.
Bundestag Member
since 2005



Committee members

The 38 members of the Defence Committee

Wolfgang Hellmich,
SPD
Group coordinator and
policy spokesman
Executive,
b. 5 May 1958
in Welper-Meyerich.
Bundestag Member
since 2012



Florian Hahn,
CDU/CSU
Policy spokesman
Electronic marketing
specialist,
b. 14 Mar. 1974
in Munich.
Bundestag Member
since 2009



Sara Nanni,
Alliance 90/The Greens
Group coordinator and
policy spokeswoman
Peace and conflict
researcher,
b. 1987 in Datteln.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Alexander Müller,
FDP
Group coordinator and
policy spokesman
IT specialist,
b. 17 July 1969
in Bendorf am Rhein.
Bundestag Member
since 2017



Rüdiger Lucassen,
AfD
Group coordinator and
policy spokesman
Business administrator,
former colonel,
b. 19 Aug. 1951
in Dollerupholz.
Bundestag Member
since 2017



Žaklin Nastić,
The Left Party
Group coordinator
Carer,
b. 29 Jan. 1980
in Gdynia (Poland).
Bundestag Member
since 2017



Johannes Arlt,
SPD
Career soldier, political
scientist,
b. 23 Apr. 1984
in Berlin.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Falko Droßmann,
SPD
Head of borough
authority,
b. 11 Dec. 1973
in Wipperfürth.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Dr Kristian Klinck,
SPD
Academic secondary-
school teacher,
b. 19 Apr. 1979 in Kiel.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Kevin Leiser,
SPD
Teacher,
b. 3 Sep. 1993
in Crailsheim.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Jörg Nürnberger,
SPD
Lawyer,
b. 17 Apr. 1967
in Wunsiedel.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Rebecca Schamber,
SPD
Lawyer,
b. 7 Dec. 1975
in Neustadt am
Rübenberge.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Christoph Schmid,
SPD
Former mayor,
b. 8 July 1976
in Munich.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Marja-Liisa Völlers,
SPD
Teacher,
b. 28 Sep. 1984
in Bückeburg.
Bundestag Member
since 2017



Dirk Vöpel,
SPD
Self-employed
businessman,
b. 29 May 1971
in Oberhausen.
Bundestag Member
since 2013



Dr Joe Weingarten,
SPD
Public administration
specialist, former
senior civil servant,
b. 17 Mar. 1962
in Bad Kreuznach.
Bundestag Member
since 2019



Dr Reinhard Brandl,
CDU/CSU
Industrial engineer,
b. 1 Aug. 1977
in Ingolstadt.
Bundestag Member
since 2009



Dr Marlon Bröhr,
CDU/CSU
District commissioner,
b. 3 Apr. 1974
in Geilenkirchen.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



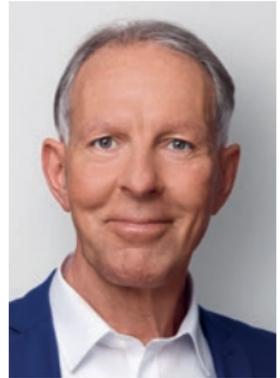
Markus Grübel,
CDU/CSU
Former notary, former
Parliamentary State
Secretary,
b. 15 Oct. 1959 in
Esslingen am Neckar.
Bundestag Member
since 2002



Serap Güler,
CDU/CSU
Civil servant,
b. 7 July 1980 in Marl.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Jens Lehmann,
CDU/CSU
Childcare worker,
b. 19 Dec. 1967
in Stolberg (Harz).
Bundestag Member
since 2017



Thomas Röwekamp,
CDU/CSU
Lawyer, notary,
b. 18 Sep. 1966
in Bremerhaven.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Armin Schwarz,
CDU/CSU
Former senior teacher,
b. 3 June 1968
in Arolsen.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Kerstin Vieregge,
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Group coordinator
Business administrator,
b. 6 Sep. 1976
in Rinteln.
Bundestag Member
since 2017



Agnieszka Brugger,
Alliance 90/The Greens
Politician,
b. 8 Feb. 1985
in Legnica (Poland).
Bundestag Member
since 2009



Philip Krämer,
Alliance 90/The Greens
Manager in the cultural
sector,
b. 29 Feb. 1992
in Frankfurt am Main.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Boris Mijatović,
Alliance 90/The Greens
Employee,
b. 4 Feb. 1974 in Kassel.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Merle Spellerberg,
Alliance 90/The Greens
Student,
b. 13 Nov. 1996
in Höxter.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Niklas Wagener,
Alliance 90/The Greens
Student,
b. 16 Apr. 1998
in Aschaffenburg.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Dr Marcus Faber,
FDP
Employee,
b. 4 Feb. 1984
in Stendal.
Bundestag Member
since 2017



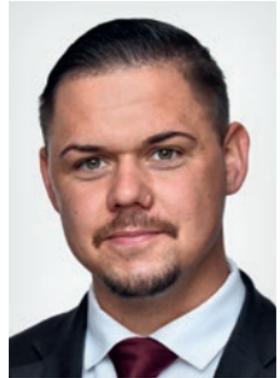
Nils Gründer,
FDP
Student,
b. 23 May 1997
in Nuremberg.
Bundestag Member
since 2022



Christian Sauter,
FDP
Industrial engineer,
b. 11 Feb. 1980
in Rinteln.
Bundestag Member
since 2017



Hannes Gnauck,
AfD
Temporary-career
volunteer,
b. 8 Aug. 1991
in Prenzlau.
Bundestag Member
since 2021



Jan R. Nolte,
AfD
Soldier,
b. 30 Dec. 1988
in Bremen.
Bundestag Member
since 2017



Gerold Otten,
AfD
Former career soldier,
former reserve colonel,
b. 7 Dec. 1955
in Lübberstedt.
Bundestag Member
since 2017



Ali Al-Dailami,
The Left Party
Policy spokesman
Restaurant specialist,
b. 27 Dec. 1981
in Sanaa (Yemen).
Bundestag Member
since 2021





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Information online

The Federal Ministry of Defence
www.bmvg.de



The Bundeswehr
www.bundeswehr.de



The Federal Foreign Office
www.auswaertiges-amt.de



The Center for International Peace Operations
www.zif-berlin.org



The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation
and Development
www.bmz.de



Website for downloading and ordering
the German Bundestag's information materials
www.btg-bestellservice.de



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The Defence Committee
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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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