



Deutscher Bundestag

## The Budget Committee

Haushaltsausschuss  
Informationen in englischer Sprache



New  
**2023**  
version  
20th electoral term



“The Budget Committee ensures that taxpayers’ money is used strategically and economically. Strong welfare systems, a well-developed infrastructure and many other federal responsibilities require stable financing. At the same time, it is important to avoid placing too great a burden on the public – especially future generations, for example in the form of new borrowing. As Chairman, it is my task to ensure that the members of the Bundestag’s Budget Committee scrutinise the government’s actions effectively and are confident in exercising Parliament’s authority over budget matters.”



Professor Helge Braun, CDU/CSU  
Chairman of the Budget 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.

No money without Parliament's consent – the Bundestag's power of the purse can be summed up by this simple phrase. The Federal Government can only take in and spend money each year if the Bundestag has given its consent to that year's Budget Act. The power of the purse is one of Parliament's oldest and most important rights, and is often described as its central prerogative.

## **The Budget Committee**

## The Budget Committee – responsible for citizens’ money

The Budget Committee plays a key role in the exercise of this power, and therefore holds a pre-eminent position among the Bundestag’s permanent committees. It prepares the plenary’s decision on the Budget Act. It also oversees the execution of the budget. It monitors whether the Federal Government is complying with the relevant regulations in its use of the funds available to it. Outside its core role, the parliamentary consideration of the draft budget, the Budget Committee also has a general right to

examine and to be involved in decision-making on laws with significant financial implications in all fields of policy. In such cases, the Committee must decide whether the planned legislation is compatible with the budget situation. If the Committee decides that it is not, and the Bundestag endorses its decision, no further deliberations can take place on the bill.

- 13 ■■■■■■■■■■■■ SPD
- 12 ■■■■■■■■■■ CDU/CSU
- 7 ■■■■■■ Alliance 90/The Greens
- 6 ■■■■■ FDP
- 5 ■■■■■ AfD
- 2 ■■■ The Left Party

Number of members: 45  
Chairman: Professor Helge Braun, CDU/CSU  
Deputy Chairwoman: Bettina Hagedorn, SPD

The “debt brake”, or limit on government debt – which was enshrined in the Basic Law in 2009 – has brought an even greater urgency to the Budget Committee’s work. Under Article 115 (2) of the Basic Law, revenues and expenditures are, in principle, to be balanced without borrowing. If it is nonetheless necessary to borrow funds, this is limited to 0.35 per cent of gross domestic product.

In cases of natural catastrophes or unusual emergency situations, the debt limit may be exceeded in the budget year in question. This requires a decision taken by a majority of the Members of the Bundestag, which must be combined with an amortisation plan. This exception was used for the 2020, 2021 and 2022 federal budgets due to the coronavirus pandemic and the effects of the war in Ukraine. With 45 members, the Budget Committee is one of the German Bundestag’s largest committees in the current electoral term. And since this is



a particularly key area in terms of Parliament's scrutiny of the government's work, the post of Chair of the Budget Committee is traditionally given to the largest opposition parliamentary group. In the current electoral term, Professor Helge Braun (CDU/CSU) has been elected Chairman of the Committee.

### **The Budget Act: from draft to adoption**

In theory, the budget process is quite simple. The Federal Government sets out what it wants to spend money on. The Bundestag examines its proposal, makes changes, and takes a decision. Then the Federal Government uses the funds to carry out its work. The Bundestag oversees this process. And the cycle repeats itself every year. In reality, the process is somewhat more complicated – after all, the federal budget involves hundreds of billions of euros and covers every area of policy,



from A for *Arbeitsmarkt* (the labour market) to Z for *Ziviler Friedensdienst* (the Civil Peace Service). But the basic principle stands. Every March, the Federal Cabinet adopts what are known as “benchmark figures”, which set binding spending limits for all the ministries. The estimated revenue and the financial plan for the coming five years are also set out at this stage. Subsequently, from March to July, the ministries establish the detailed plans for their own

budgets, then discuss them with the Federal Ministry of Finance. In late June or early July, following further intensive negotiations within the government, the Cabinet adopts the government draft of the Budget Act – to which the over 3000 pages of the budget are appended. During the “budget week” in September, the first debate on the government draft takes place in the Bundestag. This is one of the highlights of the parliamentary year. The focus then shifts to the Budget Committee. Each parliamentary group nominates a member to serve as rapporteur for each departmental budget, who goes through it with his or her colleagues, holds discussions



with the ministry's leaders, and proposes changes. The rapporteurs' proposals then form the basis for the Budget Committee's consideration of the departmental budget. The Committee votes on hundreds of motions for amendments, resulting in a collection of recommendations for a decision that are submitted to the plenary of the Bundestag, where, finally, the Budget Act and the budget receive their second and third readings and are adopted. The role of the Bundestag's plenary and the Budget Committee does not end once the budget has been adopted; they also have a say in its execution. For example, "qualified blocks" are imposed

on some budget appropriations. In this case, the Budget Committee only releases the funds if the government submits the required strategies and reports. If there is a funding shortfall in one area, the Federal Ministry of Finance can authorise excess or extra-budgetary expenditure, but the ministry concerned must make equivalent savings elsewhere. If there is an overall shortfall, a supplementary budget has to be adopted – with the Bundestag and the Budget Committee again playing a crucial role.



## **The Budget Committee's subcommittees and other bodies**

To facilitate and prepare its work, the Budget Committee has set up two subcommittees: the Auditing Committee and the Subcommittee on European Union Affairs. The Auditing Committee is composed of 19 members of the Budget Committee. Their work forms the basis for the discharge of the Federal Government by the plenary of the German Bundestag. They carefully scrutinise how the supreme federal authorities

and their executive agencies use the funds allocated to them. In doing so, they work closely with the Bundesrechnungshof, Germany's Supreme Audit Institution. The Subcommittee on European Union Affairs has 13 members. They help the Bundestag to exercise its right to participate in matters concerning the EU, enshrined in Article 23 of the Basic Law. To this end, they deliberate on the EU items referred to the



Budget Committee. In addition to these subcommittees, a number of other parliamentary bodies with special tasks are attached to the Budget Committee. There is the Confidential Committee, which scrutinises the budgets of the intelligence services, and the Federal Finance Panel, which deals with the Federation's debt management, its holdings in private-law enterprises, and with issues relating to the Financial-Market Stabilisation Fund and the Economic Stabilisation Fund. A new addition in the current electoral term is the panel

established under the Act to Finance the Bundeswehr and Establish a "Special Fund for the Bundeswehr", which monitors the armed forces' major armament projects. Finally, there is also the Panel established under the Stabilisation Mechanism Act and ESM Financing Act, which, when required, exercises the Bundestag's participatory rights in relation to the purchase of government bonds by the euro rescue fund.



Professor Helge Braun,  
CDU/CSU  
Chairman  
Former Federal  
Minister, doctor,  
adjunct professor,  
b. 18 Oct. 1972 in  
Gießen.  
Bundestag Member  
from 2002 to 2005 and  
since 2009



Bettina Hagedorn,  
SPD  
Deputy Chairwoman,  
Goldsmith, former  
Parliamentary State  
Secretary,  
b. 26 Dec. 1955 in Kiel.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2002



## Committee members

The 45 members of the Budget Committee

Dennis Rohde,  
SPD  
Parliamentary-group  
coordinator  
Lawyer,  
b. 24 June 1986 in  
Oldenburg.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2021



Florian Oßner,  
CDU/CSU  
Parliamentary-group  
coordinator  
Economist, risk  
management analyst,  
b. 5 July 1980 in  
Vilsbiburg.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2013



Dr Sebastian Schäfer,  
Alliance 90/The Greens  
Parliamentary-group  
coordinator  
Ministry official,  
b. 11 July 1979 in  
Dettelbach.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2021



Karsten Klein,  
FDP  
Parliamentary-group  
coordinator  
Business administrator,  
b. 2 Dec. 1977 in  
Aschaffenburg.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2017



Peter Boehringer,  
AfD  
Parliamentary-group  
coordinator  
Business administrator,  
business journalist and  
author,  
b. 6 Apr. 1969 in  
Schwäbisch Gmünd.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2017



Dr Gesine Löttsch,  
The Left Party  
Parliamentary-group  
coordinator  
Philologist,  
b. 7 Aug. 1961 in  
Berlin.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2002



Esther Dilcher,  
SPD  
Lawyer, notary,  
b. 18 Sep. 1965 in  
Hofgeismar.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2017



Dr Wiebke Esdar,  
SPD  
Research assistant,  
b. 11 Feb. 1984 in  
Bielefeld.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2017



Martin Gerster,  
SPD  
Parliamentary adviser  
at a Land Parliament,  
b. 30 Aug. 1971 in  
Biberach an der Riß.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2005



Metin Hakverdi,  
SPD  
Lawyer,  
b. 26 June 1969 in  
Hamburg.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2013



Frank Junge,  
SPD  
Sports teacher,  
b. 5 May 1967 in  
Halle/Saale.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2013



Kathrin Michel,  
SPD  
Team lead,  
b. 17 Apr. 1963 in  
Forst.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2021



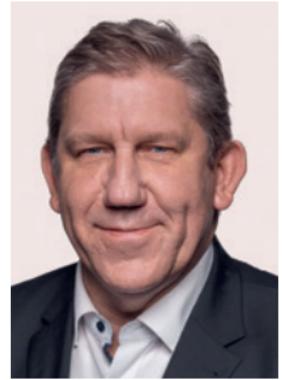
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SPD  
Employee,  
b. 24 Nov. 1979 in  
Berlin.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2021



Dr Thorsten Rudolph,  
SPD  
Civil servant,  
b. 15 Mar. 1975 in  
Koblenz.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2021



Andreas Schwarz,  
SPD  
Business administrator,  
former mayor,  
b. 3 Mar. 1965 in  
Berleburg.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2013



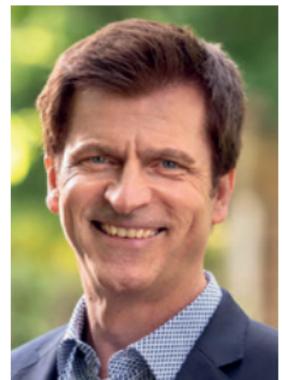
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SPD  
Senior PR adviser,  
b. 26 Aug. 1976 in  
Oldenburg.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2013



Michael Thews,  
SPD  
Chemical engineer,  
b. 6 Sep. 1964 in  
Bremerhaven.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2013



Dr André Berghegger,  
CDU/CSU  
Lawyer, former mayor,  
b. 5 July 1972 in  
Osnabrück.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2013



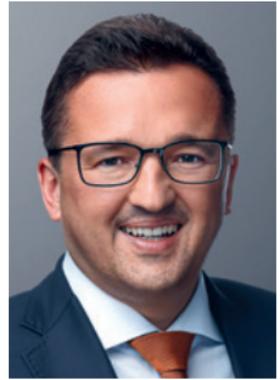
Ingo Gädechens,  
CDU/CSU  
Former career soldier,  
b. 30 July 1960 in  
Lübeck.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2009



Christian Haase,  
CDU/CSU  
Member of the Bun-  
destag,  
b. 6 May 1966 in  
Höxter.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2013



Carsten Körber,  
CDU/CSU  
Business administrator,  
b. 11 June 1979 in  
Zwickau.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2021



Dr Silke Launert,  
CDU/CSU  
Regional Court judge,  
b. 27 Dec. 1976 in  
Stadtsteinach.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2013



Paul Lehrieder,  
CDU/CSU  
Lawyer, former mayor,  
b. 20 Nov. 1959 in  
Ochsenfurt.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2005



Andreas Mattfeldt,  
CDU/CSU  
Industrial clerk, mayor,  
b. 28 Sep. 1969 in  
Verden/Aller.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2009



Kerstin Radomski,  
CDU/CSU  
Teacher,  
b. 1 Nov. 1974 in  
Krefeld-Hüls.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2013



Josef Rief,  
CDU/CSU  
Farmer,  
b. 13 Apr. 1960 in  
Illertissen.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2009



Markus Uhl,  
CDU/CSU  
Business administrator,  
b. 31 Oct. 1979 in  
Cologne.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2017



Felix Banaszak,  
Alliance 90/The Greens  
Social and  
cultural anthropologist,  
b. 24 Oct. 1989 in  
Duisburg.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2021



Bruno Hönel,  
Alliance 90/The Greens  
Psychologist,  
b. 1 Apr. 1996 in  
Dresden.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2021



Sven-Christian Kindler,  
Alliance 90/The Greens  
Business administrator,  
b. 14 Feb. 1985 in  
Hanover.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2009



Markus Kurth,  
Alliance 90/The Greens  
Political scientist,  
b. 14 Apr. 1966 in  
Beuel.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2002



Dr Paula Piechotta,  
Alliance 90/The Greens  
Doctor,  
b. 19 Sep. 1986 in Gera.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2021



Jamila Schäfer,  
Alliance 90/The Greens  
Student,  
b. 30 Apr. 1993 in  
Munich.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2021



Otto Fricke,  
FDP  
Lawyer,  
b. 21 Nov. 1965 in  
Krefeld.  
Bundestag Member  
from 2002 to 2013 and  
since 2017



Torsten Herbst,  
FDP  
Business administrator,  
b. 23 Aug. 1973 in  
Dresden.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2017



Dr Thorsten Lieb,  
FDP  
Lawyer,  
b. 3 Jan. 1973 in Bad  
Kreuznach.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2021



Claudia Raffelhüschen,  
FDP  
Economist,  
b. 7 Nov. 1968 in  
Cologne.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2021



Frank Schäffler,  
FDP  
Business administrator,  
b. 22 Dec. 1968 in  
Schwäbisch Gmünd.  
Bundestag Member  
from 2005 to 2013 and  
since 2017



Marcus Bühl,  
AfD  
IT specialist,  
b. 29 Apr. 1977 in  
Ilmenau.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2017



Dr Michael Ependiller,  
AfD  
Mathematician,  
b. 5 May 1989 in  
Leonberg.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2017



Ulrike Schielke-Ziesing,  
AfD  
Public-sector employee,  
b. 17 June 1969 in  
Neubrandenburg.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2017



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AfD  
IT consultant and  
specialist,  
b. 20 Oct. 1964 in  
Munich.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2017



Victor Perli,  
The Left Party  
Political scientist,  
b. 1 Feb. 1982 in Bad  
Oeynhausen.  
Bundestag Member  
since 2017



Deutscher Bundestag  
18. Wahlperiode

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[www.bundestag.de/en/committees/a08](http://www.bundestag.de/en/committees/a08)



*The Federal Ministry of Finance*

[www.bundesfinanzministerium.de](http://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de)



*The Bundesrechnungshof (Germany's Supreme Audit Institution)*

[www.bundesrechnungshof.de](http://www.bundesrechnungshof.de)



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

[www.btg-bestellservice.de](http://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](http://www.bundestag.de/en/committees)



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