



Deutscher Bundestag

The European Affairs Directorate

Divisions of the European Affairs Directorate (PE)

Secretariat of the Committee
on the Affairs of the European Union (PE 1)

Fundamental EU Issues,
Economic and Monetary Union Issues (PE 2)

Analysis, Prioritisation
and Advice on EU Affairs (PE 3)

EU Liaison Office (PE 4)

European Affairs Documentation (PE 5)

European Affairs Research Section (PE 6)

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How does the German Bundestag participate in European affairs?

From waste disposal, to rules for financial services and companies, to consumer protection – our daily lives are being influenced and governed more and more by the laws and decisions of the European Union (EU). European cooperation is essential, as many challenges can only be dealt with if the Member States work together. The Bundestag plays an important role in this context, because Article 23 of the Basic Law, the German constitution, enshrines the principle that it participates in EU affairs. Parliament's notification and participatory rights require the Federal Government to notify the Bundestag comprehensively, continuously and as early as possible about all matters concerning the EU. The Bundestag's primary means of influencing European policy-making is via the Federal Government, which, together with the governments of the other Member States, acts as legislator in the Council of the European Union; the Federal Government is required to take opinions delivered by the German Parliament into account in its negotiations in Brussels. In special cases, such as matters which touch on the Bundestag's overall budgetary responsibility and its responsibility for integration, the Federal Government can only act with the Bundestag's prior consent.

In the framework of the political dialogue or a consultation, the Bundestag can also deliver opinions directly to the European Commission. In addition, direct information-sharing and dialogue about European initiatives is facilitated by visits by European Commissioners and Members of the European Parliament to the Bundestag's bodies, as well as by Members and Bundestag committees visiting the EU institutions. Interparliamentary meetings and conferences are held on selected topics. The European Treaties also enshrine the principle that the national parliaments monitor compliance with the principle of subsidiarity and examine whether the EU is entitled to propose specific legal regulations or whether this power is reserved for the Member States in the case in question.

How does the European Affairs Directorate function?

The European Affairs Directorate in the Administration of the German Bundestag supports all Members, committees and parliamentary groups in the parliamentary deliberations on EU affairs.

The staff of the European Affairs Directorate assess important EU initiatives and analyse their potential impact on the Federal Republic of Germany. They research the timetables for the EU institutions' deliberations and the state of discussions on legislative proposals, enabling the Bundestag to exercise its participatory rights from an early stage. Parliamentarians also receive expert reports on questions of European law and on the application of Parliament's participatory rights in EU affairs.

In addition, the Directorate ensures that Members have access to all EU documents transmitted to the Bundestag and all notification documents provided by the Federal Government in EuDoX, the Bundestag's internal information system, and monitors whether the Federal Government is complying with its notification requirements. The Secretariat of the Committee on the Affairs of the European Union provides organisational and specialist support in this context. The Liaison Office gives the Bundestag its own presence in Brussels. The Office informs Parliament at an early stage about planned EU initiatives and forthcoming decisions, and supports Members and committees as they engage in dialogue and share information with the EU institutions and the national parliaments of the other Member States.

