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The Bavarian State Parliament's Committees



Many citizens associate the term “Bavarian State Parliament“ with the image of a plenary session in a plenary chamber. However, the standing committees that are appointed for the duration of the electoral term are just as important to the parliamentary work. Each of the currently 14 standing committees is responsible for one area of politics that its members specialise in. They advise on bills and motions and submit recommendations for a resolution. As a result, the committees prepare the content for the plenary session's meetings and decisions.

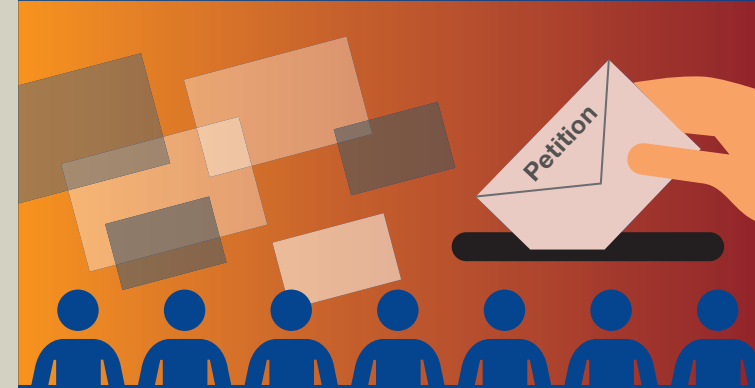
The committees can request the presence of any member of the state government at their meetings. State government members and their officers have access to committee meetings and must be heard at any time. The committees also deal with petitions and complaints from citizens and take a final vote on these.

All of the Bavarian State Parliament's parliamentary groups are represented on the committees, which have 14, 18 or 21 members depending on their field. At the same time, the political majorities on the committee must correspond to those in the Bavarian State Parliament's plenary. The committee chairmanships are also distributed across the parliamentary groups based on relative strength. The parliamentary groups then decide internally which member of Parliament they delegate to a committee and who should take over the chairmanship or vice chairmanship, as necessary. The committees generally hold public meetings.

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Committee on Petitions and Complaints



Bayerischer Landtag

The Committee on Petitions and Complaints



Chairwoman: Gülseren Demirel (GRU) (right)
Vice Chairman: Dr. Harald Schwartz (CSU)

Duties

The Committee on Petitions and Complaints is one of fourteen permanent committees of the Bavarian State Parliament. Fourteen members of Parliament in total belong to the committee, also referred to as the Petitions Committee: six CSU members, three members from FREIE WÄHLER (FW), two members each from AfD and ALLIANCE 90/ THE GREENS (GRU) and one SPD member.

The committee has existed in its current form since the start of the first electoral term in 1946. The origins of the right of petition, which is anchored both in the Constitution of the Free State of Bavaria (Art. 115 BV) and in German Constitutional Law (Art. 17 GG), go back much further though to ancient times when there was already the possibility of appealing to the rulers with requests and complaints. Today the Bavarian State Parliament offers citizens this opportunity.

The committee deals almost exclusively with petitions. It only advises on motions and bills if they affect the right of petition. The Committee on Petitions and Complaints was assigned roughly 30% of the 10,000 petitions submitted to the Bavarian State Parliament in the 18th electoral term. Other specialised committees deal with the other petitions. Its work focuses, among other things, on petitions to do with building and housing matters, personal status issues, education and training grants and school travel costs, legal issues concerning foreigners as well as petitions for clemency or complaints from penal institutions and district hospitals. When dealing with petitions for building permits, it is decided to carry out an on-site inspection in many cases where the responsible committee members try to find a solution together with the petitioners and public authority representatives on site.

As part of its right to scrutinise the state government, the committee examines any official contested decisions and obtains written statements from the responsible ministries. Its aim is to find solutions to the problems presented by the petitioner within what is legally possible outside the formal legal process. The committee is a contact point for petitioners while also helping Members of Parliament to recognise their constituents' pressing issues.

Meetings

The meetings always take place on Wednesdays during sitting weeks. They are convened and chaired by the chairwoman. Besides the committee members and head of the committee office, state government representatives responsible for the specific agenda items also attend.

With important political issues, responsible members of the government are also present. The Bavarian State Parliament's shorthand writers' service documents the meetings.