



The 7th Saxon State Parliament

Everything you need to know



Sächsischer Landtag

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Foreword by the President of the State Parliament

“ALL STATE AUTHORITY IS DERIVED FROM THE PEOPLE.”

Saxon Constitution,
Article 3(1)



Dear Reader,

I am glad that you are interested in the Saxon State Parliament. This information booklet will tell you all you need to know about the Saxon State Parliament and its composition in the 7th legislative term.

“All state authority is derived from the people.” This statement from the Saxon Constitution reminds us that parliamentary democracy, and Saxony as a constitutional state, were restored thanks to the peaceful revolution of 1989. It also reminds us that parliamentary democracy allows the greatest amount of freedom, but is also the most difficult form of government. It depends on the active involvement of its citizens.

A prerequisite for this involvement is knowledge about the workings of democratic organisations and institutions. This short guide provides you with an overview of the

composition and functions of the Saxon State Parliament. As you read, you will learn all about the work of the Parliament, and about how its members formulate policy for Saxony.

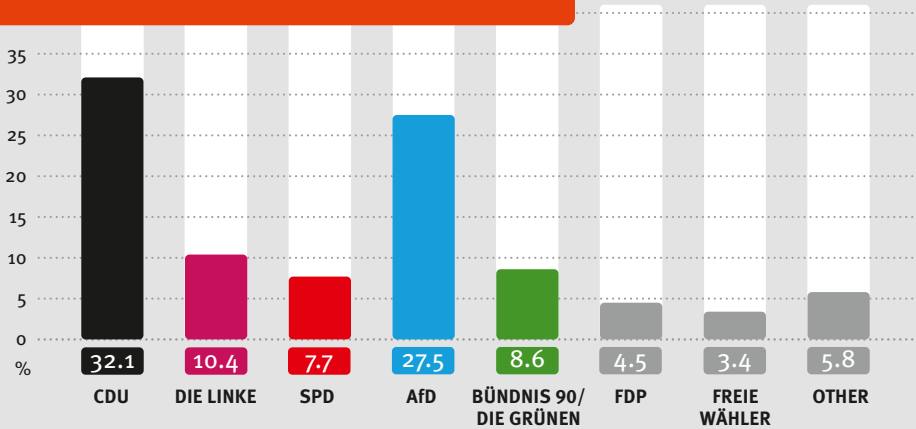
I hope this booklet will help improve your understanding of the Saxon State Parliament. But do get involved as well! Our state needs civic engagement and society needs everyone to participate. This booklet also sets out what opportunities there are for participating in politics and submitting petitions, and explains citizen lawmaking.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthias Röbler". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr. Matthias Röbler

President of the Saxon State Parliament

Who sits in the State Parliament?



The election of the 7th Saxon State Parliament

The Saxon State Parliament is the only constitutional body in the Free State of Saxony that is directly elected by the people. Members of the State Parliament are elected by secret ballot in direct, free elections on the basis of universal and equal suffrage. Elections to the Saxon State Parliament are held every five years. Since the restoration of the Free State, there have been seven elections to the State Parliament.

On 1 September 2019, almost 3.3 million Saxons were asked to elect a new State Parliament. Two thirds of those eligible to vote (66.5%) took the opportunity to have a say in the composition of the 7th Saxon State Parliament. This was the highest voter turnout since 1990.

Five parties were elected to the State Parliament: the CDU, the AfD, DIE LINKE, BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN and the SPD.

Who is allowed to vote?

All German citizens whose main residence is in Saxony and who are aged 18 or over on polling day are entitled (with a few exceptions) to participate in elections to the Saxon State Parliament and cast their vote.

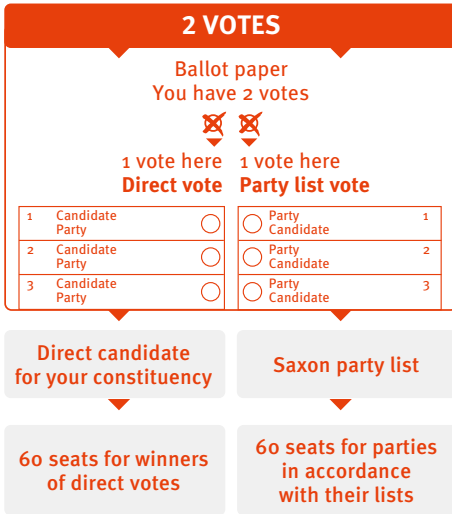
Why vote?

Parliamentary elections are a key aspect of political participation in every democracy. By casting their vote, citizens play an active role in the political decision-making process and determine the political composition of the Parliament. Take advantage of the opportunity to shape the political development of the Free State of Saxony.

Chart: final official result according to the Saxon state returning officer (as at 13/09/2019), order of parties based on their showing in the 2014 election



How does the election work?



Voters have two votes:

✗ **Direct vote** to elect a constituency representative: half of the members are directly elected by the 60 constituencies. The candidate receiving the most direct votes in a constituency is elected to the Saxon State Parliament.

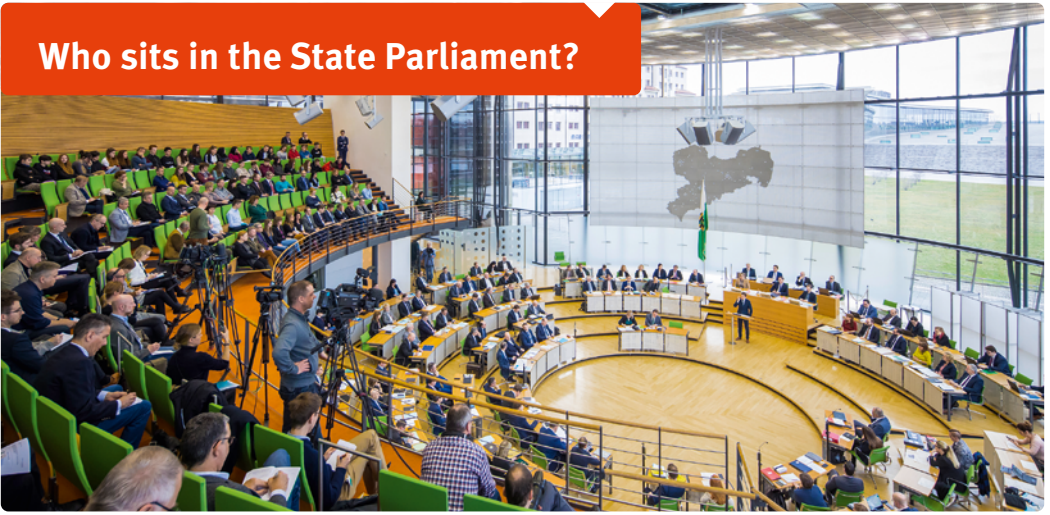
✗ **List vote** to elect party list representatives. The other half are elected on the basis of state lists, which are drawn up by the parties in advance. The list votes have the greatest influence on the distribution of seats, since these are used to calculate the proportional composition of the State Parliament.

Only parties receiving at least 5% of the votes cast ('5 per cent clause') or winning directly elected seats in at least two constituencies ('alternative clause') are considered when seats are allocated.

Distribution of seats in the 7th Saxon State Parliament

2019		CDU	AfD	DIE LINKE	BÜNDNISGRÜNE	SPD
Seats from ...	Total					
Direct votes	60	41	15	1	3	0
List votes	59	4	23	13	9	10
Total	119	45	38	14	12	10

Who sits in the State Parliament?



Composition of the Parliament

The Saxon State Parliament is on principle made up of 120 members. Since one of the seats obtained by the AfD could not be allocated, the 7th Saxon State Parliament consists of 119 members instead of 120.

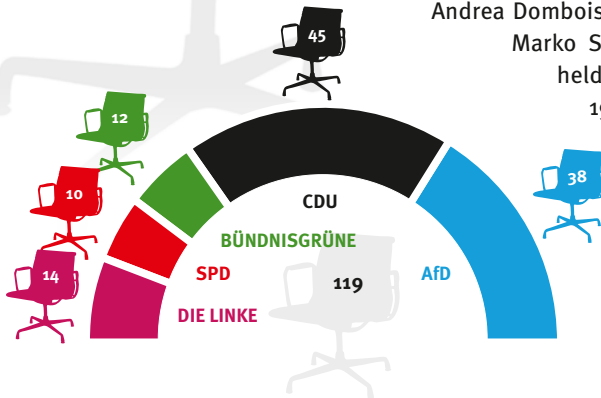
The 119 members of the State Parliament are divided into five parliamentary party groupings. Seats are allocated to the parties based on the number of list votes they obtain in the state election.

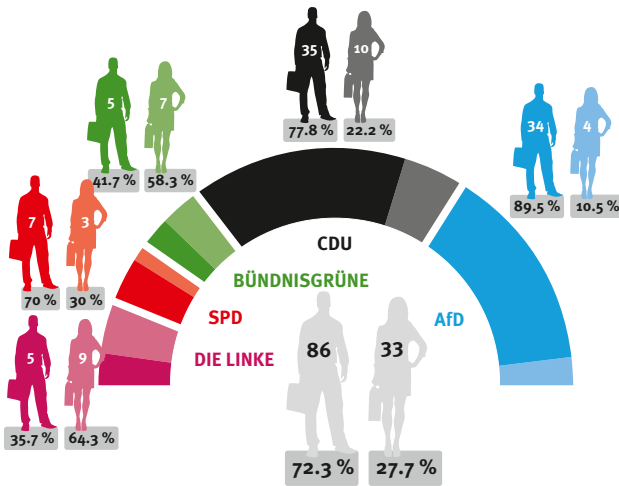
Allocation of seats

The CDU constitutes the largest parliamentary group, with 32.1% of the party list votes and 45 seats, followed by the AfD with 38 seats (27.5%). DIE LINKE won 14 seats (10.4%), and BÜNDNISGRÜNE 12 seats (8.6%). The SPD is the smallest parliamentary group with 10 seats (7.7%).

Three of the 119 members of the State Parliament have been members from the very beginning:

Andrea Dombois, Dr. Matthias Rößler and Marko Schiemann (all CDU) have held parliamentary seats since 1990. By contrast, 50 newcomers have won seats in the State Parliament for the first time.



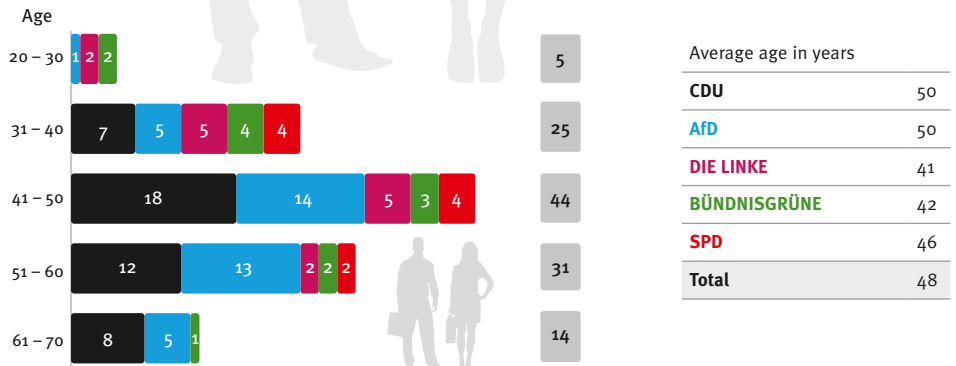


Gender distribution

The gender distribution in the State Parliament is 33 women to 86 men. Women thus make up 27.7% of members. There are significant differences between the parliamentary party groups. In the DIE LINKE group, women are in the majority, at 64.3%. In the BÜNDNISGRÜNE group, women account for 58.3% of members. In the SPD and CDU Parliamentary Groups, women are in the minority at 30% and 22.2% respectively. The AfD Parliamentary Group also has a minority of women, at 10.5%.

Age distribution

The average age of members of the State Parliament is 48, with the greatest number coming from the 41 to 50 age group. At 69, Svend-Gunnar Kirmes (CDU) is the oldest member of the State Parliament. 22-year-old Lucie Hammecke (BÜNDNISGRÜNE) is the Parliament's youngest member.



(As at: 01.02.2020)





How is the State Parliament organised?



The President and Vice Presidents

The President of the State Parliament is the highest-ranking representative of the State Parliament. The President represents the State Parliament to the outside world, and is therefore the face and voice of the Parliament. He or she performs his/her duties in a non-partisan and just manner.

The President and his or her deputies, the Vice Presidents, are elected by the State Parliament at the beginning of each legislative term. Since 2009, the office of President has been held by Dr. Matthias Rößler. He is supported by three Vice Presidents.

Duties

THE PRESIDENT

- ▶ convenes and leads sessions of the State Parliament, ensuring that the Rules of Procedure are adhered to. He is assisted during each session by two recording clerks.
- ▶ protects the reputation and laws of the State Parliament,
- ▶ controls who can enter the State Parliament building and exercises police powers there,
- ▶ manages the financial affairs of the State Parliament in accordance with the Budget Act,
- ▶ is responsible for the State Parliament's official communications, e.g. with the State Government.



President of the Saxon State Parliament
Dr. Matthias Rößler, CDU



First Vice President
Andrea Dombois, CDU



Second Vice President
André Wendt, AfD



Third Vice President
Luise Neuhaus-Wartenberg,
DIE LINKE



The Presidium

The Presidium is the State Parliament's central coordinating and steering body. It assists the President with management of parliamentary business and administration of the State Parliament.

The Presidium usually meets on the Wednesday of the week before plenary week.

The Presidium has 21 members.

Duties

THE PRESIDIUM

- ▶ draws up the schedule for plenary sessions, which sets out the days on which plenary sessions will take place, for example.
- ▶ sets the agenda for plenary sessions and agrees the allocation of speaking time in the plenum,
- ▶ controls the distribution of rooms in the State Parliament building,
- ▶ establishes preliminary estimates for the State Parliament's budget,
- ▶ determines procedures for appointing and removing State Parliament officials.

PRESIDENT OF THE STATE PARLIAMENT

First Vice President

Second Vice President

Third Vice President

5 Parliamentary party group chairs

12 other members of parliament

How is the State Parliament organised?



The Parliamentary Party Groups

Parliamentary party groups play a key role in the day-to-day activities of the Parliament. They play a key role in political decision-making and have considerable influence on the work of the Parliament. This is why they are often referred to as the ‘parties in parliament’.

Formation of a parliamentary party group in the State Parliament requires a minimum of six members of the same party. There are five parliamentary party groups in the 7th Saxon State Parliament: the CDU Parliamentary Group (45 seats), the AfD Parliamentary Group (38 seats), the DIE LINKE Parliamentary Group (14 seats), the BÜNDNISGRÜNE Parliamentary Group (12 seats) and the SPD Parliamentary Group (10 seats).

These are headed by the chairs of the parliamentary party groups, who set policy guidelines and represent their parliamentary party group to the public. The activities of parliamentary party groups are regulated by parliamentary secretaries. Groups also come to agreements amongst themselves, for exam-

Duties

THE PARLIAMENTARY PARTY GROUPS

- ▶ contribute to political decision-making,
- ▶ can introduce bills and motions in the State Parliament,
- ▶ try to work towards shared political interests and objectives,
- ▶ can form coalitions, i.e. cooperate with each other in order to form a majority government or work in opposition to the government,
- ▶ determine the course of debate in the plenum by deciding who will speak on behalf of the parliamentary party group and how they will respond to parliamentary initiatives proposed by the other parliamentary party groups and the State Government,
- ▶ contribute to decisions on appointments to various roles by bringing forward proposals, for example, on who to elect as President and Vice Presidents.

ple, on approaches to parliamentary debates and ensuring that their own parliamentary party group holds the line prior to critical votes.



Chair of the Parliamentary Party Group
Christian Hartmann



Parliamentary Secretary
Sören Voigt



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Parliamentary Secretary
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How is the State Parliament organised?



The Working Groups

Not all members of a parliamentary party group can have detailed knowledge of every political issue. The parliamentary party groups therefore form working groups to deal with different policy areas.

Working groups bring together the expertise of specialist members of parliamentary party groups to address specific issues. This ensures that parliamentary party group experts are well prepared for standing committee meetings and plenary sessions. However, their decisions must always be approved by the entire parliamentary party group.

The number of working groups a parliamentary party group has is closely linked to its size. The greater the number of members within a parliamentary party group, the likelier it is that it will be able to form separate working groups for individual policy areas.

Duties

THE WORKING GROUPS

- ▶ prepare positions on specific issues for their parliamentary party groups,
- ▶ formulate political positions on their areas of work,
- ▶ evaluate issues within their specific field,
- ▶ prepare for committee meetings in terms of content and strategy,
- ▶ prepare plenary session agenda items that fall within their area of work,
- ▶ keep in touch with organisations and interest groups within their area of responsibility.

Working groups and their chairpersons

CDU:

Constitutional and Legal Affairs, Democracy, Europe and Equal Opportunities
Martin Modschiedler

Budget and Finance
Georg-Ludwig von Breitenbuch

Schools and Education
Holger Gasse

Business, Employment and Transport
Jan Hippold

Energy, Climate Change, Environment and Agriculture
Andreas Heinz

Domestic Policy and Sport
Rico Anton

Social Welfare and Community Cohesion
Alexander Dierks

Science, Higher Education, Media, Culture and Tourism
Oliver Fritzsche

Regional Development
Ronny Wähner

Petitions
Stephan Hösl

Rules of Procedure and Immunity Matters
Dr. Christiane Schenderlein

1st Investigation Committee
Svend-Gunnar Kirmes

AfD:

Constitutional and Legal Affairs, Democracy, Europe and Equal Opportunities
Alexander Wiesner



Domestic Policy and Sport
Lars Kuppi

Social Welfare and Community Cohesion
Doreen Schwietzer

Education and Science
Dr. Rolf Weigand

Budget, Finance and Regional Development
André Barth

Agriculture, Energy, Environment and Conservation
Jörg Dornau

Business, Employment and Transport
Mario Beger

Media, Culture and Tourism
Thomas Kirste

**DIE LINKE:
Democratic Society**
Kerstin Köditz

Sustainable Development
Marco Böhme

Public Services
Franz Sodann

**BÜNDNISGRÜNE:
Business, Transport and Social Welfare**
Kathleen Kuhfuß

Domestic Policy, Legal Affairs and Democracy
Lucie Hammecke

Education, Science and Culture
Dr. Claudia Maicher

Environment, Agriculture, Regional Development and Finance
Dr. Daniel Gerber

**SPD:
Employment, Regional Development, Finance, Domestic Policy**
Henning Homann

Social Welfare, Education, Science, Justice
Hanka Kliese

How is the State Parliament organised?



The Committees

The State Parliament forms committees for the duration of each legislative term. These cover all of the policy fields for which the state legislature is responsible. Politicians with special expertise from all parliamentary party groups sit on the committees and provide thorough and detailed advice on individual political issues.

Committees can be

- ▶ **standing committees**
(select committees, other standing committees) or
- ▶ **temporary committees**
(investigation committees, committees of inquiry)

Parliamentary party groups are represented on committees in proportion to their number of seats in the State Parliament. The number of committee chairpersons drawn from each group also reflects the group's strength in the State Parliament.

Duties

THE COMMITTEES

- ▶ act as preparatory bodies, making recommendations to the State Parliament on submissions referred to them (e. g. bills, motions),
- ▶ provide specialist and political input to prepare issues for decision in the plenum,
- ▶ can hold public hearings with experts (select committees),
- ▶ have the right of initiative in relation to other issues within their area of competency,
- ▶ can put questions to the State Government.

The standing committees and their chairpersons



Committee for Domestic Policy and Sport
Ronald Pohle (CDU)



Budget and Finance Committee
Holger Hentschel (AfD)



Committee for Science, Higher Education, Media, Culture and Tourism
Dr. Claudia Maicher (BÜNDNISGRÜNE)



Committee for Regional Development
André Barth (AfD)



Committee for Schools and Education
Christopher Hahn (AfD)



Committee for Energy, Climate Change, Environment and Agriculture
Ines Springer (CDU)



Committee for Constitutional and Legal Affairs, Democracy, Europe and Equal Opportunities
Marko Schiemann (CDU)



Committee for Business, Employment and Transport
Ines Saborowski (CDU)



Committee for Social Welfare and Community Cohesion
Susanne Schaper (DIE LINKE)

Investigation committees

The State Parliament is able to form temporary committees, including, in particular, investigation committees. According to the Constitution of the Free State of Saxony, a motion by one fifth of the members of the State Parliament is required to set up an investigation committee. This key minority right is exercised primarily by the opposition to investigate potential political or administrative malpractice or possible misconduct on the part of politicians.

Other standing committees

Appraisal Committee

Committee for Rules of Procedure and Immunity Matters

Roland Walter Hermann Ulbrich (AfD)

Petitions Committee

Simone Lang (SPD)

Election Scrutiny Committee

Martin Modschiedler (CDU)



1st Investigation Committee

“Involvement of the State Government in the wilfully unlawful reduction of the AfD state list”

Lars Rohwer (CDU)

How is the State Parliament organised?



Plenum

The plenum is the plenary assembly of all the members of the State Parliament. All members generally meet for two days each month in the plenary chamber of the Saxon State Parliament in Dresden. No plenary sessions are held when Parliament is not sitting (e.g. summer recess).

Proceedings

Plenary sessions generally begin at 10 am and run until the evening, or sometimes even into the night. Plenary sessions are public and are led by the President of the State Parliament or one of his deputies.

Media representatives, citizens and registered visitor groups may observe sessions from the gallery. Interjections such as heckling or applause are not permitted. The State Parliament live-streams plenary sessions on its website.

Duties

THE MEMBERS OF THE STATE PARLIAMENT IN THE PLENUM

- ▶ debate current issues,
- ▶ vote on bills and motions, elect representatives to a range of bodies and offices (e.g. President of the State Parliament, Prime Minister),
- ▶ put questions to members of the State Government,
- ▶ bring forward their arguments publicly.

The order of events is set out in the agenda, which is agreed in advance. Parliamentary party groups may not exceed their agreed speaking time.

Votes are signalled by a gong that can be heard throughout the Parliament building. The purpose of this is to ensure that members are present in the plenary chamber in time to vote.

Significance

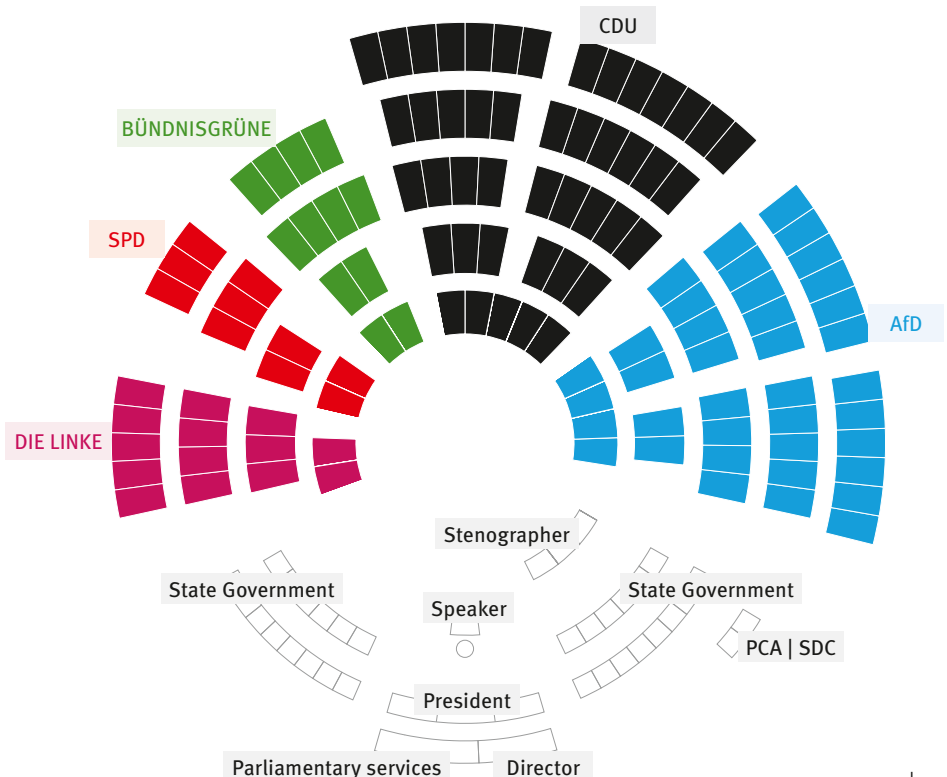
Members are familiar from prior discussion with the submissions that are debated and voted on in the plenum. The working groups, parliamentary party groups and standing committees give members the opportunity to work intensively on submissions in advance and to exchange views.

The main purpose of the plenary sessions is therefore to publicly document and track the political decision-making process. It is here that the decisions prepared in the bodies, parliamentary party groups and committees are tracked and formally voted on. All parliamentary party groups also have the opportunity to present their political points of view to the general public.

Seating arrangements

Members of the State Parliament have their own personal seats and sit together in their parliamentary party group. The chair of the parliamentary party group and parliamentary secretary usually sit in the first row. To the right and left of the president of the session are the government benches, where the Prime Minister and his/her cabinet members sit during plenary sessions.

The plenary chamber also includes seats for stenographers, who transcribe all of the speeches and any interjections, producing a verbatim record. Further seats are provided for the President of the Court of Auditors (PCA) and the Saxon Data Protection Commissioner (SDC).



How is the State Parliament organised?



The members of the State Parliament

The members of the State Parliament are representatives of the people, elected to their seats by the citizens of Saxony. As parliamentarians, they represent the entire population of the state of Saxony. At present, the Saxon State Parliament has 119 members. They have the designation 'MdL' ('Mitglied des Landtags', meaning 'member of the State Parliament').

Elections

Representatives are elected to the State Parliament every five years by secret ballot in free and direct elections on the basis of universal and equal suffrage. They gain their seat either by winning their own constituency (direct seat) or as a result of their position on their party's state list (list seat), which the parties draw up before the state elections.

Anyone wishing to stand as a candidate for election to the State Parliament must be aged 18 or over and have been resident in Saxony for at least 12 months (main residence). The aim of this is to ensure that prospective candidates have a good knowledge of the region and its people before they stand for election.



Representatives are elected to the Parliament by the voters (Wähler)



Rights

Members are bound only by their own conscience in the exercise of their office, not by instructions or orders.

However, in practice, members often have to observe party discipline. This means that the parliamentary party group comes to an



agreement prior to important votes on how all of its members will vote.



Members of the State Parliament have immunity. They are thus exempt from criminal prosecution for the duration of their term of office. This even applies to statements they make in the State Parliament after their term of office has concluded. They also have the right to refuse to give evidence to investigatory authorities and courts.

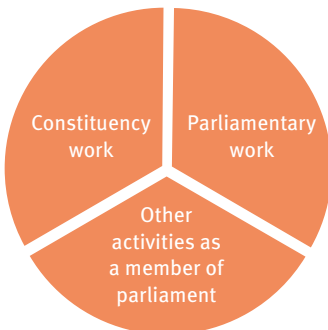
How is the State Parliament organised?



The members of the State Parliament

Parliamentary work

At the seat of the State Parliament in Dresden, members focus primarily on parliamentary work. They take part in a wide range of consultations (plenary sessions, committee meetings, parliamentary group consultations, working group meetings), which also require preparatory and follow-up work, for example preparing speeches, reading written opinions and taking part in detailed discussions with colleagues.



Duties

MEMBERS OF THE STATE PARLIAMENT

- ▶ have a wide range of duties to perform. They function as important links between the citizens of Saxony and the decisions taken in the State Parliament, and play a key role in policy delivery.

Constituency work

In addition, members are key points of contact for citizens, businesses and associations across Saxony and in their constituencies. Most members have an office in their constituency (called a 'Bürgerbüro'), where they hold regular surgeries and discuss issues with local people. This enables them to make citizens' voices heard in the State Parliament and to explain Parliamentary debates and decisions to their constituents.



PLENARY CYCLE

In order to enable members to perform their diverse duties effectively, the meetings calendar sets out a structure with a different work focus for each individual week. The calendar distinguishes between plenary weeks, committee weeks, parliamentary party group weeks and constituency weeks, which rotate on a regular basis.



Other activities as a member of parliament

Members of parliament have other responsibilities as part of their role, for instance within the parliamentary group or party, dealing with correspondence, travelling on behalf of the State Parliament, attending events and conferences, talking to media representatives, and other public engagements.

REMUNERATION | SALARIES

Members of the State Parliament are entitled to a level of remuneration that will ensure they are appropriately independent (salary). This comprises a basic salary (€5,943.50 as at 1 August 2019) and a tax-exempt flat rate for expenses (€3,330.60 to €4,354.75 as at 1 April 2020). The flat rate for expenses varies depending on the distance between a member's primary residence and the seat of the State Parliament in Dresden. It covers, for example, constituency work, the costs of travelling to the State Parliament, and rent for the member's constituency office.





Seating arrangements in the plenum

SDC | PCA

Director |

State Government

State Government

Recording clerk |

Stenographer



Saxon Data Protection Commissioner (SDC)
President of the Saxon Court of Auditors (PCA)

Parliamentary services

State Government

President | Recording clerk

State Government

Speaker



Sächsischer Landtag

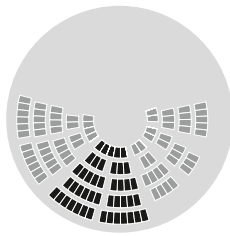


The CDU Parliamentary Group in the Saxon State Parliament

With 45 members, the CDU Parliamentary Group is the largest parliamentary party group in the State Parliament. The CDU has been the strongest parliamentary party group in the State Parliament since 1990, and has formed part of every government.

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Sören Voigt



Georg-Ludwig
v. Breitenbuch



Jan
Löffler



Christian
Hartmann



Dr. Stephan
Meyer



an
old



Holger
Gasse



Martin
Modschiedler



Geert
Mackenroth



Andrea
Dombois



Dr. Matthias
Rößler



ohan
sl



Ronny
Wähler



Oliver
Fritzsche



Alexander
Dierks



Rico
Anton



Andreas
Heinz



ric
ich



Lars
Rohrer



Ronald
Pohle



Ines
Springer



Ines
Saborowski



Marko
Schiemann



Kay
Ritter



Patricia
Wissel



Wolf-Dietrich
Rost



Peter Wilhelm
Patt



Gerald
Otto



Andreas
Nowak



Kerstin
Nicolaus



Aloysius
Mikwauschk



Susan
Leithoff

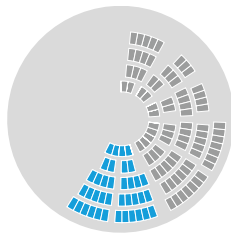


The AfD Parliamentary Group in the Saxon State Parliament

The AfD Parliamentary Group consists of 38 members. The AfD first entered the Saxon State Parliament in 2014. It is the largest opposition parliamentary party group in this legislative session.



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André Wendt



Dr. Rolf Weigand



Dr. Joachim Michael Keiler



Carsten Hütter



Ivo Teichmann



Thomas Thumm



Torsten Gahler



Hans-Jürgen Zickler



René Hein



Jörg Dornau



Thomas Kirste



Dietmar Frank Schaufel



Gudrun Petzold



Martina Jost



Ulrich Willi Lupart



André Barth



Romy Penz



Lars Kuppi



Dr. Volker Dringenberg



Wolfram Keil



Christopher Hahn



Alexander Wiesner

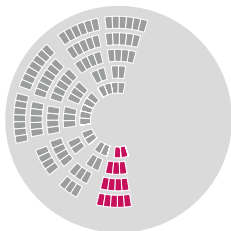


The DIE LINKE Parliamentary Group in the Saxon State Parliament

The DIE LINKE Parliamentary Group consists of 14 members. The DIE LINKE party has had representatives in the Saxon State Parliament since 1990. The parliamentary party group has always been in opposition.

DIE LINKE.
Fraktion im Sächsischen Landtag

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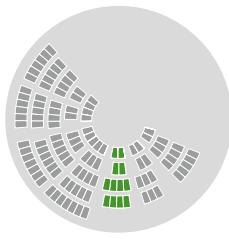


The BÜNDNISGRÜNE Parliamentary Group in the Saxon State Parliament

The BÜNDNISGRÜNE Parliamentary Group entered the Saxon State Parliament with 12 members. BÜNDNISGRÜNE was represented in the 1st Saxon State Parliament, and has had representatives in every legislative session since 2004. They joined the governing coalition, for the first time, in 2019.



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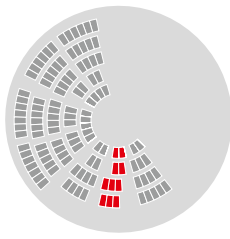


The SPD Parliamentary Group in the Saxon State Parliament

With 10 members, the SPD is the smallest parliamentary party group in the State Parliament. The SPD has sent representatives to every State Parliament since 1990, and has formed part of several governing coalitions, including since 2019 with the CDU and BÜNDNISGRÜNE.



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Holger
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Richter



Volkmar
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Simone
Lang



Martin
Dulig

What does the State Parliament do?



Passing laws

The Saxon State Parliament decides on all legislation that falls within the jurisdiction of the Free State of Saxony. This includes, for example, schools and education, police law and the right to assembly, culture, media policy, and local government.

Budget

The members of the State Parliament adopt the state budget, which sets out the revenue and expenditure of the Free State of Saxony for a two-year period. A ban on new borrowing is laid down by the Saxon Constitution. This means that if more is invested in one area, savings must be made in another.

Exceptions may be made to this ban in the event of natural disasters or in emergency circumstances (see Coronavirus Pandemic 2020).



Procedure

Bills can be introduced in the Parliament by members, parliamentary party groups, the State Government or citizens. Before a law is passed, it must go through several legislative stages. The politicians on the relevant standing committee undertake intensive deliberations on the bill and any proposed amendments before finally presenting a recommendation to Parliament.



Electing representatives

Not only do the members of the Saxon State Parliament elect their own representatives, such as the President and Vice Presidents, they also elect individuals to a large number of other posts.

Prime Minister

One of the most prominent appointments is that of the Prime Minister. The State Parliament elects the Prime Minister through a majority vote in a secret ballot of its members, without debate. The Prime Minister appoints and dismisses State Ministers and State Secretaries, as well as his or her own deputy. The State Government's legitimacy is thus derived solely from the State Parliament.

Saxon Constitutional Court

The State Parliament elects the members of the Saxon Constitutional Court for a term of nine years each, on the basis of a two-thirds majority of its members. The Constitutional Court is a constitutional body with equal

status to the State Parliament and State Government. Its responsibilities include deciding how to interpret the Saxon Constitution in disputes between constitutional bodies, and on the compatibility of state laws with the Constitution.

The State Parliament also elects the President of the Saxon Court of Auditors and the State Commissioners (the Saxon Commissioner for Foreigners' Affairs, Saxon Commissioner for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship, and Saxon Data Protection Commissioner).



What does the State Parliament do?



Scrutinising the State Government

The Saxon State Parliament scrutinises the work of the State Government. This scrutiny is a key element of the parliamentary system of government. Traditionally, public scrutiny is conducted primarily by opposition parliamentary party groups. The State Government is required to answer to the State Parliament. A diverse range of instruments and procedures is available to the members of the State Parliament as part of this process, for example:

Minor interpellations

Minor interpellations are the most commonly used instrument. All members of the State Parliament can put questions to the State Government in written form. These questions must – with a few exceptions – be answered. Besides providing information to members, they also serve as a means of scrutinising the work of the State Government. During the 6th legislative term, this form of scrutiny was used over 15,000 times. Minor interpellations are most frequently used by members of the opposition.

Questions to the State Government

Members have the opportunity during each plenary week to question a member of the State Government in Parliament. The questioning takes place on the second day of each plenary week after the Current Affairs hour. A time slot of 45 minutes is allotted for this. The Prime Minister is questioned at least once a year.

Investigation committees

Investigation committees are a special type of parliamentary scrutiny. They are set up on the basis of a motion from one fifth of the members of the State Parliament to investigate specific matters whose clarification is in the public interest, including in particular malpractice. During the 2nd plenary session of the 7th Saxon State Parliament, the 1st investigation committee, entitled “Involvement of the State Government in the ‘wilfully unlawful’ reduction of the AfD state list”, was set up on 30 October 2019.



Articulating opinions

Another important function of the State Parliament is to act as a public political forum for the Free State of Saxony. The aim is to give expression to as wide a range of opinions as possible here so as to contribute to the political decision-making process. The views of the citizens of Saxony should also be voiced in the Saxon State Parliament.

Visitors' gallery/Lobby

Citizens, pre notified visitor groups and media representatives can observe plenary sessions from the visitors' gallery. The gallery accommodates up to 150 people. Those in the visitors' gallery are forbidden from expressing views whether positive or negative, and from applauding. The State Parliament can vote by a two-thirds majority to exclude the public in specific cases.

The lobby in front of the plenary chamber serves as a meeting point for members of parliament, members of the State Government and journalists for discussions and interviews.

Plenary session broadcasts

If you do not have time to visit the State Parliament, you can keep up to date on the latest political disputes, or follow plenary session broadcasts, in the media.

- ▶ **Web:** The State Parliament live-streams all plenary sessions on its website.
- ▶ **Audio:** Follow plenary sessions via live audio stream on MDR SACHSEN EXTRA (DAB+).
- ▶ **Local television:** Sachsen Fernsehen broadcasts Current Affairs hours (part of the plenary sessions) in its programming on the afternoon of the relevant plenary session.

Videos of all plenary sessions from the current and previous legislative terms are available on the State Parliament's website. You can also search here for speeches by individual members of parliament.

How can people participate?



Submitting petitions

The right of petition is a valuable asset and a fundamental democratic right, which is exercised frequently by Saxon citizens. The Saxon State Parliament Petitions Committee examines citizens' requests and complaints and attempts to provide solutions.

You can bring your problems and concerns to the Petitions Committee regardless of whether the issue in question affects only one person or is supported by thousands of people.

ARTICLE 35 OF THE SAXON CONSTITUTION

“Every person has the right to address requests and complaints in writing to the competent authorities and to the Parliament individually or in association with others. They also have the right to receive a reasoned response within a reasonable period of time.”

Petitions Committee

With 28 members, the Petitions Committee is the largest committee in the State Parliament. This highlights the level of priority that the Parliament attaches to citizens' concerns. The committee can, for example, request opinions from the State Government, hold hearings with petitioners or experts, examine records and undertake on-site visits.

Petitions provide valuable input to the work of the members of the State Parliament because they

- ▶ convey the concerns and hardships that people are facing,
- ▶ reveal gaps in legislation or regulations, and
- ▶ reflect people's views on current political issues.

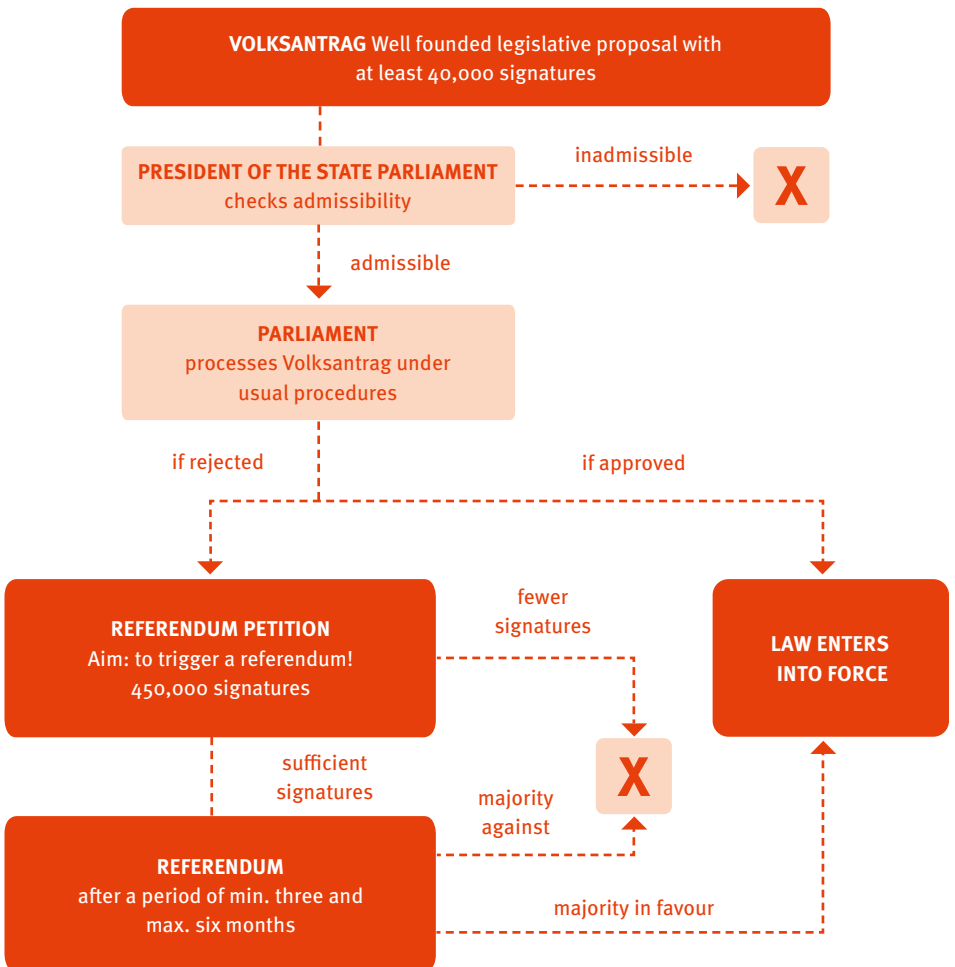
Petitions can be submitted easily direct to the Parliament in writing, or via an online petition.

Introducing bills

Citizens of Saxony can introduce bills to Parliament directly by means of a Volksantrag or 'people's motion'. This motion must be signed by at least 40,000 individuals who are eligible to vote, and must include a well founded legislative proposal. The procedure is set out in the Saxon Constitution, the

Rules of Procedure of the State Parliament, and in a specific statute.

If a Volksantrag is not accepted in the plenum, it may still be passed by means of a referendum petition and a referendum.



How can people participate?



Getting informed

Democracy thrives on the participation of its citizens. Make the most of your opportunities to shape your immediate environment, as well as political developments in Saxony. It is important to remember, however, that participation requires knowledge and information. So it is important that you keep up to date with current issues in the region's politics.

The Saxon State Parliament provides lots of resources with information on current regional issues and parliamentary processes.

Publications

The Parliament provides many publications, which you can order free of charge or read online on the website.

Landtagskurier

The Landtagskurier parliamentary magazine reports regularly on parliamentary debates and explains important laws. It also provides valuable background information on the

work of the Saxon State Parliament, and insights into the everyday work of members, and informs readers about upcoming events.

People's Handbook

Who are the people who sit in the State Parliament? Find out by taking a look at the 7th Saxon State Parliament People's Handbook, which contains biographies and photographs of all 119 members. It also provides information on the composition of the Parliament.



ORDER PUBLICATIONS/ SUBSCRIBE TO LANDTAGSKURIER

Tel. +49 (0)351 493-5133
publikation@slt.sachsen.de
www.landtag.sachsen.de



Visiting the State Parliament

You are welcome to visit the State Parliament in Dresden, talk to members, or take a seat in the plenary chamber.

Guided tour

A guided tour provides fascinating insights into the work and role of the Parliament, and also includes many historical and architectural details. A longer stop at the heart of the Parliament building – the plenary chamber – is the highlight of the visit.

Talk to members

Visitors can request an additional 60-minute session following the tour with members of the State Parliament, who will be happy to answer questions.

Open tours

Once a month, the State Parliament offers open tours for individual visitors (pre booking not required). These usually take place on the first Friday of the month at 4 pm. You will find upcoming dates on the website www.landtag.sachsen.de/en

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Tel. +49 (0)351 493-5132
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Digital Parliament

Social media

The Saxon State Parliament is active on the social media platforms YouTube, Twitter and Instagram, where citizens can get quick information on the latest news and developments. These platforms are also used to announce events and to showcase the work of the Parliament, for example through explanatory videos.



YouTube
 Sächsischer Landtag



Instagram
 sachsen_landtag



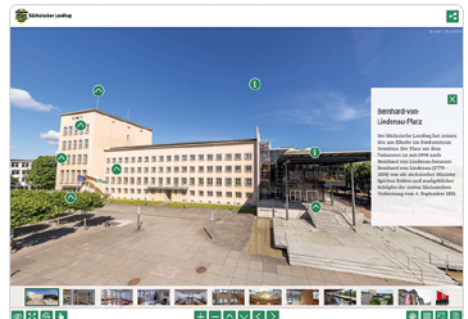
Twitter
 @sax_lt

Website

The State Parliament website keeps citizens informed about the Saxon State Parliament and the politics of the Free State of Saxony. www.landtag.sachsen.de/en

Virtual tour

Take a virtual tour of the Parliament, with a unique opportunity to climb up to the roof of the Parliament building. Discover 13 locations through interactive 360° panoramic views. www.landtag.sachsen.de/rundgang



How can people participate?



Taking a look inside the Parliament

Open day

Each year on 3 October, the State Parliament opens its doors and invites citizens to take a look behind the scenes. The programme gives visitors a special insight into Saxony's democracy and the work of the members of the State Parliament.

Traditionally, the President of the State Parliament Dr. Matthias Rößler gets the open

day under way at 2 pm. Visitors have the opportunity to meet some of the members of the State Parliament in person and to find out about the work of the parliamentary party groups.

Exhibition in the Citizens' Foyer

The exhibition "The Saxons' Parliament" has information boards, reading nooks and photo corners to help visitors to find out more about the Parliament. Interactive terminals give citizens the opportunity to actively engage with the exhibition.

VISIT THE EXHIBITION

Saxon State Parliament
Bernhard-von-Lindenau-Platz 1
New building entrance (Elbe side)
01067 Dresden

Opening hours:
Monday to Friday, 9 am – 6 pm





Events for schools

Youth Debate Forum

School pupils from years 8 to 12 from Brandenburg, Thuringia and Saxony put their debate skills to the test by attempting to impress a renowned jury with their arguments and delivery.

The event is divided into three parts.

The pupils prepare speeches on selected subjects before the start of the event, focusing on issues such as climate change and migration. Next, the participants discuss current political topics in groups, with five minutes allotted to discuss a particular issue and make notes. In the final stage, the pupils deliver a speech in the plenary chamber in front of the jury and audience.

The speeches given by the young participants are evaluated by a jury, whose members include representatives from radio, print media and educational institutions.

Junior Doctor

This activity centres on the drafting of laws. However, this time it is not the members of parliament themselves who are called upon, but school pupils. In small groups, pupils from years 6 to 8 try to find arguments for and against the bill assigned to them. At the same time, they busily work on their speeches.

Then in the Parliament they engage in a simulated plenary session and have lively debate – supported by “real” members of parliament – on the bills in relation to a specific theme. Junior Doctor is a talent development programme provided by the city of Dresden.



Saxony in Europe

Citizens of Saxony are affected by many of the key decisions taken by the European Union, both directly and indirectly. It is therefore important that Saxony represents its interests to the European Union.

As a result of the transfer of wide-ranging legal jurisdiction for economic and monetary policy, foreign and security policy, and domestic and legal policy, the European Union has a profound impact on Germany's constitutional system. The federal and state governments work together to promote the principle of European integration, which was incorporated into the German constitution by means of Article 23 in 1992.

The Saxon State Parliament and the European Union

“The Union shall respect the equality of Member States before the Treaties as well as their national identities, inherent in their fundamental structures, political and constitutional, inclusive of regional and local self-

government.” (Article 4(2) of the Treaty on European Union, first sentence)

With the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon of the European Union in 2009, explicit reference is made, for the first time, to regions and municipalities. From this time on, the Union has been obliged by Community law to respect the equality of Member States before the Treaties as well as their national identities. This also includes regional and local self-government. The Free State of Saxony therefore has the right to participate in the shaping of EU policy in order to ensure its interests are represented in Brussels. The Saxon State Parliament is thus responsible for mediating this process on behalf of the citizens of the Free State of Saxony.



Subsidiarity

The Saxon State Parliament takes advantage of various opportunities for participation in order to play an active role in the process of European integration. Subsidiarity is an important concept in this context. According to the principle of subsidiarity, tasks that can be performed at a lower level of government should not be performed at a higher level, unless the lower level is dependent on the assistance of the higher level in certain areas. Thus, under the principle of subsidiarity, the Free State of Saxony actively takes advantage of the available opportunities for participation whilst being an integral part of the supranational system of the EU.

Cross-border cooperation

The Free State of Saxony advocates continuing European integration, as expressed in Article 12 of the Saxon Constitution. The Saxon State Parliament actively supports the strengthening of the EU in relation to the areas of competence assigned to it. It should also be emphasised that the state of Saxony

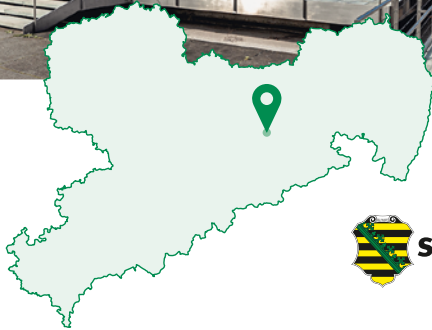
is committed to maintaining good relations with its neighbouring regions in Poland and the Czech Republic, with whom it shares a border of over 500 km. The Saxon State Parliament therefore also strives to cultivate and deepen its existing relationships with its neighbours.

State Parliament liaison office in Brussels

The establishment of a liaison office in Brussels has enabled the Saxon State Parliament to take a further step towards strengthening its European connections. The office provides the Parliament with information on European policy issues which may be of relevance to policy at state level.



State Parliament contact details



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Sächsischer Landtag

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PUBLICATIONS

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STATE PARLIAMENT SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS



YouTube
Sächsischer Landtag



Instagram
sachsen_landtag



Twitter
@sax_lt

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SPD	Tel. +49 (0)351 493-5700

CITIZENS' FOYER IN NEW BUILDING

Free entry for visitors to
“The Saxons’ Parliament” exhibition
Opening hours:
Monday to Friday from 10 am to 6 pm

CHIAVERI – public restaurant

in the Saxon State Parliament
Opening hours:
Mondays to Saturdays
(Sundays on public holidays only)
11 am to 11 pm
Tel. +49 (0)351 496-0399
www.chiaveri.de

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