

20 SEPTEMBER 2026



Elections to the Berlin House of Representatives
and the District Assemblies

BERLIN VOTES:
MY CITY.
MY VOICE.

Berliner Landeszentrale
für politische Bildung

BERLIN



WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

How can we support the local economy?

How do we want to think about inclusion?

What kind of cultural life does Berlin need?

Will a playground be built in my neighbourhood?

Will there be a cycle lane in my street?

How do we want to live together in a diverse Berlin?

How can we do more to protect the climate?

What can make our city safer?

Will new homes be built on the empty plot next to the park?

How can housing in Berlin become (more) affordable?

What kind of schools do we want in future?

What should mobility in Berlin look like in future?

These are the kinds of issues at stake in the elections on 20 September 2026.
So: Make sure you vote!



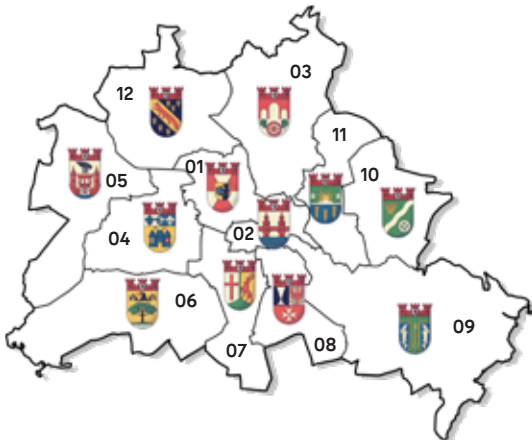
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WHAT'S BEING ELECTED ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2026?

ELECTION SUNDAY

Every five years, people in Berlin elect a new House of Representatives and new District Assemblies. Members of Parliament and district representatives are elected on the same day by eligible voters across Berlin. Elections are always held on a Sunday.



ONE CITY - 12 DISTRICTS

- 1 Mitte
- 2 Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg
- 3 Pankow
- 4 Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf
- 5 Spandau
- 6 Steglitz-Zehlendorf
- 7 Tempelhof-Schöneberg
- 8 Neukölln
- 9 Treptow-Köpenick
- 10 Marzahn-Hellersdorf
- 11 Lichtenberg
- 12 Reinickendorf

DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES

Berlin is divided into 12 districts, each with its own District Assembly, known as a Bezirksverordnetenversammlung or BVV. Together with the District Office, the BVV is responsible for local self-government in the district. Many of the issues that shape everyday life and quality of life in Berlin's neighbourhoods are discussed and decided here.

THE BERLIN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Berlin is what is known as a city-state: both a city and one of Germany's 16 federal states. The House of Representatives is Berlin's parliament - the legislative body elected by the people of Berlin. Its members decide on issues affecting Berlin as a federal state and the city as a whole.



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You can find the BVV for each district here:



Visiting the House of Representatives

The House of Representatives meets in the building of the former Prussian State Parliament in central Berlin, at Niederkirchnerstraße 5. Visitors can attend exhibitions, guided tours and events there, and - with prior registration - also plenary sittings and committee meetings. More information about visiting in person:



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DEMOCRACY AT DISTRICT LEVEL - THE BVV

Playgrounds, public order services, pedestrian crossings, nurseries, development plans, citizens' services, parks and green spaces, youth activities, cycle lanes, public health services, investment planning, school buildings, district museums, youth welfare services, local libraries, district budgets, neighbourhood clubs, street renaming, tenant advice services, adult education centres, football cages, music schools, urban development funding, parking management, municipal galleries, public sports facilities, remembrance culture, the design of public spaces, the purchase and sale of district holdings, business support, student budgeting projects, and more...

The District Mayor and 5 District Councillors

VOTE

The BVV = 55 elected district representatives

3% electoral threshold

YOU HAVE

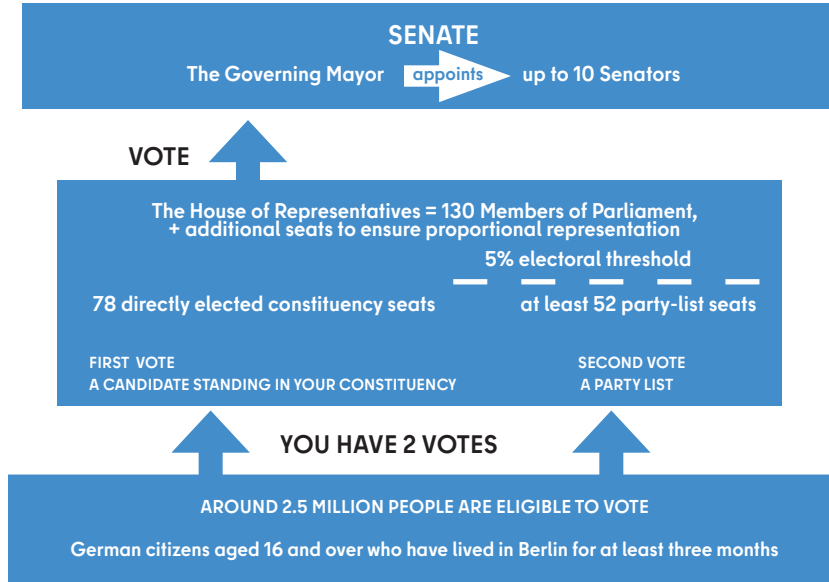
1 VOTE

AROUND 2.75 MILLION PEOPLE ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE

German citizens and citizens of all EU Member States aged 16 and over who have lived in Berlin for at least three months (including around 55,000 16- and 17-year-olds and around 250,000 people from other EU countries)

DEMOCRACY ACROSS BERLIN - THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Schools, the underground, rent controls, state theatres, trams, policing, school structures, heat protection, transport networks, major bridges, economic development, teachers, BVG public transport, property transfer tax, state museums, Berlin city cleaning services (BSR), courts, social housing, the Kulturforum, Tempelhof Field, accommodation for refugees, solar-energy funding, prisons, the Berlin minimum wage, climate targets, tax offices, film funding, public transport fares, opera houses, hospitals, restrictions on misuse of housing, Berlin public swimming facilities, civil protection, and more...



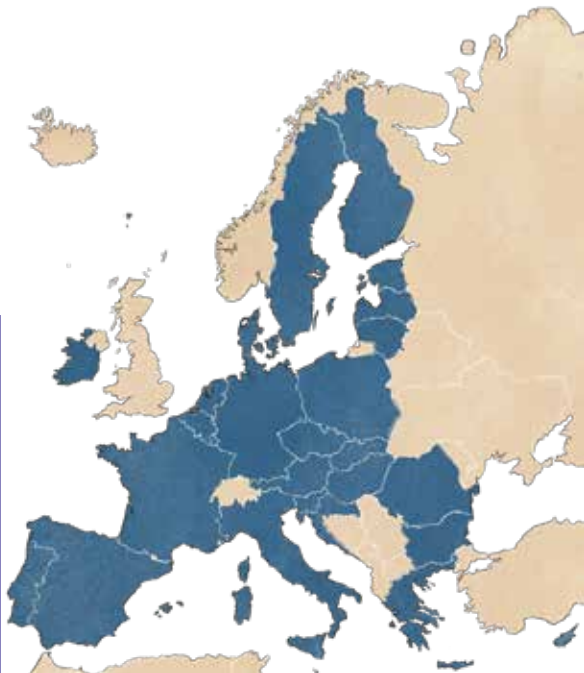
WHO CAN VOTE?

YOU CAN VOTE IN THE BVV ELECTIONS IF, ON ELECTION DAY, YOU:

- are a German citizen or a citizen of another European Union (EU) Member State;
- are at least 16 years old;
- have had your main residence in Berlin for at least three months or normally live in Berlin.

THE 27 EU MEMBER STATES:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.



YOU CAN VOTE IN ELECTIONS TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IF, ON ELECTION DAY, YOU

- are a German citizen;
- are at least 16 years old;
- have had your main residence in Berlin for at least three months or normally live in Berlin.

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NEW: VOTING FROM THE AGE OF 16 IN BOTH ELECTIONS!

For the first time, 16- and 17-year-olds will also be allowed to vote in elections to the Berlin House of Representatives. Previously, this was only possible in BVV elections.

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Anyone who's entitled to vote - known as active voting rights - and is at least 18 years old may also stand as a candidate for the House of Representatives or for the BVV in their district - known as passive voting rights.

GENERAL, DIRECT, FREE, EQUAL AND SECRET

Elections are democratic when they are held regularly and follow certain basic principles:

General:

Everyone who is eligible to vote may take part. No one may be excluded for social, economic, religious or political reasons.

Direct:

Representatives are elected directly by the voters.

Free:

Voters decide freely and without pressure who they want to vote for.

Equal:

Every vote carries the same weight.

Secret:

No one should be able to see how another person votes. That's why polling booths are used.

VOTING RIGHTS: PAST AND PRESENT



1848

First parliamentary elections in Germany; only men with a certain income are allowed to vote.

Women are allowed to vote for the first time.

1919

1933-1945

National Socialism: no free elections; women are largely excluded from political office.



1949

FRG

All German women and men aged 21 and over are entitled to vote and may stand for election from the age of 25.

GDR

GDR: elections are not free; voters can only vote for a single unity list.

1950

Voting from the age of 18. All GDR citizens aged 21 and over may stand for election.

Voting from the age of 18 (eligible for election from age 21).

1972

1974

The minimum age for standing for election is lowered to 18.

VOTING RIGHTS: PAST AND PRESENT



In democratic elections, the people affected by political decisions should be allowed to vote. In practice, however, there are restrictions. Many people in Berlin are not allowed to vote because, for example, they are either too young or do not hold a German or EU passport. The question of who should be allowed to vote continues to be debated, and the path towards today's voting rights was the result of a long political struggle.



Passive voting rights: the minimum age for standing for election is lowered from 21 to 18.

In European and local elections, citizens of other EU Member States are also allowed to vote.

European elections.

1975

1994

2024

1990

1990

voting from the age of 16 →
2006 2026

March 1990:
last election to the People's Chamber – the first election in the GDR held according to democratic principles.

December 1990:
first election to the House of Representatives in reunified Berlin.

BVV elections

Elections to the Berlin House of Representatives.

GOT QUESTIONS?

I turn 16 on 20 September - can I already vote?

Yes - and congratulations!

I'm from another EU country. Do I need to register to vote?

No. All EU citizens registered as having their main residence in Berlin who meet the voting requirements are automatically entered in their district's electoral register and will receive a polling notification.

Why can citizens of other EU countries vote in BVV elections, but not in elections to the House of Representatives?

Under Germany's Basic Law, only German citizens may vote in state parliament or Bundestag elections. Citizens of other EU countries may vote only in European and local elections.



I don't have a German or EU passport, but I've lived in Berlin for a long time or was born here. Can I vote?

No - at the moment, that's not possible. To change this, Germany's Basic Law would have to be amended with a two-thirds majority in both the Bundestag and the Bundesrat. Under certain conditions, migrants who have lived in Germany for many years can apply for German citizenship, which would also give them the right to vote.

I don't currently have a permanent address. Can I still vote?

Yes. Eligible voters without a permanent address or official registration can still vote if they are at least 16 years old and have been staying in Berlin for at least three months. To do this, they must register in the electoral register at their district electoral office by 28 August 2026 at the latest, or submit a written application by 30 August 2026. It's free - it just takes a little time.

Why can I vote at 16, but only stand for election at 18?

Many people believe that elected representatives should be legal adults with full legal capacity.



HOW DOES VOTING WORK?

In BVV elections, each voter has one vote. In elections to the House of Representatives, each voter has two votes.

1 VOTE FOR THE BVV

In BVV elections, political parties and voter groups can stand with district-wide candidate lists in which the order of candidates has already been decided.

Each eligible voter has 1 vote, which they can use to vote for the list of a political party or voter group.

Voter group

A voter group represents specific interests – often local political issues – without being a political party.

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ELIGIBLE VOTERS MAY MARK ONE CROSS.

Stimmzettel
für die Wahl zur Bezirksverordnetenversammlung

Bitte einmal
so ankreuzen
und nach unten
zusammenfalten

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

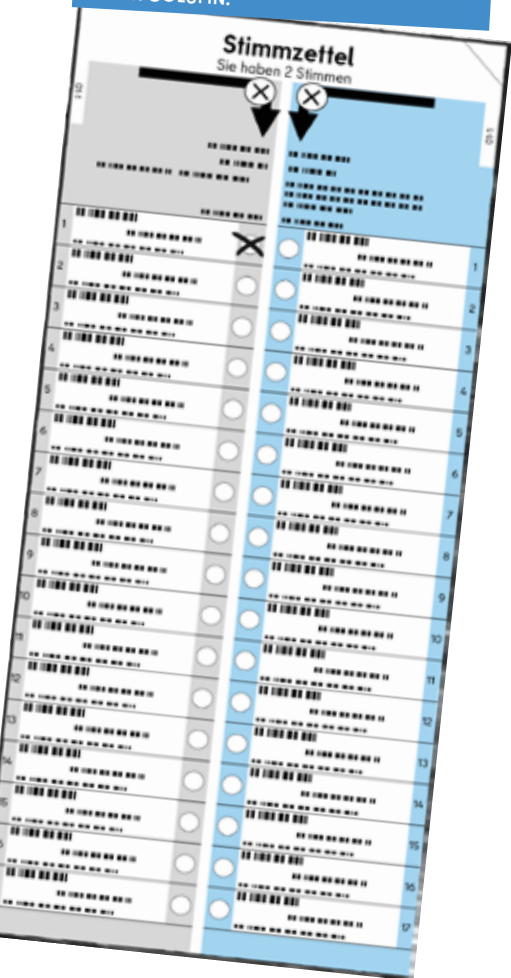
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9

10

11

ELIGIBLE VOTERS MAY PLACE A CROSS IN EACH COLUMN.



2 VOTES FOR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

In elections to the House of Representatives:

- individual candidates, including independent candidates, can stand in constituencies

AND

- political parties can stand with district-wide or Berlin-wide candidate lists in which the order of candidates has already been decided.

Each eligible voter has 2 votes:

- a first vote for a candidate standing in their constituency;
- a second vote for a district-wide or Berlin-wide party list.

The person you choose with your first vote does not have to belong to the same party you choose with your second vote.

THERE ARE DIFFERENT WAYS TO VOTE

- 10-30 August 2026 - receive your polling notification
- Apply for a postal vote and receive your postal voting documents

It's best to return completed postal voting documents as early as possible by post.

Completed postal voting documents (the red postal ballot envelope) must arrive at the responsible district electoral office - listed on the red envelope - by 6 pm on election day, 20 September 2026, in order to be counted.

You can also vote at your district's postal voting centre - remember to bring your passport or identity card.

- Or wait until election day and vote at your polling station on 20 September 2026.

Wahlbenachrichtigung

Wahltag: Sonntag, der 20. September 2026
Wahlzeit: 8 bis 18 Uhr

Personalausweis: AAF6320221

PERSONAL AUSWEIS

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HOW DOES VOTING AT THE POLLING STATION WORK?

- Make sure you bring your identity card or passport with you.
- Go to the correct polling station (shown on your polling notification or on the State Election Director's website).
- Polling stations are run by volunteer election workers. They check whether your name is on the electoral register and give you your ballot paper or papers.
- Voting is secret and takes place in a polling booth. Afterwards, fold your ballot paper and place it in the ballot box.

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CAN SOMEONE GO INTO THE POLLING BOOTH WITH ME?

As a general rule, only one person may enter a polling booth at a time. Voting secrecy is meant to protect people from pressure or intimidation when casting their vote. Only people with disabilities or reading and writing difficulties may receive assistance from another person when completing their ballot paper - including inside the polling booth.



DON'T WORRY. EVERY VOTE COUNTS!

I already have plans at the seaside on 20 September!

No problem: just apply for a postal vote in good time. Your polling card explains exactly how to do this.

I've lost my polling card!

That's not a problem. Just make sure you bring your identity card or passport to the polling station. You'll need it anyway.

I just want to sleep in on Sunday!

Polling stations are open from 8 am to 6 pm on 20 September. If you'd rather stay in bed longer, you can apply for a postal vote and vote in advance.

"Polling station"? No idea where mine is!

You can find it here from 10 August onwards: www.berlin.de/wahlen

I have no idea who to vote for!

From around 24 August, you can try the Wahl-O-Mat for the House of Representatives election to find out which party best matches your views and what the parties stand for: www.wahl-o-mat.de.

Find out more:
Read party manifestos online, follow the media, attend events, speak to candidates at information stands and pick up leaflets - that way you can learn who is standing for election and what political goals they support.

My party won't win anyway!

You can't know that before the election. And in a democracy, a strong opposition is important too.



Great! Then I'll post online who I voted for!

Friends, acquaintances and even strangers are welcome to know how you voted. But please don't take selfies inside the polling booth or photos of your ballot paper – that isn't allowed inside the polling station.

YOUR VOTE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

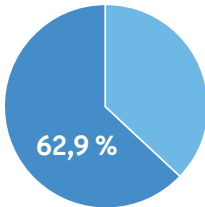
Two out of three eligible voters in Berlin used their vote in the last elections.



TURNOUT IN THE 2023 AND 2016 ELECTIONS

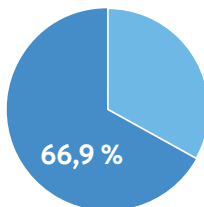
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

Eligible voters
2.431.776



● voter turnout
2023

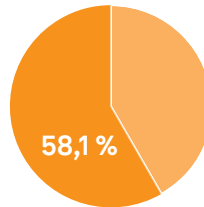
Eligible voters
2.485.379



● voter turnout
2016

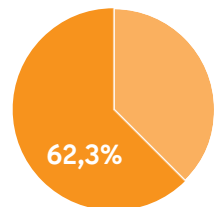
BVV:

Eligible voters
2.725.844



● voter turnout
2023

Eligible voters
2.760.397



● voter turnout
2016

WHO GETS ELECTED?

WHO GETS ELECTED TO THE BVV?

The number of votes determines how many seats a political party or voter group receives in the BVV.

3% electoral threshold: Political parties and voter groups must receive at least 3% of the votes cast in the district in order to win seats in the BVV.

BVV elections also give first-time candidates, smaller parties and local voter groups a chance to be elected.

EVERY VOTE COUNTS

Every vote helps decide which parties are represented in the BVV and the House of Representatives – and how strongly they are represented.

Even if the party you vote for does not win or does not gain any seats, every vote still

matters: Parties that receive at least 1% of the vote in **House of Representatives** elections receive public funding from the State of Berlin to support their work and election campaigns.

WHY ARE THERE ELECTORAL THRESHOLDS?

A small black lowercase letter 'i' inside a white circle, which is part of a larger purple-bordered box containing the text.

In the last House of Representatives election in 2023, 33 parties stood for election. If that many parties were represented in parliament, it would be very difficult to form majorities for important political decisions. Electoral thresholds are designed to prevent this kind of deadlock.

WHO GETS ELECTED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES?

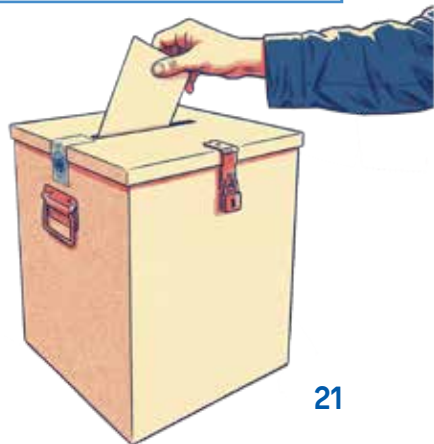
The candidate with the most first votes in a constituency is elected directly. These Members of Parliament hold what is known as a direct mandate. The total number of seats a party receives is determined by its share of the second votes. Direct mandates won by a party are counted towards its total number of seats.

5% electoral threshold: Only parties that receive at least 5% of all second votes cast across Berlin – or win a direct mandate in at least one constituency – are allocated seats in the House of Representatives in proportion to their share of the second vote.

WHAT ARE OVERHANG AND COMPENSATORY SEATS?

Some parties win more directly elected constituency seats than they would normally be entitled to based on their share of the second vote. In these cases, they receive what are known as overhang seats. This is because a candidate who wins directly in a constituency keeps their seat regardless of how well or badly their party performs overall. Other parties then receive compensatory seats so that the balance of seats between the parties once again reflects their share of the second vote.

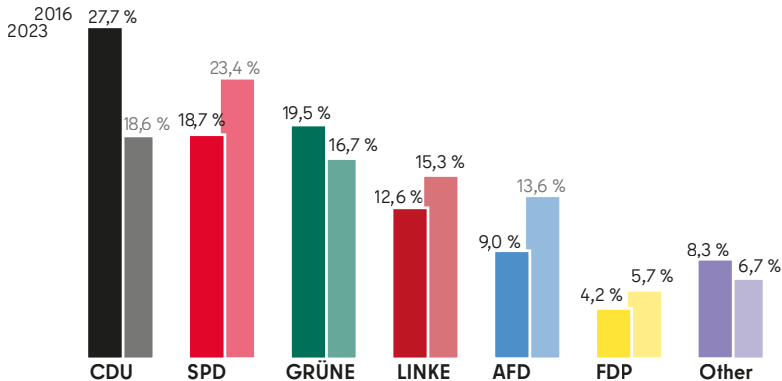
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WHO SITS IN A BVV - AND HOW MANY MEMBERS DOES IT HAVE?

Each BVV in Berlin has 55 elected district representatives. The number of seats a political party or voter group receives in a BVV depends on its share of the vote in the district. Seats are allocated according to the order of candidates on the party or voter-group lists.

RESULTS OF THE BVV ELECTIONS IN 2016 AND 2023 (BERLIN OVERALL)



Source: Report of the State Returning Officer, also published as Statistical Report B VII 2-3 - 5j / 23. Repeat election on 12 February 2023 (main election of 26 September 2021): https://www.statistischebibliothek.de/mir/receive/BBHeft_mods_00046287: p. 130

VOTING MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

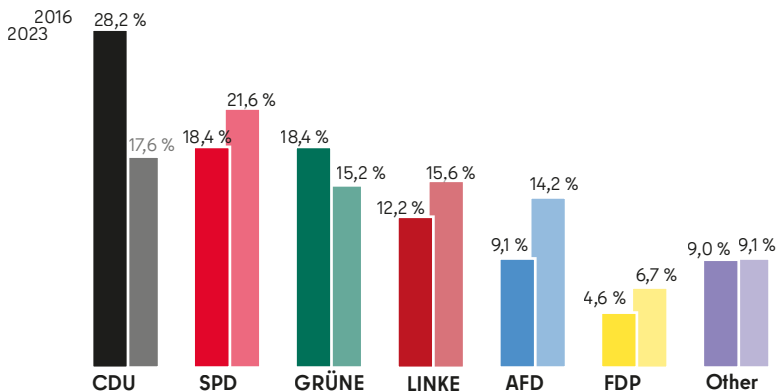
Elections hold politicians accountable. If voters are no longer satisfied with political decisions, politicians must expect that they may not be re-elected. The most recent House of Representatives election led to a change of government. BVV elections also significantly changed the balance of power between parties in several districts.

WHO SITS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - HOW MANY MEMBERS ARE THERE?

The House of Representatives has at least 130 members. 78 are directly elected in constituencies. The winning candidate in each constituency is the person who receives the most first votes.

The remaining members - at least 52 - are elected via party lists based on each party's share of the second vote. Because some parties receive overhang seats and others receive compensatory seats, the total number of Members of Parliament changes after each election. At present, there are 159 members.

RESULTS OF THE SECOND VOTE IN THE 2016 AND 2023 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ELECTIONS*



Source: Report of the State Returning Officer, also published as Statistical Report B VII 2-3 - 5j / 23. Repeat election on 12 February 2023 (main election of 26 September 2021): https://www.statistischebibliothek.de/mir/receive/BBHeft_mods_00046287: p. 6

* **Note on the election results:** The elections to the House of Representatives and the District Assemblies held in September 2021 were declared invalid by the Berlin Constitutional Court because of numerous problems during the conduct of the election. For this reason, the elections were repeated in full in February 2023.

HOW DO ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES DO THEIR WORK?

Elected district representatives and Members of Parliament are there to represent the interests of voters. For a fixed period of time, they are entrusted with making political decisions that affect all of us. They deal with a wide range of social challenges and responsibilities. People often disagree about what is more important or what the best solution is – so compromises have to be found. Decisions can only be made if a majority of representatives support them.

To manage all these responsibilities, elected representatives divide the work between them. They meet together in plenary sessions and in smaller groups – parliamentary groups and committees.

WHERE DECISIONS ARE MADE: THE PLENARY CHAMBER

All elected representatives come together in the plenary chamber. There, they put forward proposals on a wide range of issues, discuss them and vote on proposals from the parliamentary groups, the Senate and the committees. A proposal is only adopted if a majority of representatives vote in favour of it.

CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT REPRESENTATIVES ARE CURRENTLY DISCUSSING?

Meetings of the BVV and the House of Representatives are generally open to the public, and anyone interested can attend – either in person or online.



BVV

All 55 members of a BVV meet during plenary sessions. These meetings usually take place once a month in the evening. Proposals from committees and parliamentary groups, as well as recommendations and motions involving the District Office, are discussed and voted on there. In certain matters, a majority of the BVV can also overturn a decision made by the District Office.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Berlin's Members of Parliament usually meet in plenary session every two weeks. The agenda includes topical debates, questions to the Senate, draft legislation, motions, and reports from Senate departments, votes and resolutions. This is where Members of Parliament decide on new laws and changes to laws for Berlin.

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Meetings of the BVV can be attended in person without prior registration and can usually also be followed via livestream. Public question times for residents are held regularly, giving everyone the opportunity to ask questions to the District Office.

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Meetings of the House of Representatives can only be attended in person after registering in advance: Visitor Service - House of Representatives of Berlin



You can also watch Members of Parliament live online without registering: <https://www.parliament-berlin.de/mediathek/parlament-live>



WHERE LIKE-MINDED REPRESENTATIVES WORK TOGETHER: PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

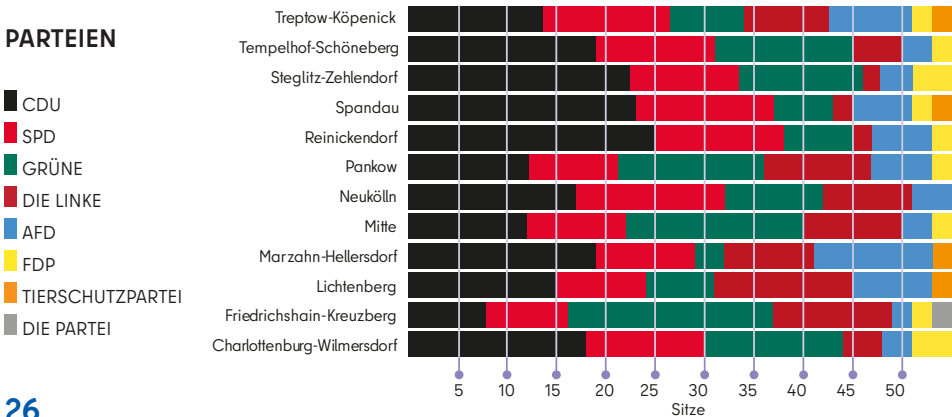
Elected representatives with similar political views – usually from the same political party – form a parliamentary group. The size of a parliamentary group generally depends on the party’s election result. Each elected representative may belong to only one parliamentary group.

Within these groups, representatives discuss current problems, possible solutions and agree on shared political goals and plans. This makes it easier for representatives in the plenary chamber to exchange views and find compromises than if everyone spoke individually.

PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS IN THE BVV

At least 3 district representatives are needed to form a parliamentary group. Because each district elects its own BVV, the number and strength of parliamentary groups varies from district to district.

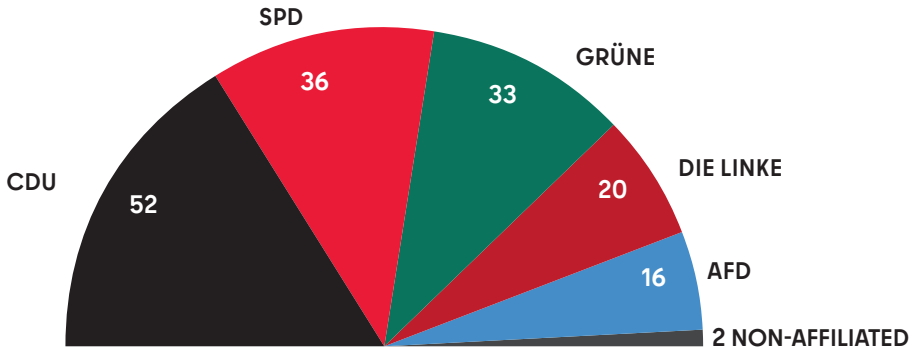
BVV ELECTIONS 2023: SEATS WON BY PARTIES IN THE 12 DISTRICTS



PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

At least 7 Members of Parliament are required to form a parliamentary group (5% of the minimum total of 130 members). The House of Representatives currently has 159 members.

Since the last election, 5 parliamentary groups have been represented in the House of Representatives



Stand: 13.4.2026

FUNDING FOR PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

To enable parliamentary groups to work effectively and independently, they are provided with resources such as group offices. They also receive funding to pay staff and cover running costs for their work in the BVV or the House of Representatives.



WHERE ISSUES ARE EXAMINED IN DETAIL: THE COMMITTEES

In committees, elected representatives work as specialists on specific topics. Each committee is responsible for a particular policy area. Each parliamentary group appoints members to the different committees. Committees examine motions and proposed solutions in detail before they are submitted to the plenary chamber for a vote. Because the BVV and the House of Representatives are responsible for different tasks, their committee structures differ somewhat.

BVV COMMITTEES

Each BVV decides for itself which committees to set up after an election. That's why committee names vary somewhat between Berlin's districts. However, every district must have a Committee for Participation and Integration as well as a Youth Welfare Committee.

BVV committees usually meet once a month. Meetings are generally open to the public, and local residents are welcome to attend.

Citizen deputies in the BVV

A BVV can appoint up to 6 citizen deputies to a committee. These are people with specialist knowledge in a particular area who are not themselves elected district representatives. They advise the committee and also have voting rights there. Anyone aged 16 or over who lives in Berlin can become a citizen deputy - even if they are not entitled to vote.



COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Members of Parliament decide themselves how many committees to establish and what areas they will cover. There are currently 18 committees, each responsible for a particular policy area. Two committees deal with especially important issues that can affect all policy areas:

- **the Main Committee**, , which is responsible for budget and financial matters;
- **the Petitions Committee**, which deals with petitions and complaints from the public.

Committee topics 2023-2026

Labour and Social Affairs – Education, Youth and Families – Federal and European Affairs and Media – Digitalisation and Data Protection – Health and Care – Internal Affairs, Security and Public Order – Integration, Women and Gender Equality, Diversity and Anti-Discrimination – Culture, Civic Engagement and Democracy Promotion – Mobility and Transport – Sport – Urban Development, Construction and Housing – Environmental and Climate Protection – Constitutional and Legal Affairs, Rules of Procedure and Consumer Protection – Protection of the Constitution – Business, Energy and Public Enterprises – Science and Research.



ELECTED - WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Are Members of Parliament and district representatives always professional politicians?

No. Most elected offices and political roles are carried out on a voluntary basis alongside people's regular jobs and in their spare time. This applies to all members of the BVV. By contrast, being a Member of the House of Representatives is a full-time job and difficult to combine with another regular occupation. But: Elected office is always temporary!

Didn't win - but still matter?

Parties that are not part of the government form the opposition. Their role is to hold the governing parties to account. That's why a strong parliamentary opposition matters.

Do elected representatives get paid?

Elected representatives spend a great deal of time attending and preparing for meetings. To ensure that people can hold

elected office regardless of their income, they receive financial compensation for their work. The amount is linked to general wage developments in Berlin.

Volunteer district representatives receive compensation of around €1,220 per month. They also receive between €20 and €31 per meeting, plus a travel allowance of €41.

A member of the House of Representatives receives €8,161 per month (before tax). In addition, fixed monthly amounts are provided for office expenses and equipment (€3,304) and for staff salaries (€8,057). (As of January 2026)

Do elected representatives pay tax?

Yes. Members of the House of Representatives must pay tax on their parliamentary remuneration and other income. For volunteer district representatives, only the compensation they receive for their elected role is tax-free. Any other income is taxable.

How do politicians stay in touch with voters?

Most elected representatives try to stay in regular contact with voters. If people in Berlin feel that something is not working well in the city or in their district – or if they have ideas for improving things – they can speak to their district representatives or Members of Parliament. Many representatives hold public office hours and other events where people can easily get in touch with them. Contact details and consultation times can be found on the websites of the BVVs and the Berlin House of Representatives.

Do Members of Parliament and district representatives have to vote the way their party tells them to?

In theory, Members of Parliament and district representatives are free to make their own decisions and are not required to follow instructions. In practice, however, members of a parliamentary group usually discuss how they intend to vote before a vote takes place.

How busy are Members of Parliament and district representatives?

The workload is demanding. They have to attend and prepare for parliamentary group meetings, committee meetings and plenary sessions. They also have many other responsibilities. Meetings with their political party, appointments in their constituencies, conversations with voters, discussions with experts from public life and academia, and contact with the media are all part of their everyday work. Many are also involved in local initiatives, community projects and voluntary organisations.



WHAT DECISIONS ARE MADE BY THE BVV AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES?

In a parliamentary democracy, elected bodies – including the BVV and the House of Representatives – have four main responsibilities:

- Making political decisions – the BVV for the district, the House of Representatives for Berlin as a whole.
- Setting the budget – deciding how much money the district or the State of Berlin spends and what it is spent on.
- Electing a government – either a governing team or at least a head of government.
- Holding the government and administration to account.

In a democracy, no one decides alone

Whatever a government – whether the District Office or the Senate – wants to do, it needs the support of a majority of elected representatives. If many representatives

oppose a proposal, the government must either reach a compromise or abandon the proposal.

EVERY VOTE MATTERS

A blue circular icon containing a white lowercase letter 'i', representing an information or key point.

By voting, people help decide:

- who will make decisions for Berlin and its districts over the next five years;
- who decides how public money is spent;
- which parties gain a majority and can form a government;
- how strong the opposition will be in holding the government to account.

BVV

1. Making political decisions

Through resolutions, motions and recommendations, the BVV helps shape what the District Office does.

2. Setting the budget

The BVV decides on the district budget – in other words, what money is spent on and how much is spent. The funding comes from the State of Berlin, and every district budget must be approved by the House

3. Electing the district government

The BVV elects the district's governing team: a District Mayor and 5 District Councillors who lead the District Office. Depending on its size, each parliamentary group may nominate one or more candidates. As a result, district governments usually include representatives from several different political parties.

4. Holding the administration to account

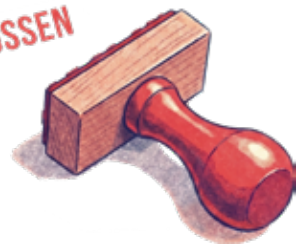
Die BVV prüft, ob das Bezirksamt die Beschlüsse der BVV befolgt und seine Aufgaben richtig erledigt. Dazu können die Bezirksverordneten Auskünfte vom Bezirk-

samt verlangen. Bei bestimmten Angelegenheiten kann die BVV auch durch einen eigenen Beschluss Entscheidungen des Bezirksamtes aufheben.

Many of the decisions that shape everyday life in local neighbourhoods are made at district level – including youth centres, sports grounds and playgrounds, parking management, district infrastructure such as cycle lanes and roads, parks and public spaces, school buildings and much more.

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BESCHLOSSEN



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

1. Making political decisions

Members of Parliament pass laws that apply across the whole of Berlin.

2. Setting the budget

Members of Parliament pass the state budget law. They decide how much money Berlin spends, what it is spent on, and the level of state taxes and charges.

3. Electing the head of government

The House of Representatives elects Berlin's Governing Mayor. This is usually a member of the party with the largest number of seats. The Governing Mayor appoints up to ten Senators, who together form Berlin's government: the Senate.

4. Holding the administration to account

Members of Parliament monitor whether the Senate and the Senate administration are implementing the decisions of the House of Representatives and spending public money as agreed. During topical debates, question sessions and through written questions, they can request information and table motions.

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Members of Parliament decide, for example, on climate and environmental protection measures, policing, education policy, housing and urban development, and how public services such as Berlin city cleaning services (BSR), Berlin public transport (BVG), prisons and Berlin's courts are organised.

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If no party wins an outright majority in the House of Representatives, several parties form a coalition government. This is because the government needs majority support in the House of Representatives in order to pass important decisions. Berlin is currently governed by a "black-red" coalition made up of the CDU and SPD. The election on 20 September 2026 will determine which coalitions are possible in future.

Democratic participation at every level

In Germany, local authorities, the federal states and the federal government each have different responsibilities. Districts and federal states must follow federal law, just as Berlin's districts must follow the laws and regulations issued by the State of Berlin.

In some areas, the federal government sets rules that the states and districts must implement. In many other areas, however, the State of Berlin and the districts make their own decisions independently.

To make sure that different interests are taken into account, decision-makers at the various political levels work closely together. This means that both Berlin's districts and the State of Berlin can help shape decisions at the next political level above them.

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The election on 20 September 2026 will determine who represents Berlin's districts within the city and who represents Berlin at federal level.

European Union

The European Union (EU) now makes many decisions that affect everyday life in Germany. For particularly important EU decisions, the approval of the Bundestag is required. Through the European Committee of the Regions, the House of Representatives can also represent Berlin's interests at European level.

Bundesrat

The Berlin Senate is represented in the Bundesrat by 4 members. There, the federal states help decide on many federal laws and can also put forward proposals on national political issues.

Council of Mayors

Berlin's districts can influence Senate policy through the Council of Mayors. This is where the Governing Mayor, the two deputy mayors from the Senate and the 12 District Mayors discuss issues affecting Berlin's districts.

GETTING INVOLVED AND HELPING SHAPE DECISIONS: THERE'S ALWAYS A WAY TO TAKE PART!

Democratic participation matters not only on election day, but between elections too. The more people get involved, the more different interests can be taken into account when decisions are made.

There are many different ways to help shape politics and everyday life together.

IN EVERYDAY LIFE, FOR EXAMPLE:

- through clubs, local initiatives and interest groups;
- in the political party of your choice;
- at work through staff councils or trade unions;
- at school through student or parent representation, or at university through student unions.

People who are not entitled to vote can also get involved and help shape decisions in these ways.

Everyone can share ideas online at any time through the participation platform:
<https://mein.berlin.de/>



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POLITICS does not begin in the BVV or the House of Representatives – it begins right on your doorstep. Political and social decisions affect all of us – **EVERY DAY.**

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AT DISTRICT LEVEL:

- at residents' meetings, where the district presents important projects and plans;
- by submitting requests or complaints to the District Office;
- through residents' questions in the BVV;
- through a residents' initiative supported by at least 1,000 people;
- through citizens' initiatives and local referendums;
- through participatory budgeting and other participation projects – the Kiezradar platform shows current projects in your area: <https://mein.berlin.de/kiezradar/>
- in advisory councils or as citizen deputies in the BVV.

Young people can also get involved through children's and youth parliaments (available in some districts) and other participation projects.

ACROSS BERLIN:

- petitions (requests and complaints submitted to the House of Representatives);

- popular initiatives (requiring at least 20,000 signatures);
- referendums and popular votes.

Tip: Sometimes simply talking to a politician about an issue you care about – for example by email or during a public consultation hour – can already make a difference. And of course, anyone can also get involved in the political party of their choice and take an active part in politics themselves.

REPRESENTING SPECIAL INTERESTS: ADVISORY COUNCILS

Across Berlin's districts and at city-wide level, there are advisory councils and representative bodies for particular groups and specific issues. Committed Berlin residents contribute their expertise and personal experience to advise the districts or the Senate. For example, there are advisory councils for people with disabilities, older people, women, and for participation and integration.



THE ELECTION IS GETTING CLOSER - WHAT NOW?

Who should I vote for?

Many people decide only a few weeks or even days before the election who they want to give their vote to. Their decision often depends on the issues, policies and political goals promoted by the parties. For many voters, it also matters which candidates they trust most to solve important problems.

What matters to me?

All of us - including the candidates - have different ideas about what matters most and which problems in Berlin should be addressed most urgently.

Politicians argue so much - but who's right?

Political parties - and people in general - often disagree about how problems should be solved: how more housing should be created, what good education should look like, how future energy supplies should


be organised, or how immigration should be managed. Election campaigns are competitions between ideas, giving voters the chance to choose between different solutions and political priorities.

Voters should make sure they learn about the parties and candidates before election day. This is because political parties are no longer allowed to campaign inside or directly outside polling stations on election day.

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There are many ways to form your own opinion:

- Online media, newspapers, radio and television all report on the election campaign and the parties standing for election.
- Political parties and candidates use events and online platforms to explain what they stand for and what they want to achieve. The public election campaign in Berlin begins in August. That's when election posters and info stands start appearing across the city as candidates promote their ideas and seek support from voters
- Basic information about the Berlin elections – both online and in print – is available from the Berlin State Agency for Civic Education: www.berlin.de/politische-bildung/berlinwahlen-2026

- For the House of Representatives election, the Wahl-O-Mat is expected to go online from 24 August. It allows people

to compare their views on important issues with the positions of the political parties: www.wahl-o-mat.de



- U16 elections for the Berlin House of Representatives: Children and young people under 16 will be able to take part in the U16 election at many locations across Berlin on 11 September 2026. <https://u18.berlin/>

- Detailed information about how the election works is available on the website of the Berlin State Returning Officer: <https://www.berlin.de/wahlen/wahlen/berliner-wahlen-2026/>

- Current election updates are also available on the social-media channels of the Berlin State Agency for Civic Education: Instagram, Facebook, Bluesky and LinkedIn (@BeLapoBi).

Which issues matter most to me?

How should mobility and transport in Berlin work in future?

What support do businesses in Berlin need to succeed?

How can housing in Berlin become (more) affordable?

How can everyone in Berlin live safely?

How can people from different backgrounds shape the city together?

Which approaches to tackling antisemitism and racism matter most to me?

How can social cohesion be strengthened?

From nursery school to university - what needs to improve?

What should public money in Berlin be spent on?

How should employment policy in Berlin be shaped?

What prospects do young people in Berlin have for their future - and what can politics do to support them?

Ukraine, the Middle East conflict, the USA, military service, basic income support, pensions and healthcare - how can Berlin contribute to national and international debates?



The elections on 20 September 2026 are about all these questions - and many more besides.
SO: MAKE SURE YOU VOTE!

IMPRINT

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