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**CONTRIBUTION**

by

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to the General Debate on

**“How does your parliament provide factual information to parliamentarians to support evidence-based decision-making?”**

**Geneva Session**  
**October 2025**



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## **“How does your parliament provide factual information to parliamentarians to support evidence-based decision-making?”**

ASGP meeting in Geneva, Tuesday, 21 October, afternoon

Preparation by ID and WD

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### Directorate ID

#### *Preliminary remark*

The Library, Parliamentary Archives, Parliamentary Documentation and Press Documentation divisions, which are grouped together in the ID (Library and Documentation) sub-department, provide services and information directly to Members of Parliament and their staff, the parliamentary groups and members of the Bundestag administration.

Besides the Research Services, it is this subdivision that collects, evaluates and makes available all information relevant to parliamentary work. This is done primarily with the help of databases on the intranet. However, some of the information is also available to all citizens via the internet.

#### *Library*

With just over 1.6 million media items, the German Bundestag Library is one of the largest parliamentary libraries in the world. It has its own information and research service, which responds to each enquiry individually. In this respect, there is no cooperation with external bodies.

In addition, all users and the general public are actively informed about current literature on all political topics in various formats via the Bundestag's website.

#### *Parliamentary Archives*

The Parliamentary Archives are not purely an internal parliamentary institution, but are accessible to all citizens as a public archive. Enquiries regarding the archive holdings are answered in all cases and the archive material is made available.

#### *Parliamentary documentation*

Parliamentary documentation records the publicly accessible materials of the Bundestag and the Bundesrat (second chamber) according to formal and content-related criteria in the Documentation and Information System for Parliamentary Materials (DIP). The system is publicly available on the German Bundestag's website ([dip.bundestag.de](http://dip.bundestag.de)). The content that can be searched in DIP can also be accessed in machine-readable formats (JSON and XML) via an interface (API).

DIP contains not only the printed papers and plenary minutes of both houses, but also the deliberations on parliamentary bills. For example, DIP documents legislative procedures from the introduction of a draft bill to its promulgation in the Federal Law Gazette. Speeches and other activities of the members of the Bundestag, the Bundesrat and other political actors in the plenary sessions of the houses can also be

researched. DIP also serves as a central archive for parliamentary deliberations, as it documents not only current but also historical parliamentary materials.

### *Press Documentation*

The Press Documentation is the central documentation and evaluation centre of the German Bundestag for press information. Its primary purpose is to provide information to Parliament, its committees and its administration. The Press Archive of the German Bundestag is one of the largest press archives in Germany.

### Directorate WD

The Research Services of the German Bundestag support Members in their parliamentary work with specialist information, ranging from the latest updates on a topic to research reports. Among other aspects, the following three criteria must be met by such texts:

- The document must display the required level of academic detail and contain a neutral presentation of all of the significant different perspectives held on the topic.
- The text should include references to established practices.
- The text must be formulated in such a way that it can also be understood by laypersons.

In order to be able to meet these criteria, the staff of the Research Services must have a high degree of specialist expertise in their respective areas. Experience has shown that this already needs to be taken into account at the recruitment stage. In general it is sufficient for staff to provide a relevant academic qualification in order to be able to answer questions on their areas of expertise. This applies in particular to legal questions, which are answered by fully-qualified lawyers. When dealing with certain topic areas requiring a very long familiarisation period due to their complexity, it has proved highly useful to obtain experienced staff from specialist authorities. One example of such a topic area is social security law.

In addition, professional and personal training for employees plays a significant role in ensuring that specialist knowledge is always kept up to date and for staying informed about more recent developments.

Here, specialist training courses by external organisers or even federal ministries are helpful.

Conversations with experts and practitioners at specialist conferences, such as the annual meeting of tax consultants, create a link with the lived reality and prevent the documents from becoming too theoretical and removed from the practical side of things. The same applies to the exchanges with authorities and institutions such as the most recent visit by two research sections to the German Federal Social Court.

As a matter of principle, the research sections only work in response to a request from a party entitled to commission research. All Members and bodies of the German Bundestag are entitled to submit such requests. The requests must be related to the parliamentary mandate and cannot be used to produce papers for the plenary, draft bills or political concepts.

Political neutrality is mandatory in all the documents produced by the Research Services. They do not represent the views of the German Bundestag, any of its bodies or the Bundestag Administration. Each document is exclusively the responsibility of its author and the management of the research section. The research section management examines how the research has been conducted and how balanced the account of the topic is.

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Once sent, the documents are available exclusively to the customer who requested them for a period of four weeks. After this, they are generally published on the website of the German Bundestag, where they can be accessed by other Members and the public.