

Federal Elections Act

in the version published on 23 July 1993 (Federal Law Gazette I, pp. 1288, 1594),
as last amended by Article 1 of the Act of 7 March 2024
(Federal Law Gazette 2024 I, no. 91)

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Part I
Electoral System

Section 1
Composition of the German Bundestag and Principles of Franchise

- (1) The German Bundestag consists of 630 members. They are elected in a general, direct, free, equal and secret ballot by the Germans eligible to vote.

- (2) The principles of proportional representation apply in elections to the German Bundestag. Each voter has two votes, a first vote to be cast in an election based on constituency nominations and a second vote to be cast in an election based on Land lists where the parties admitted to participate in the election name their candidates.

- (3) When the seats going to the Land lists are allocated to individual candidates, priority is given, subject to the provisions of section 6, to candidates determined in 299 constituencies in an election based on constituency nominations. In each Land, each party gets as many seats for those of its candidates who have won the most first votes in the constituencies of the Land as are backed by the number of second votes cast for that party (seat allocation based on second votes).

- (4) Candidates who have not been nominated by a party may stand for election in the constituencies in accordance with the requirements resulting from this Act.

Section 2
Division of the Electoral Area

- (1) The electoral area is the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany.

- (2) The division of the electoral area into constituencies is specified in Annex 2 to this Act.

- (3) Each constituency is divided into polling districts for voting.

Section 3

Constituency Commission and Delimitation of Constituencies

(1) The following principles must be observed in the division of the electoral area into constituencies:

1. The Länder boundaries must be respected.
2. The number of constituencies in the individual Länder must correspond, as far as possible, to their share of the population. The number is calculated in accordance with section 5.
3. The population in a constituency should not be more than fifteen percent above or below the average figure for all constituencies; in cases where the difference is greater than twenty-five percent, the constituency boundaries must be redrawn.*
4. Each constituency should form a coherent area.
5. The boundaries of the municipalities, districts and urban districts are respected, where possible.

Foreigners (section 2, subsection (1) of the Residence Act) are not taken into account in the determination of population figures.

(2) The Federal President appoints a permanent Constituency Commission. It consists of the President of the Federal Statistical Office, a judge from the Federal Administrative Court, and five other members.

(3) The Constituency Commission is responsible for reporting on changes in population figures in the electoral area and for stating what changes, if any, it considers necessary in the division of the electoral area into constituencies. In its report, it may also propose changes for other reasons. When making its proposals concerning the division of the electoral area into constituencies, it must observe the principles specified in subsection (1); if the calculation in subsection (1) number 2 produces several possible divisions, the Commission prepares corresponding proposals.

* As of 1 January 2026:

The population in a constituency should not be more than ten percent above or below the average figure for all constituencies; in cases where the difference is greater than fifteen percent, the constituency boundaries must be redrawn.

(4) The report of the Constituency Commission must be submitted to the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community within fifteen months of the beginning of the Bundestag legislative term. The Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community forwards it to the Bundestag without delay and publishes a notice in the Federal Gazette concerning its publication as a Bundestag printed paper. At the request of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, the Constituency Commission must submit a supplementary report; in such case, the second sentence applies accordingly.

(5) Whenever Land boundaries are altered in accordance with the statutory provisions governing the procedure for other changes regarding the territory of the Länder pursuant to Article 29 paragraph (7) of the Basic Law, the boundaries of the constituencies affected are also modified accordingly. When two or more constituencies are affected in the incorporating Land or where an exclave of a Land is formed, the new part of the Land belongs to the constituency of the municipality, the municipal district, or the non-municipal area to which it has been added. Changes to Land boundaries which are made after the end of the thirty-second month following the commencement of the legislative term only affect the division into constituencies in the subsequent legislative term.

Section 4

Principles of Seat Distribution among Parties

(1) The total number of seats (section 1 subsection (1)) is first distributed among the parties and then among the Land lists of each party according to the principles of proportional representation. The number of successful constituency candidates as per section 6 subsection (2) is subtracted from the total number of seats.

(2) The seats are distributed among the parties in proportion to the number of second votes cast for the Land lists of each party in the electoral area as laid down in section 5 (upper level distribution). This procedure does not consider

1. the second votes of the voters who have cast their first votes for a candidate who has been successful as per section 6 subsection (2) and

2. parties which have received less than 5 percent of the valid second votes cast in the electoral area.

Sentence 2 number 2 does not apply to the lists submitted by parties representing national minorities.

(3) The seats allocated to each party pursuant to subsection (2) are distributed among the party's Land lists in proportion to the number of second votes cast for the Land lists in accordance with section 5 (lower level distribution).

(4) If a party which has won more than half of the total number of second votes cast for all parties to be considered does not receive more than half of the seats in the distribution process, it is allocated further seats until the number of seats it has is equal to half of the seats plus one. The total number of seats (section 1 subsection (1)) increases by the difference in such a case.

Footnote

Section 4 subsection (2), second sentence, number 2: Provision incompatible with Article 21 paragraph (1) and Article 38 paragraph (1), first sentence, of the Basic Law according to the reasons stated by the Federal Constitutional Court in its ruling of 30 July 2024 I No. 281 - 2 BvF 1/23 etc. -. Section 4 subsection (2), second sentence, number 2 of the Federal Elections Act will continue to apply until amendments are enacted, subject to the condition that political parties that receive less than 5 percent of the valid second votes cast in the electoral area will be excluded from the distribution of seats only if their candidates secure the most first votes in fewer than three constituencies.

Section 5

Seat Distribution Calculation

(1) To determine the upper level distribution, the number of second votes to be considered in the electoral area is divided by a divisor for the allocation of seats, which is determined as per subsection (2), and the result of the division is rounded as per subsection (3). To determine the lower level distribution, the number of second votes

going to each Land list of a party is divided by a divisor for the allocation of seats to be determined as per subsection (2), and the result of the division is rounded as per subsection (3).

(2) The divisor for the allocation of seats is determined in a way that ensures that all available seats are distributed. To determine the divisor, the total of the votes on which the apportionment is based is divided by the number of available seats. If, using this divisor, more seats are distributed in total than are actually available, the divisor must be increased so that the result of the distribution process, when repeated, matches the number of seats available; if too few seats are allocated to the parties, the divisor must be reduced accordingly.

(3) The division results as calculated pursuant to subsection (1) are rounded, whereby decimal fractions under 0.5 are rounded down to the nearest whole number and decimal fractions above 0.5 are rounded up to the nearest whole number. Decimal fractions equal to 0.5 are rounded up or down to ensure that the number of available seats is maintained; if there are various seat allocation options as a consequence, the Federal Returning Officer decides by drawing lots.

Section 6

Allocation of Seats to Candidates

(1) A constituency candidate of a party (section 20 subsection (2)) is elected as the constituency representative in the Bundestag if he or she wins the most first votes and is awarded a seat in the seat allocation procedure based on second votes (fourth sentence). In each Land, a party's candidates who have won the most first votes in the constituencies are ranked by descending proportion of first votes. The proportion of first votes is calculated by dividing the number of first votes cast for the candidate by the total number of valid first votes cast in the particular constituency. The seats determined for a party's Land list as per section 4 subsection (3) are awarded to the constituency candidates in the order established in accordance with the second sentence (allocation procedure based on second votes).

(2) A candidate nominated pursuant to section 20 subsection (3) is elected as the constituency representative in the Bundestag if he or she wins the most votes.

(3) If votes are tied and the proportions of first votes are equal, a lot is drawn to determine the winner. The lot is drawn by the Constituency Returning Officer if candidates competing in a constituency are concerned (subsection (1), first sentence; subsection (2)) and by the Federal Returning Officer if there is a tie in the allocation of seats based on second votes (subsection (1), fourth sentence).

(4) A Land list candidate is elected as a member of the Bundestag if he or she is awarded a seat during the process of distributing the Land list seats (section 4, subsection (3)) that remained after the completion of the seat allocation procedure based on second votes; the seats are awarded in the order of the Land list. Candidates who have been elected pursuant to subsection (1), first sentence, are not considered as Land list candidates. If the number of seats allocated to a Land list exceeds the number of candidates listed, the respective seats remain vacant.

Section 7

(Repealed)

Part II

Electoral Bodies

Section 8

Organisation of Electoral Bodies

(1) Electoral bodies are the Federal Returning Officer and the Federal Electoral Committee for the electoral area, a Land Returning Officer and a Land Electoral Committee for each Land, a Constituency Returning Officer and a Constituency Electoral Committee for each constituency, an Electoral Officer and an Electoral Board for each polling district, and at least one Electoral Officer and one Electoral Board for each constituency to establish the results of the postal ballot. The Constituency Returning Officer decides on

the number of Postal Ballot Boards that need to be set up in order to establish the result of the postal ballot on election day.

(2) A Joint Constituency Returning Officer may be appointed and a Joint Electoral Committee formed for several neighbouring constituencies; the Land Returning Officer issues the relevant order.

(3) To establish the result of the postal ballot, Electoral Officers and Electoral Boards can be appointed for individual or several municipalities or for individual administrative districts within a constituency rather than for every constituency; the Land Government or the body designated by it issues the relevant order.

Section 9

Establishment of Electoral Bodies

(1) The Federal Returning Officer and his or her deputy are appointed by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community; the Land Returning Officers, Constituency Returning Officers and Electoral Officers and their deputies are appointed by the Land Government or the body designated by it.

(2) The Federal Electoral Committee consists of the Federal Returning Officer as Chair, eight eligible voters who have been appointed as assessors by the Federal Returning Officer, and two judges of the Federal Administrative Court. The other Electoral Committees are composed of the Returning Officer as Chair and six eligible voters appointed as assessors by the Returning Officer; two judges of the Land's Higher Administrative Court must also be appointed to each Land Electoral Committee. The Electoral Boards consist of the Electoral Officer as Chair, his or her deputy and three to seven other eligible voters appointed as assessors by the Electoral Officer; the Land Government or the body designated by it may order that the assessors of the Electoral Board be appointed by the municipal authority and the assessors of the Electoral Board for the establishment of the postal ballot result be appointed by the Constituency Returning Officer, and in the event of an order pursuant to section 8 subsection (3), by the municipal or administrative district authority alone or in concurrence with the Electoral Officer. When assessors are appointed, the political parties represented in the district must be considered where possible.

(3) No one may be a member of more than one electoral body. Candidates standing for election, spokespersons for nominations, and deputy spokespersons may not be appointed as members of an electoral body.

(4) The municipal authorities are authorised to collect and process personal data of eligible voters for the purpose of appointing them as members of Electoral Boards. For this purpose, personal data of eligible voters who are suitable for appointment to Electoral Boards may also be processed for future elections unless the person concerned has objected to the processing of the data. The person concerned must be informed of the right to object. The following data may be collected and processed: surname, first name, date of birth, address, telephone numbers, number of appointments as member of an Electoral Board and position held.

(5) To ensure that an election can be held, the authorities of the Federation, federal corporate bodies, institutions and foundations under public law, authorities of the Länder, municipalities and associations of municipalities and any other legal persons governed by public law and subject to Land supervision are obliged, at the request of the municipal authorities, to name members of their staff who reside in the territory of the requesting municipal authority, stating their surnames, first names, dates of birth and addresses, for the purpose of their appointment as members of Electoral Boards. The authority requested to do so must notify the person concerned of the data passed on and of the data recipient.

Section 10

Electoral Committee and Electoral Board Functions

(1) The Electoral Committees and Electoral Boards negotiate, deliberate and take their decisions in public session. Unless otherwise specified in this Act, decisions are taken by majority vote; in the case of a tie, the chairperson has the casting vote.

(2) The members of the electoral bodies, their deputies and the record keepers are bound to perform the duties of their offices impartially and to treat as confidential any information to which they gain access as a result of their official duties. They must not cover their faces whilst performing their duties.

Section 11
Honorary Posts

(1) The assessors of the Electoral Committees and the members of the Electoral Boards perform their duties in an honorary capacity. Anyone eligible to vote is bound to accept this honorary post if it is offered to them. The honorary post may be refused only on substantial grounds.

(2) (Repealed)

(3) (Repealed)

Part III
Eligibility to Vote and Stand for Election

Section 12
Eligibility to Vote

(1) All Germans as defined in Article 116 paragraph (1) of the Basic Law are eligible to vote, provided that, on the day of the election, they

1. have reached the age of eighteen years,
2. have had an abode or have otherwise been habitually resident in the Federal Republic of Germany for at least three months, and
3. are not disqualified from voting under section 13.

(2) Provided the other conditions are fulfilled, Germans as defined in Article 116 paragraph (1) of the Basic Law who are resident outside the Federal Republic of Germany on the day of election are also eligible to vote provided that,

1. after reaching the age of fourteen years, they have had an abode or have been habitually resident in the Federal Republic of Germany for a minimum of three months without interruption, provided that this stay took place within the last twenty-five years, or

2. for other reasons, they have become familiar, personally and directly, with the political situation in the Federal Republic of Germany and are affected by it.

A previous abode or residence in the territory specified in Article 3 of the Unification Treaty is also considered an abode or habitual residence within the meaning of the first sentence. The three-month period pursuant to subsection (1) number 2 does not apply if a person who is eligible to vote under the first sentence returns to the Federal Republic of Germany.

(3) For the purposes of this Act, an abode is any enclosed space used for dwelling or sleeping. Caravans and houseboats, however, are only considered abodes if they are not moved at all or only occasionally.

(4) If they do not have or have not had an abode in the Federal Republic of Germany, an abode as defined in subsection (1) number 2 or subsection (2), first sentence, is:

1. for sailors and the members of their households, the ship they occupy, provided that the ship is entitled to fly the German flag under the Flag Act (as amended),
2. for inland waterway sailors and the members of their households, the ship they occupy, provided that the ship is on a shipping register in the Federal Republic of Germany,
3. for persons serving a term of imprisonment imposed by a court of law and for other persons placed in an institution or facility, the respective institution or facility.

(5) The day on which the abode is occupied or the residence begins must be included in the calculation to determine the three-month period pursuant to subsection (1) number 2 and subsection (2), first sentence.

Section 13

Disqualification from Voting

A person is disqualified from voting if he or she is not eligible to vote owing to a judicial decision.

Section 14

Exercise of the Right to Vote

(1) Only persons who are listed in an electoral register or have a polling card may vote.

(2) Anyone listed in an electoral register may only vote in the polling district where he or she is on the electoral register.

(3) Anyone possessing a polling card may vote in the constituency in which the polling card was issued

- a) by casting his or her vote in any polling district of this constituency, or
- b) by postal ballot.

(4) Each person eligible to vote may vote only once and must do so personally. It is not permitted for the right to vote to be exercised by a proxy instead of the person eligible to vote.

(5) Persons eligible to vote who are illiterate or prevented by a disability from casting their vote may seek the assistance of another person for that purpose. Such support is limited to practical assistance in communicating an electoral decision which has been taken and expressed by the person eligible to vote. Such assistance is inadmissible in cases where an abusive influence is exercised while the assistance is rendered, where it replaces or alters the self-determined development of opinion or decision taken by the person eligible to vote or where there is a conflict of interest for the person rendering assistance.

Section 15

Eligibility to Stand for Election

(1) A person is eligible to stand for election if, on election day, he or she

1. is German as defined in Article 116 paragraph (1) of the Basic Law and
2. has reached the age of eighteen years.

(2) A person is ineligible to stand for election if he or she

1. is disqualified from voting under section 13 or
2. has been deprived by judicial decision of the eligibility to stand for election or the ability to hold public office.
3. (Repealed)

Part IV
Preparations for the Election

Section 16
Election Day

The Federal President determines the day of the main election (election day). The election day must be a Sunday or a statutory public holiday.

Section 17
Electoral Register and Polling Card

(1) The municipal authorities maintain a register of persons eligible to vote for each polling district. Each eligible voter has the right to verify that the data entered on his or her person in the electoral register are correct or complete on the working days between the twentieth and sixteenth day before the election during normal opening hours. To verify that the data of other persons on the electoral register are correct or complete, persons eligible to vote only have the right to consult the electoral register during the period specified in the second sentence if they produce facts suggesting that the electoral register may be incorrect or incomplete. The right to verify data as specified in the third sentence does not apply to data of persons eligible to vote against whose names a blocking notice has been entered in the population registers in accordance with section 51 subsection (1) of the Federal Act on Registration.

(2) A person eligible to vote who has been entered in the electoral register or who has not been entered in the electoral register for reasons beyond his or her control must be issued a polling card on application.

Section 18
Right to Nominate Candidates, Notification of Participation

(1) Nominations of candidates may be submitted by parties and by persons eligible to vote in accordance with section 20.

(2) Parties which have not been continuously represented by at least five representatives in the German Bundestag or in a Landtag since the last election to that assembly on the basis of nominations made by the party itself may only submit nominations as parties if they have given notification of their participation in the election to the Federal Returning Officer in writing not later than 6 p.m. on the ninety-seventh day before the election and have been recognised as parties by the Federal Electoral Committee. Such notification must include the name under which the party intends to participate in the election. It must bear the personal handwritten signatures of at least three members of the national executive committee, including the chairperson or his or her deputy. If a party does not have a national executive committee, the executive committee of the party's highest-level organisation takes the place of the national executive committee. The party's written statutes and written programme as well as proof that the executive committee has been duly appointed in accordance with the statutes must be enclosed with the notification. As a rule, proof of party status in accordance with section 2 subsection (1), first sentence, of the Political Parties Act is to be enclosed with the notification.

(3) The Federal Returning Officer must examine the notification pursuant to subsection (2) immediately upon receipt. If the Federal Returning Officer identifies any deficiencies in the notification, he or she will immediately notify the executive committee and request it to correct remediable deficiencies. After expiration of the notification period, deficiencies may only be corrected in notifications which are otherwise valid. A notification is not deemed valid if

1. the form or deadline prescribed in subsection (2) has not been observed,
2. the name of the party is not stated,
3. the valid signatures required under subsection (2) and the documents to be submitted with the notification are missing, unless such documents cannot be submitted in time due to circumstances beyond the party's control,
4. the executive committee members' names and particulars have not been adequately supplied such that the members' identities cannot be established.

No deficiencies of any kind may be corrected after the decision on the recognition as a party. The party's executive committee may appeal to the Federal Electoral Committee against orders issued by the Federal Returning Officer in proceedings concerning the correction of deficiencies.

(4) The Federal Electoral Committee confirms as binding for all electoral bodies not later than the seventy-ninth day before the election

1. which parties have been continuously represented by at least five representatives in the German Bundestag or in a Landtag since the last election to that assembly on the basis of nominations made by the party itself,
2. which associations, having given notification of their participation pursuant to subsection (2), must be recognised as parties for the election; a two-thirds majority is necessary to refuse an association recognition as a party for the election. The confirmation must be announced by the Federal Returning Officer in the meeting of the Federal Electoral Committee. It must be made public.

(4a) A party or association may lodge a complaint with the Federal Constitutional Court against a confirmation pursuant to subsection (4) preventing it from submitting nominations within four days of the announcement. In such case the party or association must be treated by the electoral bodies as a party entitled to submit nominations until a decision has been taken by the Federal Constitutional Court, at the latest until the end of the fifty-ninth day before the election.

(5) A party may submit only one constituency nomination in each constituency and only one Land list in each Land.

Section 19

Submission of Nominations

Constituency nominations must be submitted in writing to the Constituency Returning Officer and Land lists to the Land Returning Officer not later than 6 p.m. on the sixty-ninth day before the election.

Section 20

Content and Form of Constituency Nominations

(1) A constituency nomination may only contain the name of one candidate. Each candidate may only be named in one constituency, and only in one nomination for that constituency. A person may only be nominated as a candidate if he or she has given his or her written consent to the nomination; such consent is irrevocable.

(2) Constituency nominations of parties must bear the personal handwritten signatures of the members of the executive committee of the Land branch of the party or, where such Land branches do not exist, the personal handwritten signatures of the members of the executive committee of the next lower regional branches in whose area the constituency lies. They may only be admitted if a Land list of the party is admitted in the respective Land. Constituency nominations of the parties specified in section 18 subsection (2) must in addition bear the personal handwritten signatures of at least 200 persons eligible to vote in the constituency; they must be eligible to vote at the time they sign the nomination and proof of this must be furnished when the nomination is submitted. The requirement to provide 200 signatures does not apply to constituency nominations of parties representing national minorities.

(3) Non-party constituency nominations must bear the personal handwritten signatures of at least 200 persons eligible to vote from the constituency concerned. Subsection (2), third sentence, second half-sentence, applies accordingly.

(4) Constituency nominations of parties must contain the name of the submitting party and any shortened form of the party name that the party may use, non-party constituency nominations must contain an identifying name.

Section 21

Selection of Party Candidates

(1) A person may only appear as a party candidate on a constituency nomination form if he or she is not a member of another party and has been elected for this purpose at a members' assembly convened to elect a constituency candidate or at a special or general

delegates' assembly. A members' assembly convened to elect a constituency candidate is an assembly of members of the party who at the time of the meeting are eligible to vote in the German Bundestag election in their constituency. A special delegates' assembly is an assembly of the delegates which such an assembly of members has elected from their own ranks. A general delegates' assembly is a general assembly appointed in accordance with the statutes of the party (section 6 of the Political Parties Act) by such an assembly of members from their own ranks in view of forthcoming elections.

(2) Where districts and urban districts comprise several constituencies, the candidates for those constituencies whose area does not intersect the boundary of the district or urban district may be elected at a joint members' or delegates' assembly.

(3) The candidates and the delegates for the delegates' assemblies are elected by secret ballot. Proposals can be submitted by all those attending the assembly who have voting rights. Candidates must be given the opportunity and time to duly introduce themselves and present their programmes to the assembly. Elections may take place no earlier than thirty-two months after the commencement of the legislative term of the German Bundestag, in the case of the delegates' assembly no earlier than twenty-nine months; this does not apply if the term ends prematurely.

(4) The executive committee of the Land branch or, where such Land branches do not exist, the executive committee of the next lower regional branch in whose area the constituency lies or another body provided for this purpose in the party's statutes may object to the decision of a members' or delegates' assembly. If such an objection is raised, the ballot must be repeated. Its result is final.

(5) Further details regarding the election of delegates for the delegates' assembly, the convention of the members' or delegates' assemblies, the respective quorum, and the procedure for the election of the candidate are set forth in the parties' statutes.

(6) A copy of the record of the candidate's election containing details of where and when the assembly took place, the form of invitation, the number of members present and the result of the ballot must be submitted together with the constituency nomination. In so doing, the chairperson of the assembly and two members designated by the assembly

must give the Constituency Returning Officer an affirmation in lieu of an oath to the effect that the requirements specified in subsection (3), first to third sentences, have been observed. The Constituency Returning Officer is responsible for accepting such an affirmation in lieu of an oath; the Constituency Returning Officer is considered an authority within the meaning of section 156 of the Penal Code.

Section 22

Spokesperson

(1) A spokesperson and a deputy spokesperson are designated in every constituency nomination. If such a designation is not made, the first person to have signed is considered the spokesperson and the second person to have signed the deputy spokesperson.

(2) Unless otherwise specified in this Act, only the spokespersons and their deputies are authorised, each for themselves, to make and receive binding declarations concerning the constituency nomination.

(3) Spokespersons and deputy spokespersons may be removed from office and replaced by others through a written declaration issued by the majority of the signatories of the constituency nomination and addressed to the Constituency Returning Officer.

Section 23

Withdrawal of Constituency Nominations

A constituency nomination may be withdrawn by a joint written declaration issued by the spokesperson and deputy spokesperson before a decision has been taken regarding its admission. A constituency nomination signed by at least 200 persons eligible to vote may also be withdrawn by the majority of the signatories through a declaration bearing their personal handwritten signatures.

Section 24

Alteration of Constituency Nominations

After expiration of the submission period for nominations, a constituency nomination may be altered only through a joint written declaration issued by the spokesperson and the deputy spokesperson and only if the candidate has died or become ineligible to stand for election. The procedure laid down in section 21 need not be observed and the signatures as defined in section 20 subsections (2) and (3) are not required. No alterations of any kind are allowed after a decision has been made on the admission of a constituency nomination (section 26 subsection (1), first sentence).

Section 25

Correction of Deficiencies

(1) The Constituency Returning Officer must examine the constituency nominations immediately upon receipt. If the Constituency Returning Officer identifies deficiencies in a constituency nomination, he or she will immediately notify the spokesperson and request him or her to correct remediable deficiencies in good time.

(2) After expiration of the submission period for nominations, deficiencies may only be corrected in nominations which are otherwise valid. A nomination is not deemed valid if

1. the form or deadline prescribed in section 19 has not been observed,
2. the nomination is missing the valid signatures, together with the proof that the signatories are eligible to vote, as required pursuant to section 20 subsection (2), first and third sentences, and subsection (3), unless such proof cannot be furnished in time due to circumstances beyond the control of the person eligible to make the nomination,
3. in the case of a party nomination, the name of the party has been omitted, the recognition of party status required under section 18 subsection (2) has been refused, or the proof required under section 21 has not been furnished,
4. the candidate's name and particulars have not been adequately supplied such that the candidate's identity cannot be established, or
5. the candidate has not given written consent to the nomination.

(3) No deficiencies of any kind may be corrected after the decision on the admission of a constituency nomination (section 26 subsection (1), first sentence).

(4) The spokesperson may appeal to the Constituency Electoral Committee against orders issued by the Constituency Returning Officer in proceedings concerning the correction of deficiencies.

Section 26

Admission of Constituency Nominations

(1) The Constituency Electoral Committee decides on the admission of constituency nominations on the fifty-eighth day before the election. It must reject constituency nominations if they

1. are submitted too late, or
2. do not meet the requirements set forth in this Act and in the Federal Electoral Regulations unless otherwise specified in these provisions.

A constituency nomination of a party is admitted provided that the Land list of the party submitting the nomination has been admitted pursuant to section 28. The decision must be announced at the meeting of the Constituency Electoral Committee.

(2) If the Constituency Electoral Committee rejects a constituency nomination, an appeal may be lodged with the Land Electoral Committee within three days of the announcement of the decision. The spokesperson for the constituency nomination, the Federal Returning Officer and the Constituency Returning Officer are entitled to lodge an appeal. The Federal Returning Officer and the Constituency Returning Officer may also appeal against a decision by which a constituency nomination is admitted. The persons concerned attending the appeal proceedings must be heard. The decision on the appeal must be taken not later than the fifty-second day before the election.

(3) The Constituency Returning Officer establishes whether the conditions specified in subsection (1), third sentence, have been fulfilled. The Constituency Returning Officer makes the admitted constituency nominations public not later than the forty-eighth day before the election.

Section 27

Land Lists

(1) Land lists may only be submitted by political parties. They must bear the personal handwritten signatures of the members of the executive committee of the Land branch or, where Land branches do not exist, those of the members of the executive committees of the next lower regional branches that lie within the territory of the Land and, in the case of the parties specified in section 18 subsection (2), the personal handwritten signatures of one per thousand of the persons eligible to vote in the Land at the last Bundestag election, but of not more than 2,000 eligible voters. The signatories of a nomination of one of the parties specified in section 18 subsection (2) must be eligible to vote at the time they sign the nomination and proof of this must be furnished when the Land list is submitted. The requirement to present additional signatures does not apply to Land lists of parties representing national minorities.

(2) Land lists must contain the name of the party submitting the lists as well as any shortened form of the party name that the party may use.

(3) The names of the candidates must be listed in a recognisable order.

(4) A candidate may only be nominated in one Land, and in only one Land list in said Land. A candidate may only be nominated in a Land list if he or she has not been nominated pursuant to section 20 subsection (3). A person may only be nominated in a Land list if he or she has given his or her written consent to the nomination; such consent is irrevocable.

(5) Section 21 subsections (1), (3), (5) and (6) as well as sections 22 to 25 apply accordingly, provided that the affirmation in lieu of an oath to be given under section 21 subsection (6), second sentence, also covers an affirmation to the effect that the order of the names of the candidates in the Land list has been set by secret ballot.

Section 28

Admission of Land Lists

(1) The Land Electoral Committee decides on the admission of the Land lists on the fifty-eighth day before the election. It must reject Land lists if they

1. are submitted too late, or

2. do not meet the requirements set forth in this Act and in the Federal Electoral Regulations unless otherwise specified in these provisions.

If only individual candidates do not meet the requirements, their names are removed from the Land list. The decision must be announced at the meeting of the Land Electoral Committee.

(2) If the Land Electoral Committee rejects a Land list wholly or in part, an appeal may be lodged with the Federal Electoral Committee within three days of the announcement of the decision. The spokesperson for the Land list and the Land Returning Officer are entitled to lodge an appeal. The Land Returning Officer may also appeal against a decision by which a Land list is admitted. The persons concerned attending the appeal proceedings must be heard. The decision on the appeal must be taken not later than the fifty-second day before the election.

(3) The Land Returning Officer makes the admitted Land lists public not later than the forty-eighth day before the election.

Section 29

(Repealed)

Section 30

Ballot Papers

(1) The ballot papers and the required envelopes for the postal ballot (section 36 subsection (1)) must be produced by the government.

(2) The ballot paper contains:

1. for constituency elections, the names of the candidates from the admitted constituency nominations; in the case of constituency nominations by parties, also the names of these parties as well as any shortened form of the party name that the party may use; in the case of other non-party constituency nominations, also the identifying name;

2. for Land list elections, the names of the parties and any shortened form of the party name that the party may use as well as the names of the first five candidates from the admitted Land lists.

(3) The order of the Land lists of parties is determined by the number of second votes that the parties received at the last Bundestag election in the Land concerned. The remaining Land lists then follow in alphabetical order of the names of the parties. The order of the constituency nominations is determined by the order of the corresponding Land lists. Other constituency nominations then follow in alphabetical order of the names of the parties or identifying names.

Part V

The Poll

Section 31

Public Character of the Poll

Polling is public. The Electoral Board may remove anyone violating public order from the polling station.

Section 32

Inadmissible Electioneering and Collection of Signatures, Inadmissible Publication of Exit Poll Results

(1) During polling hours, no influence may be exerted on voters by word, sound, writing or image, and no signatures may be collected, in or around the building in which the polling station is located as well as directly in front of the entrance to the building.

(2) The publication of exit poll results is inadmissible before the end of polling hours.

Section 33

Preservation of the Secrecy of the Ballot

(1) Measures must be taken to ensure that voters can mark and fold their ballot paper in secret. Ballot boxes used to receive the ballot papers must ensure the preservation of the secrecy of the ballot.

(2) Any voting assistance permitted pursuant to section 14 subsection (5) remains unaffected. The person rendering assistance is bound to secrecy in respect of any information obtained about another person's vote in the process.

Section 34

Voting by Means of Ballot Papers

(1) Voting is by means of official ballot papers.

(2) The voter

1. casts his or her first vote by marking the ballot paper with a cross or other sign so as to clearly indicate which candidate the vote is intended for,
2. casts his or her second vote by marking the ballot paper with a cross or other sign so as to clearly indicate which Land list the vote is intended for.

The voter then folds the ballot paper in such a way that it is not possible to see how he or she has voted, and places the ballot paper in the ballot box.

Section 35

Voting by Means of Voting Machines

(1) Voting machines may be used instead of ballot papers and ballot boxes to facilitate the casting and counting of votes.

(2) Voting machines as specified in subsection (1) must guarantee the secrecy of the ballot. For use at elections to the German Bundestag, their design must be officially approved for individual elections or on a general basis. The Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community decides on the approval of a voting machine at the request of the manufacturer. The permission of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community must be obtained before an officially approved voting machine can be used. This permission may be given for individual elections or on a general basis.

(3) The Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community is authorised, by way of a statutory instrument not requiring the endorsement of the Bundesrat, to issue more detailed provisions on:

1. the prerequisites for the official approval of the design of voting machines as well as for the withdrawal and revocation of the approval,
2. the official approval procedure governing the design,
3. the procedure governing the examination of a voting machine for conformity with the officially approved design,
4. the public testing of a voting machine prior to its use,
5. the procedure governing the granting of official permission for the use of a voting machine as well as the withdrawal and the revocation of the permission,
6. the special points that have to be borne in mind in connection with the election as a result of the use of voting machines.

In the cases specified in numbers 1 and 3, the statutory instrument is issued in agreement with the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy.

(4) Section 33 subsection (1), first sentence, and subsection (2) apply accordingly for the operation of a voting machine.

Section 36

Postal Ballot

(1) When voting by postal ballot, the voter must send the Constituency Returning Officer of the constituency in which his or her polling card was issued the sealed official return envelope containing

- a) his or her polling card and,
- b) in a separate sealed ballot paper envelope, his or her ballot paper

in good time to ensure that the postal ballot return letter is received not later than 6 p.m. on election day. Section 33 subsection (2) applies accordingly.

(2) The voter or the person assisting the voter must indicate on the polling card that he or she gives an affirmation in lieu of an oath to the Constituency Returning Officer that the ballot paper has been marked either personally or in accordance with the declared intent

of the voter. The Constituency Returning Officer is responsible for accepting such an affirmation in lieu of an oath; the Constituency Returning Officer is considered an authority within the meaning of section 156 of the Criminal Code.

(3) In the event of an order from the Land government, or the body designated by it, pursuant to section 8 subsection (3), the place of the Constituency Returning Officer specified in subsection (1), first sentence, and in subsection (2) is taken by the municipal authority that has issued the polling card or the administrative authority of the district in which this municipality lies.

(4) Postal ballot return letters may be posted free of charge through any postal company made known officially before the election as letter-post items without any special form of dispatch if they are in official return envelopes. Anyone who uses a special form of dispatch must pay the amount in excess of the letter forwarding rate otherwise applicable. The Federal Government bears the costs of the free forwarding of the postal ballot return letters.

Part VI

Establishment of the Election Result

Section 37

Establishment of the Election Result in the Polling District

After polling has closed, the Electoral Board establishes how many votes have been cast in the polling district for the individual constituency nominations and Land lists.

Section 38

Establishment of the Postal Ballot Result

The Electoral Board appointed for the postal ballot establishes how many postal votes have been cast for the individual constituency nominations and Land lists.

Section 39

Invalid Votes, Rejection of Postal Ballot Return Letters, Rules for Establishing Invalidity

- (1) Votes are invalid if the ballot paper
1. has not been produced by the government,
 2. contains no markings,
 3. is valid for another constituency,
 4. does not clearly show the voter's intent,
 5. contains any addendum or reservation.

In the cases specified in numbers 1 and 2, both votes are invalid; in the case specified in number 3, only the first vote is invalid if the ballot paper is valid for another constituency in the same Land. Under the postal ballot procedure, both votes are also invalid if the ballot paper has not been deposited in an official ballot paper envelope or has been placed in a ballot paper envelope that obviously differs from the other envelopes in a manner that jeopardises the secrecy of the ballot, or contains a clearly tangible object, but has not been rejected under subsection (4) numbers 7 or 8. Where only one vote has been cast on the ballot paper, the missing vote is considered invalid.

(2) Several ballot papers in one ballot paper envelope are considered to be one ballot paper if their wording is identical or if only one of them has been marked; otherwise they count as one ballot paper with two invalid votes.

(3) If the ballot paper envelope has been handed over empty, both votes are considered invalid.

- (4) Under the postal ballot procedure, postal ballot return letters must be rejected if
1. the postal ballot return letter is not received in time,
 2. no or no valid polling card is enclosed in the official return envelope,
 3. there is no ballot paper envelope in the official return envelope,
 4. neither the official return envelope nor the ballot paper envelope is sealed,
 5. the official return envelope contains several ballot paper envelopes but not an equal number of valid polling cards bearing the prescribed affirmation in lieu of an oath,
 6. the voter or the person assisting the voter has not signed the prescribed affirmation in lieu of an oath for the postal ballot on the polling card,

7. an official ballot paper envelope has not been used,
8. a ballot paper envelope has been used which obviously differs from the other envelopes in a manner that jeopardises the secrecy of the ballot or which contains a clearly tangible object.

The senders of rejected postal ballot return letters are not counted as voters; their votes are considered not cast.

- (5) The votes of a voter who has taken part in the postal ballot do not become invalid if the voter dies before or on election day or is disqualified from voting pursuant to section 13.

Section 40

Decision of the Electoral Board

The Electoral Board decides on the validity of the votes cast and on all issues in connection with the poll and the establishment of the election result. The Constituency Electoral Committee has the right of verification.

Section 41

Establishment of the Election Result in the Constituency

The Constituency Electoral Committee establishes how many votes have been cast in the constituency for the individual constituency nominations and Land lists.

Section 42

Establishment of the Election Result for the Land Lists

- (1) The Land Electoral Committee establishes how many votes have been cast in the Land for the individual Land lists. The Federal Electoral Committee determines how many seats go to the individual Land lists.

- (2) The Land Electoral Committee establishes, on a preliminary basis, which candidates have been elected. The Land Returning Officer notifies the candidates elected and advises them that after the final establishment of the election result for the electoral area by the

Federal Electoral Committee as per subsection (3), first sentence, they attain membership of the German Bundestag with the opening of the first meeting following the election and that a refusal of membership must be declared to the Land Returning Officer.

(3) The Federal Electoral Committee establishes the election result and conclusively determines which candidates have been elected. The Federal Returning Officer notifies the candidates.

Part VII

Special Regulations for Deferred Elections and Repeat Elections

Section 43

Deferred Election

(1) A deferred election takes place

1. if the election has not been held in a constituency or a polling district,
2. if a constituency candidate dies after the admission of the constituency nomination but before the election.

(2) In the case of subsection (1) number 1, the deferred election is to take place not later than three weeks after the day of the main election. In the case of subsection (1) number 2, it may be held on the day of the main election and is to take place not later than six weeks after the day of the main election. The date of the deferred election is set by the Land Returning Officer.

(3) The deferred election takes place in accordance with the same regulations and on the same basis as the main election.

(4) In the case of a deferred election, the provisional result of the main election must be determined, established and announced immediately after the main election has been held on the basis of the votes cast.

Section 44
Repeat Election

- (1) If an election is declared wholly or partly invalid as a result of the electoral scrutiny procedure, it must be repeated as required by the respective decision.
- (2) The repeat election takes place in accordance with the same regulations, with the same nominations and, provided it is held within six months of the main election, on the basis of the same electoral registers as the main election unless the decision reached in the course of the electoral scrutiny procedure prescribes otherwise with regard to the nominations and the electoral registers.
- (3) The repeat election must take place not later than sixty days after the decision by which the election was declared invalid has entered into force. Where the election has been declared only partially invalid, no repeat election takes place if it is certain that a new German Bundestag will be elected within six months. The date of the repeat election is set by the Land Returning Officer or, in the case of a repeat election for the whole electoral area, by the Federal President.
- (4) The election result is newly established on the basis of the repeat election in accordance with the provisions of Part VI. The Returning Officers in charge pursuant to section 42 subsection (2), second sentence, and subsection (3), second sentence, notify the elected candidates and invite them to state in writing within one week whether they accept the election.

Part VIII
Attainment and Loss of Membership of the German Bundestag

Section 45
Attainment of Membership of the German Bundestag

- (1) An elected candidate attains membership of the German Bundestag after the final establishment of the election result for the electoral area by the Federal Electoral

Committee (section 42 subsection (3), first sentence) with the opening of the first meeting of the German Bundestag following the election. A refusal of membership must be declared in written form to the Land Returning Office before the first meeting. A declaration with reservations is considered a refusal. The declaration is irrevocable.

(2) In the case of succession (section 48 subsection (1)) or a repeat election (section 44), membership of the German Bundestag is attained once the Returning Officer in charge has received the declaration of acceptance in response to the notification within the prescribed period and in the prescribed form but not before the member elected as a result of the original election has vacated his or her seat. If an elected candidate refuses membership of the German Bundestag and the declaration of acceptance of the successor has been received before the opening of the first German Bundestag meeting after the election, the successor will receive membership once that meeting is opened. If the successor or the candidate elected in a repeat election fails to make a declaration or fails to make it in due form before the expiration of the legally prescribed period, the succession or election is considered accepted at the time of expiration. Subsection (1), third and fourth sentences, applies accordingly.

Section 46

Loss of Membership of the German Bundestag

- (1) A member of the German Bundestag loses his or her Bundestag membership
1. if the attainment of membership is invalid,
 2. if the election result is newly established,
 3. if he or she fails to meet one of the prerequisites for permanent eligibility for election,
 4. if he or she resigns,
 5. if the Federal Constitutional Court finds, in accordance with Article 21 paragraph (4) of the Basic Law, that the party or party branch of which the member has membership is unconstitutional.

Any grounds for loss of membership as laid down in other statutory provisions are not affected.

(2) A member of the German Bundestag whose election in the constituency is invalid nevertheless retains his or her membership of the German Bundestag if he or she was also elected on a Land list but was disregarded pursuant to section 6 subsection (4), second sentence.

(3) A resignation is only considered effective if it is declared for record to the President of the German Bundestag, to a German notary who is established within the territory where this Act applies, or to a staff member of a German mission abroad who is authorised to authenticate documents. The Bundestag member must send the declaration of resignation attested by a notary or presented to a mission abroad to the President of the Bundestag. The resignation is irrevocable.

(4) If a party or party branch is declared unconstitutional by the Federal Constitutional Court in accordance with Article 21 paragraph (4) of the Basic Law, the Bundestag members lose their membership of the German Bundestag, and their successors lose their candidacy if they were members of said party or party branch in the period between the filing of the application (section 43 of the Federal Constitutional Court Act) and the pronouncement of the decision (section 46 of the Federal Constitutional Court Act). If Bundestag members who have lost their Bundestag membership according to the first sentence were elected in constituencies, the election of a constituency representative is repeated in such constituencies, with section 44 subsections (2) to (4) applicable accordingly; in these cases, the Bundestag members who have lost their membership according to the first sentence are not allowed to stand as a candidate. If Bundestag members who have lost their Bundestag membership according to the first sentence were elected on the basis of a Land list of the party or party branch declared unconstitutional, their seats remain vacant. Otherwise, section 48 subsection (1) applies.

Section 47

Decision on Loss of Membership

- (1) A decision on loss of membership under section 46 subsection (1) is made
1. in the case of number 1, in the course of an electoral scrutiny procedure,
 2. in the case of numbers 2 and 5, by a resolution of the Council of Elders of the German Bundestag,

3. in the case of number 3, by a resolution of the Council of Elders of the German Bundestag if eligibility to stand for election has been lost as a result of a final and binding judicial decision, otherwise in the course of an electoral scrutiny procedure,
4. in the case of number 4, by the President of the German Bundestag issuing a confirmation of the declaration of resignation.

(2) If a decision on the loss of membership is made in the course of an electoral scrutiny procedure, the Bundestag membership of the member concerned ends as soon as the decision enters into force.

(3) If the Council of Elders or the President of the German Bundestag decides on the loss of membership, the Bundestag membership of the member concerned ends as soon as the decision has been taken. The decision must be taken ex officio without delay. Within two weeks of notification of the decision, the member concerned may apply for a decision on the loss of membership to be taken by the German Bundestag in the course of an electoral scrutiny procedure. Notification must be in accordance with the provisions laid down in the Administrative Service of Documents Act.

Section 48

Appointment of Successors

(1) If a candidate elected as per section 6 subsection (1) or (4) dies or informs the Land Returning Officer in writing that he or she refuses to accept membership of the Bundestag or if a Bundestag member elected as per section 6 subsection (1) or (4) dies or later withdraws from the German Bundestag for any other reason, the vacant seat is filled in accordance with the principles laid down in section 6, subsections (1), (3) and (4) by the next candidate of the party for which the elected candidate or former member stood at the election. When a successor is to be selected, any candidates on the list who have resigned from the party or become members of another party since the Land list was drawn up are not taken into consideration. The same applies to candidates who were selected as constituency candidates of that party. Candidates on the list who, as elected constituency candidates, have refused Bundestag membership or have resigned as members of the German Bundestag are also disregarded. If the list is exhausted, the seat remains vacant. The decision as to which candidate is to succeed to the seat is taken by the Land Returning

Officer. The Land Returning Officer notifies the successor and invites him or her to state in writing within one week whether he or she accepts election as a successor.

(2) If the Bundestag member vacating the seat was elected as per section 6 subsection (2), the seat remains vacant.

Part IX Final Provisions

Section 49 Contestation

Any decisions and measures directly affecting the electoral procedure may only be contested by means of the legal remedies provided by this Act and the Federal Electoral Regulations and by way of the electoral scrutiny procedure.

Section 49a Regulatory Offences

(1) A regulatory offence is committed by any person who

1. contrary to the provisions of section 11, refuses an honorary post on insubstantial grounds or evades the responsibilities of such office without sufficient excuse or,
2. contrary to the provisions of section 32 subsection (2), publishes exit poll results before the end of polling hours.

(2) A person may be punished with an administrative fine of up to five hundred euros for committing a regulatory offence as per subsection (1) number 1, or with a fine of up to fifty thousand euros for committing a regulatory offence as per subsection (1) number 2.

(3) The administrative authority within the meaning of section 36 subsection (1) number 1 of the Regulatory Offences Act is

1. for regulatory offences pursuant to subsection (1) number 1,

- a) the Constituency Returning Officer, if a person eligible to vote unjustifiably refuses to accept the office of Electoral Officer, Deputy Electoral Officer or member of the Electoral Board or of the Constituency Electoral Committee or evades the responsibilities of such office without sufficient excuse,
 - b) the Land Returning Officer, if a person eligible to vote refuses to accept the office of a member of the Land Electoral Committee or evades the responsibilities of such office without sufficient excuse,
 - c) the Federal Returning Officer, if a person eligible to vote refuses to accept the office of a member of the Federal Electoral Committee or evades the responsibilities of such office without sufficient excuse,
2. for regulatory offences pursuant to subsection (1) number 2, the Federal Returning Officer.

Section 49b

State Funds for Non-Party Constituency Nominations

(1) If candidates of a nomination submitted by eligible voters pursuant to sections 18 and 20 have obtained at least ten percent of the valid first votes cast in a constituency they will receive, per valid vote, four times the amount quoted in section 18 subsection (3), first sentence, number 1 of the Political Parties Act and increased until election day in accordance with section 18 subsection (3), third sentence, of the Political Parties Act. The funds are to be provided for in the federal budget.

(2) The candidate must apply to the President of the German Bundestag in writing for the establishment and disbursement of state funds within two months from the day of the constituent assembly of the German Bundestag; applications received after that date are not considered. The President of the German Bundestag establishes the amount and disburses the funds accordingly.

(3) The provisions of the Political Parties Act on absolute and relative upper limits do not apply.

Section 50
Election Costs

(1) The Federal Government reimburses the Länder, along with the Länder municipalities (associations of municipalities), for the necessary expenditure arising in connection with the election.

(2) The costs incurred for posting the voter's notifications and postal ballot documents as well as the refreshment allowances for the members of the Electoral Boards are reimbursed to the Länder on a separate statement basis. Each Land is reimbursed for an appropriate share of these costs if Land, local and Bundestag elections are held at the same time.

(3) The remaining costs are reimbursed by the payment of a fixed sum per person eligible to vote. It is 0.56 euros for municipalities with up to 100,000 eligible voters and 0.87 euros for municipalities with more than 100,000 eligible voters. By 30 April of each year, the President of the Federal Statistical Office must submit a report to the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community on the development of the election cost index together with a projection in accordance with Annex 1 of this Act. The resulting increases of the fixed amounts apply from the start of the year of the report and are published in the Federal Gazette by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community; fractions of 0.5 cent and above are rounded up, smaller fractions are rounded down.

(4) The Federal Government reimburses the Associations of the Blind that have expressed their willingness to produce ballot paper templates for the necessary expenditure arising from the production and distribution of the ballot paper templates.

Section 51
(Repealed)

Section 52
Federal Electoral Regulations

(1) The Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community adopts the Federal Electoral Regulations required for the implementation of this Act. It must include therein statutory provisions regarding, in particular,

1. the appointment of Returning Officers and Electoral Officers, the establishment of Electoral Committees and Electoral Boards and the activities, the quorate status and proceedings of the electoral bodies,
2. appointments to honorary electoral posts, the reimbursement of expenses to persons holding honorary electoral posts, and the fining procedure,
3. the polling hours,
4. the formation of polling districts and their notification to the public,
5. the individual preconditions concerning entry in the electoral registers, the keeping of such registers, their correction and closure, consultation of the electoral registers, objections to and complaints against the electoral register and the notification of eligible voters,
6. the individual preconditions concerning the granting of polling cards and their issuance as well as objections to and complaints against the refusal of polling cards,
7. proof of compliance with the preconditions concerning eligibility to vote and to stand for election,
8. the procedure to be followed by the electoral bodies in accordance with section 18 subsections (2) to (4a),
9. the submission, content and form of nominations and relevant documents, their examination, the correction of deficiencies, their admission; complaints against decisions made by the Constituency Electoral Committee and the Land Electoral Committee as well as the announcement of nominations,
10. the form and content of the ballot paper and the ballot paper envelope,
11. the provision, furnishing and notification to the public of the polling stations as well as devices ensuring the secrecy of the ballot and polling booths,
12. voting, also any special arrangements required to meet special conditions,
13. the postal ballot,
14. making and accepting affirmations in lieu of an oath
15. voting in hospitals and long-term care facilities, monasteries and convents, residential premises with limited access as well as socio-therapeutic correctional facilities and prisons,

16. the establishment of the election results, their communication and announcement and the notification of the elected candidates,
17. the conduct of deferred elections and repeat elections as well as the appointment of successors.

(2) The statutory provisions do not require the endorsement of the Bundesrat.

(3) If the Bundestag is dissolved, the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community is authorised to shorten the periods and deadlines prescribed in the Federal Elections Act and the Federal Electoral Regulations by statutory instrument and without the endorsement of the Bundesrat.

(4) (Repealed)

Section 53

Transitional Provision

Any disqualification from voting or ineligibility to stand for election which is not due to a judicial decision within the meaning of section 13 of the version applying from 1 July 2019 or a judicial decision within the meaning of section 15 subsection (2) number 2 may not be stored in the population register pursuant to section 3 subsection (2) number 1 letter a of the Federal Act on Registration.

Section 54

Periods, Deadlines and Form

(1) The periods and deadlines provided for in this Act and in the Federal Electoral Regulations adopted on the basis of this Act are not extended or changed if the last day of the period in question or a particular date falls on a Saturday, Sunday or a statutory or legally protected public holiday. Restoration of the status quo ante is precluded.

(2) Unless otherwise provided for in this Act or in the Federal Electoral Regulations adopted on the basis of this Act, obligatory declarations must bear a personal handwritten signature and their original must be available at the authority responsible.

Section 55
Reform Commission

A Reform Commission is established at the German Bundestag to deal with issues of electoral law and develop recommendations. It also deals with the right to vote from the age of 16, the duration of the legislative term and makes proposals for modernising parliamentary work. In addition, the Reform Commission will propose measures for achieving equal representation of men and women on the lists of candidates and in the German Bundestag. The Commission is to present its findings by 30 June 2023 at the latest. A decision setting up the Commission, to be passed by the German Bundestag without delay, will regulate more specific matters.