



The Federal Chancellor and the Chancellery



The
Federal Government

*The Federal Chancellor
and the Chancellery*

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INTRODUCTION

Responsibility for Germany



Dear citizens,

This Federal Government has taken on responsibility for Germany. We want to improve security in our country and secure peace in Europe so that we can continue to live together in freedom. We want to renew the promise of prosperity for all and promote togetherness. With these aims in mind, we will invest, reform, and get Germany back on track for growth.

The tasks facing us are great. But our country's strengths are much greater still. They lie in the innovative power of our economy and the hard work and dedication of our citizens. Through our shared efforts, we can get Germany moving again. I hope that everyone in Germany will lend a hand with this task in the coming years.

As Federal Chancellor, I want to renew our country's promise of a brighter future. I am working for a Germany where people of all generations can live joyfully and optimistically.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Friedrich Merz'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping initial 'F'.

Friedrich Merz

The Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany

Friedrich Merz was born on 11 November 1955 in Brilon in the Sauerland region. He joined the CDU in 1972. After completing his higher education entrance qualification (Abitur) in Rütten in 1975, he carried out military service until 1976.

From 1976 to 1981, Merz studied law and political science at the University of Bonn and at Marburg University.

He passed the first state law examination in 1982. This was followed by practical legal training and then the second state law examination in 1985. From 1985 to 1986, he served

as a judge at Saarbrücken Local Court. He has been a lawyer since 1986.

From 1986 to 1989, Friedrich Merz worked for the German Chemical Industry Association (VCI).

He was a Member of the European Parliament from 1989 to 1994 and a Member of the German Bundestag from 1994 to 2009. He served as Deputy Chair of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in the Bundestag from 1998 to 2000 and again from 2002 to 2004, and as its Chair in the intervening period.

Merz worked at the international law firm Mayer Brown LLP from 2005 to 2021, first as a partner and from 2017 as senior counsel.

He was Vice President of the CDU's Economic Council from 2019 to 2021. He became a Member of the German Bundestag again in 2021 and was Chair of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group from 2022 to 2025. He has been Chair of the CDU Germany since 2022.

Friedrich Merz took office as Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany on 6 May 2025 and governs with a coalition of the CDU, CSU and SPD.



The constitutional role of the Federal Chancellor

Together with Parliament, the Federal Government shapes our country's present and future. The Federal Chancellor holds a prominent position within the Federal Government, as according to Article 65 of the Basic Law, the Chancellor determines and is "responsible for the general guidelines of policy".

The Federal Chancellor has the right to form a government and makes proposals to the Federal President regarding

the appointment and dismissal of Federal Ministers. The law does not provide for the involvement of the Bundestag in forming the Federal Cabinet. In practice, however, the Federal Chancellor has to coordinate with his or her party, parliamentary group as well as the coalition partners.

The Federal Chancellor is elected by the Bundestag in a secret ballot at the proposal of the Federal President.

The Federal Chancellery and its Heads

As the central coordination body for all government policy, the Chancellery has exceptional political significance. The staff of the Federal Chancellery advise the Federal Chancellor, making sure that the Chancellor's policy guidelines are complied with and ensuring the consistency of all government policy.

The role of the Chancellery is described in the Chancellor's budget plan as follows: "To fulfil his or her tasks, the Chancellor relies on the Federal Chancellery, which is run by the Head of the Federal Chancellery. The Chancellery must keep the Chancellor informed

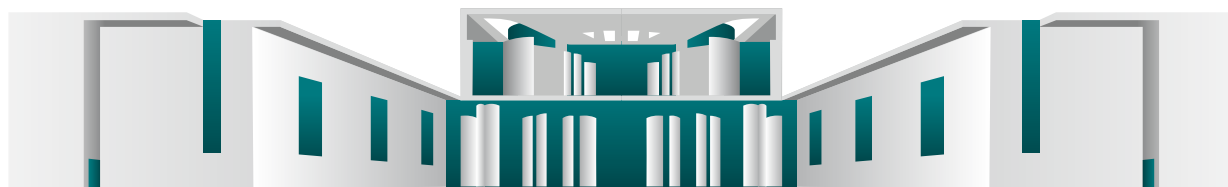
of current general policy issues and the work of the Federal Ministries. It must prepare the decisions of the Chancellor and ensure that they are implemented."

The Head of the Federal Chancellery is Federal Minister Thorsten Frei. He is responsible for running the Chancellery, is a close adviser to the Chancellor, coordinates cooperation between the Ministries and acts as the Federal Government Commissioner for the Federal Intelligence Services. He serves as an important linchpin between Parliament, the Länder (federal states) and groups in society.



The Federal Chancellery has a staff of approx. 900 spread across its various Directorates-General. They liaise with the relevant Federal Ministries and inform the Federal Chancellor of the political projects being pursued there. That is why the corresponding units at the Chancellery

are often referred to as “mirror divisions”. They monitor the work done by all Federal Ministries to ensure consistency. The seven Directorates-General are responsible for the following policy areas:



DIRECTORATE-GENERAL 3:
Social, health, labour market, environment and societal policy

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL 2:
Foreign, security and development policy

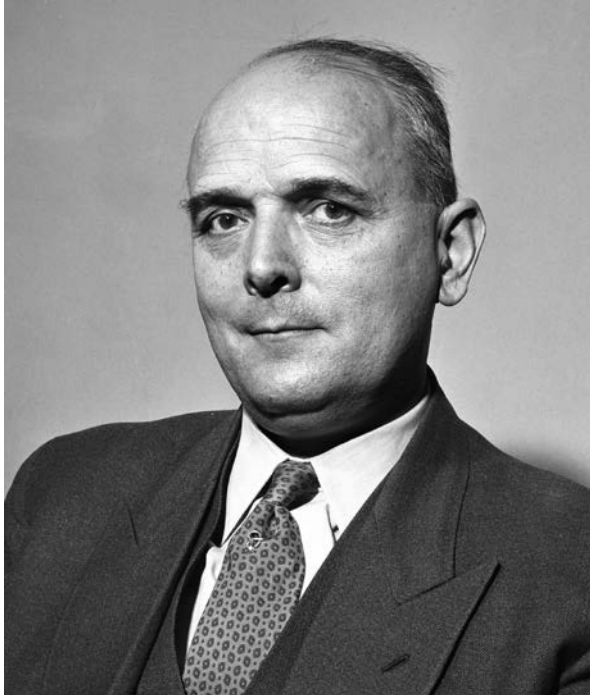
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL 1:
Central Directorate-General; Cabinet and Parliament; Federal Government and federal state affairs

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL 5:
European policy

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL 4:
Economic and financial policy

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL 6:
Digital and state modernisation; domestic and legal policy

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL 7:
Federal Intelligence Service; coordination of Federal Intelligence Services



Franz-Josef Wuermeling became the first Head of the Federal Chancellery in 1949.

There have been 22 State Secretaries and Federal Ministers at the head of the Chancellery since the Federal Republic of Germany was founded. The first was State Secretary Franz-Josef Wuermeling, who became Head of the Federal Chancellery on 17 October 1949.

Many Heads of the Federal Chancellery have gone on to hold other posts in the Federal Government. Karl Carstens became Federal President in 1979, while Frank-Walter Steinmeier was first elected to this office in 2017 and subsequently re-elected in 2022.

The Ministers of State and the State Secretary

The Ministers of State and the State Secretary are top-level officials of the Federal Chancellery.



Minister of State
Dr Michael Meister

has particular responsibility for supporting cooperation between the federal and state governments.



Minister of State
Dr Christiane
Schenderlein

is responsible for Sport and Volunteering and is committed to recognising and supporting voluntary work in Germany. The Federal Government's sports policy focuses on promoting value-based elite sport and major international sporting events.



Minister of State
Dr Wolfram Weimer

represents the cultural and media policy interests of the Federal Government and shapes the framework conditions for a free and independent media landscape. He is also responsible for financing numerous cultural institutions, including the international broadcaster Deutsche Welle and the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation.



State Secretary
Dr Jörg Semmler

is responsible for staffing and organisational matters at the Federal Chancellery, and for matters relating to the coordination and working methods employed within the Federal Government.



*The Press and
Information Office
of the Federal
Government*

The Press and Information Office of the Federal Government (BPA) reports to the Federal Chancellor. It is headed by State Secretary Stefan Kornelius, who is also Spokesperson of the Federal Government. He is assisted by Deputy Spokespersons Steffen Meyer and Sebastian Hille as well as the Deputy Head of the BPA, Esther Uleer. The BPA is the interface between politics and the public and has two core tasks: One of these tasks is to inform citizens and the media about the Federal Government's policies. Another is to inform the Federal Chancellor, the Federal Government and the Federal President about reporting in Germany and abroad. It also coordinates its press and public relations work with that of the federal ministries.

The BPA operates the websites **www.bundesregierung.de** and **www.bundestkanzler.de**. Social media such as Facebook, X, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Mastodon and WhatsApp provide citizens with up-to-date information on and insights into the work of the government. It also provides information on events such as the open day.

Planning, construction and architecture of the Federal Chancellery

Following German unification, the capital city Berlin resumed its role as the centre of national politics. The decision to relocate Parliament and the seat of Government to Berlin was taken by the Bundestag in 1991. The plans for the Government district on the bend of the River Spree, home to the German Parliament and the Chancellery, were based on the 1993 award-winning design of architects Axel Schultes and Charlotte Frank. They incorporate a 102-metre-wide ribbon of federal buildings, the “Band des Bundes”, which spans the Spree to link the east and west of the long-divided city.

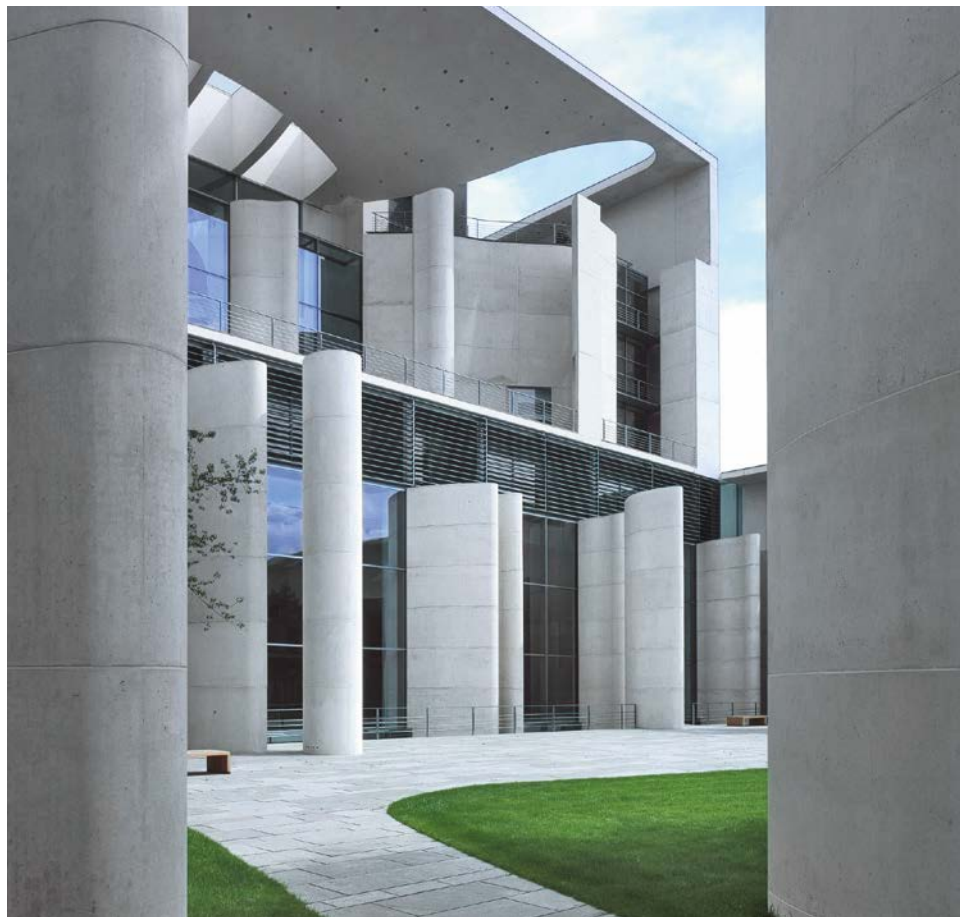
The symbolic focal point is the seat of the German Bundestag, the Reichstag building. The new Bundestag buildings – the Paul Löbe Building and the Marie Elisabeth Lüders Building – are located at the eastern end of the complex, while the Jakob Kaiser Building stands to the southeast of the Reichstag. The western end of the ribbon is formed by the Federal Chancellery and the central administration building and the two administrative wings, as well as the garden, the park and the new extension building on the other side of the Spree.





Axel Schultes and Charlotte Frank were also successful in the Federal Chancellery Architectural Competition. In the jury's view, their design distinguished itself by its unique and striking character and had a convincing air of elegance.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl turned the first sod on 4 February 1997. On 2 May 2001, the keys were handed over to his successor, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, in an official ceremony which was followed by the first cabinet meeting in the new cabinet room.



The main building is an imposing and distinctive landmark. The clear lines of the 36-metre-high cube tower several storeys above the two administrative wings, while remaining lower than the Reichstag – one of the design parameters for all buildings in the bend of the Spree.

The 5th to 8th floors of the building house the offices of the Federal Chancellor, the Head of the Federal Chancellery, the Ministers of State and their closest staff. The large and small cabinet rooms can be found on the sixth floor, while the banquet area is on the fifth. The fourth floor houses a bug-proof room for the situation centre. Technical equipment rooms occupy the second and third floors, while the international conference hall and the press briefing room are situated on the first floor.







The Kanzleramtsgarten and the so-called Kanzleramtspark on the Spree are directly adjacent to the west façade. The extension building, which has its own helicopter platform, is being built on the other side of the Spree.

The main building is adorned with large, open, arched façades to the north and south and is flanked by two 18-metre-high administrative wings on the fifth floor. They contain 370 offices for Chancellery staff, with windows opening onto 12 glass conservatories planted with evergreen trees. Each of the identically equipped and furnished offices is about 20 square metres in size. The two office wings, which differ in length due to the course of the Spree, are clad in pale sandstone. The east-west façades are finished in white exposed concrete.



The architects Axel Schultes and Charlotte Frank have translated a creative, forward-looking idea into a functional, modern building. The address of the Federal Chancellery is:

Willy-Brandt-Straße 1
10557 Berlin





Planned extension to the Federal Chancellery

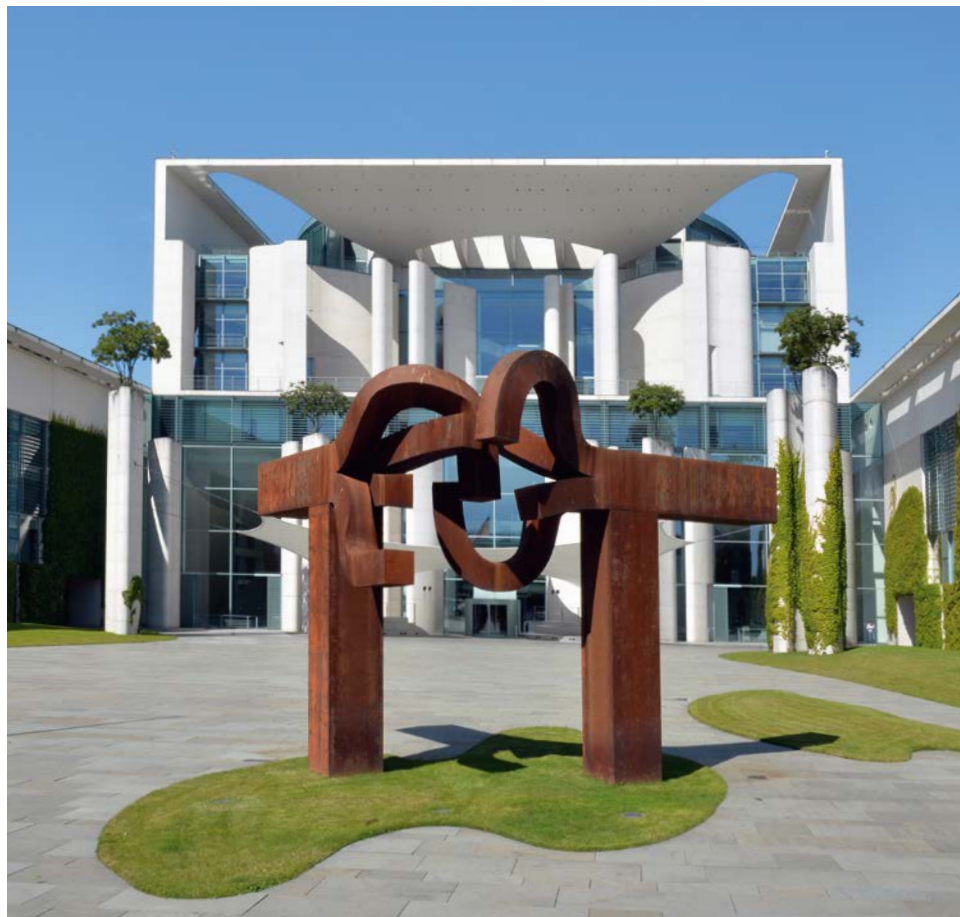
The Chancellery's range of tasks has grown over the course of the years, as has the number of staff: from 410 to approx. 900 at present. As the existing building was designed for no more than 450 workstations, around 250 staff members were moved to other buildings once staff levels started to rise. An extension is to be built in the Chancellery Park so that all staff members can work together again at the same site. Up to 400 additional offices are to be created in a semi-circular six-storey structure. Two single-storey buildings with a canteen, a childcare facility, an event space and a raised helicopter platform are to be connected to this structure. A modern mail and logistics area will be constructed next to these buildings. The extension will be connected to the existing building via a pedestrian bridge across the Spree that will be open to the public.

Artwork in the Federal Chancellery

All considerations concerning art in the Chancellery are inspired by the architecture itself. The clear geometrical outline of the spacious building opposite the Reichstag reflects the modernity of united Germany in its capital, Berlin. The aim from the outset was therefore to include not only classic modern works of art, but also to invite contemporary artists to produce pieces for the building. This was not limited to German art as Germany is also a forum for trends in the international art scene.



The most prominent work of art in the Chancellery is by the sculptor Eduardo Chillada (1924–2002): The Spanish artist from the Basque region created the impressive, monumental sculpture in the ceremonial courtyard, a 5.5-metre iron form entitled “Berlin” that weighs 87.5 tonnes. The two intertwined arms, almost but not quite touching, embody the concepts of division and unity – clearly also in a political sense. A symbol of the office of Federal Chancellor, it reflects the unifying force of tolerance and political moderation. It has acquired a level of significance similar to that of the famous “Large Two Forms” by Henry Moore in front of the old Federal Chancellery in Bonn.





The German painter Markus Lüpertz was invited to develop a theme for the six rounded walls of the central staircase in the interior entrance area. Lüpertz proposed six “colour spaces”, drawing on old masters’ handbooks and the mediaeval understanding of virtues and temperaments.

The colour blue stands for wisdom, while umber (the colour of lions) depicts power and strength. Red represents the virtue of courage, ochre gold symbolises justice, and the combination of green and white signifies prudence.

“Die Philosophin” (The Philosopher), a bronze statue by Lüpertz, stands at the foot of the northern front stairwell and is intended to epitomise the contemplative human being.

The sculptor Rainer Kriester (1935–2002), born in Plauen, in the south-eastern German region of Vogtland, described his sculptures as heads or stelae. Most of his pieces were created in Albenga, a small town in the Ligurian hills, where he lived and worked from 1982, dividing his time between Italy and Berlin. The material he chose was the local limestone – a porous, off-white substance with a barely perceptible blush of pink. Kriester retained the closed form of the block in which it came out of the quarry, transforming only its surface.

The lines are intuitively geometric. Triangles, circles and stars intersect and penetrate each other, giving the piece a mysterious, archaic appearance. The sculpture is a prominent feature in the foyer of the main building.

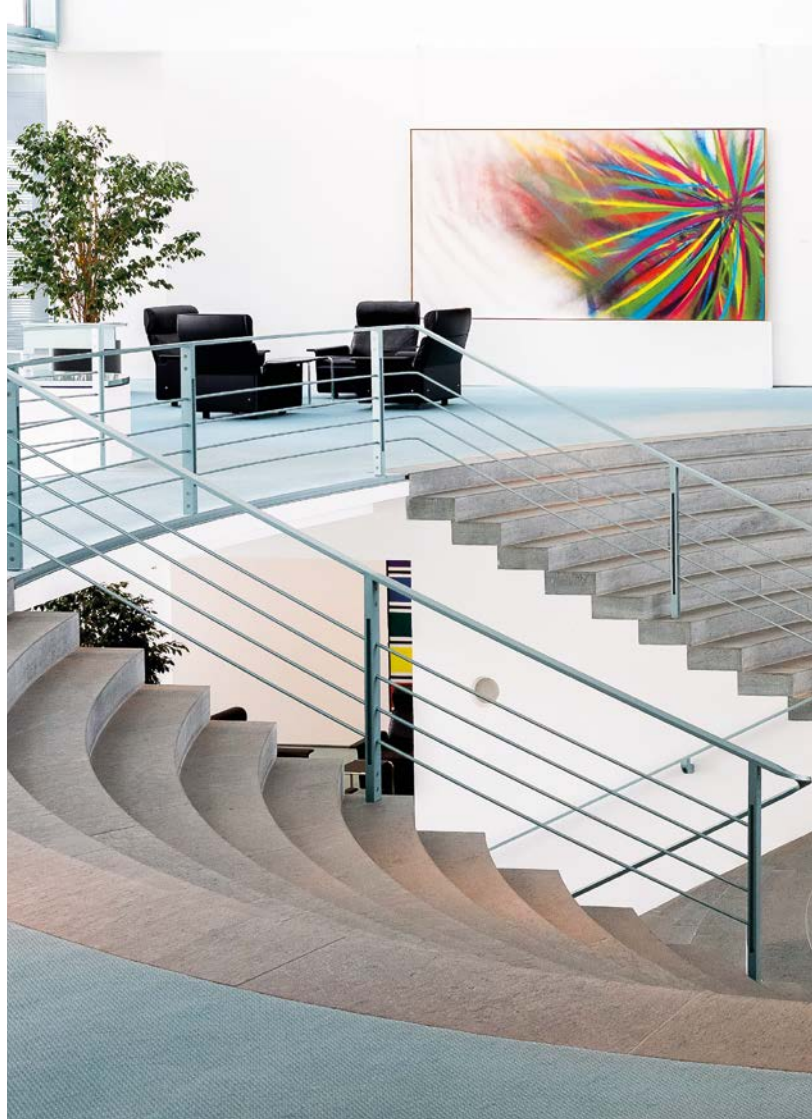






The pictures “Orientalisches Märchen” (Oriental Fairytale) by August Macke (1887–1914) in the “Kleine Lage” meeting room and “Sonntagabend der Bergbauern” (Sunday Evening with the Mountain Farmers) by the Expressionist painter Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880–1938) in the cabinet room were previously on display at the Bonn Federal Chancellery. The decision to display these pictures in the Chancellery was, in part, a symbolic gesture towards the artists. Their works were defamed in the 1937 “Degenerate Art” exhibition in Munich, which the National Socialists used to justify banning certain works which did not fit into their idea of German art.

A wide range spectrum of artworks was selected for the office and conference areas. These items include purchases and loans, as well as works chosen from the Government collection. The sky lobby stretching over three floors – from the Chancellor's seventh floor, via the Cabinet's sixth floor, through to the banquet hall on the fifth floor – plays a particularly prominent role in the Chancellery. The expansive rooms are flooded with light, and the large wall surfaces are ideal for displaying a high-quality selection of international contemporary art. On the fifth floor pieces by Franz Ackermann and Michel Majerus are shown alongside paintings by Corinne Wasmuht, one of Germany's most significant present-day painters. Works by Katharina Grosse and A.R. Penck from the Böckmann collection adorn the walls on the seventh floor.





The gallery of Chancellors

*The portraits of the former
Federal Chancellors can
be found on the first floor
of the Chancellery.*

Konrad Adenauer (1949–1963), CDU,

was elected as the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949. He remained in office for 14 years. Before becoming Chancellor, Adenauer was the President of the Parliamentary Council, which drafted the Basic Law in 1948. Adenauer's name is inextricably linked to the democratic and economic reconstruction of West Germany in the wake of the Second World War. He is also remembered for anchoring the country firmly in the community of free countries in the West. The Federal Republic of Germany became a sovereign state again in 1955. In the context of European integration, Adenauer was particularly committed to reconciliation with France. Together with Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, he laid the foundations for German-Jewish reconciliation. The difficult process of integrating displaced people and war refugees was also handled successfully during Adenauer's time as Federal Chancellor.



Painted by Hans Jürgen Kallmann (1963)

Ludwig Erhard (1963–1966), CDU,

masterminded the currency reform in 1948. The economics professor advocated a liberal economic order from an early stage. As Minister of Economics in Adenauer's Government, Erhard is regarded as the father of Germany's economic miracle and the social market economy. Ludwig Erhard became Chancellor in 1963 following Konrad Adenauer's resignation. With regard to foreign policy, Erhard worked to promote relations with the United States and Israel in particular. After the 1965 elections, the CDU/CSU entered into a coalition with the FDP. Economic and foreign policy problems led to the break-up of this coalition in 1966.



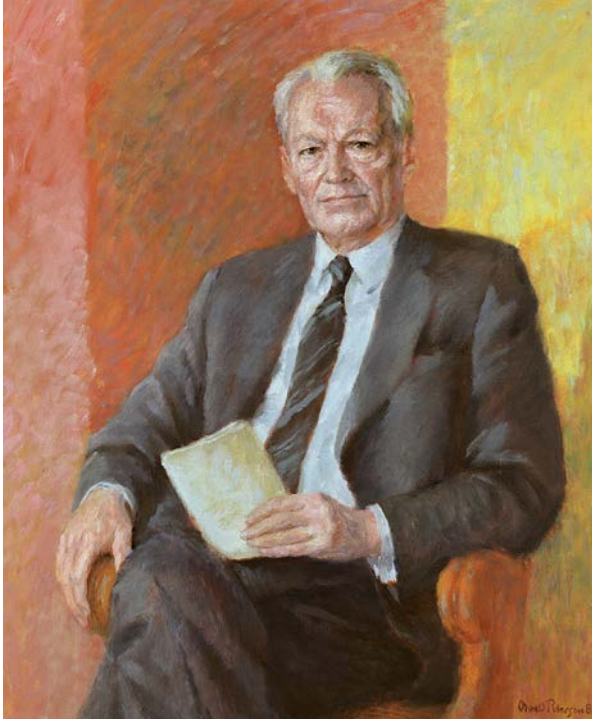
Painted by Günter Rittner (1974)



Painted by Günter Rittner (1976)

Kurt Georg Kiesinger (1966–1969), CDU,

was Minister-President of Baden-Württemberg from 1958 to 1966. He was elected Chancellor of a coalition government consisting of the CDU/CSU and the SPD in 1966. His Government's economic and financial policies were particularly successful. In the area of foreign policy, it shifted its focus to improve relations with its European neighbours. The first steps towards a new Ostpolitik were taken under Kiesinger. The most important domestic issue – the adoption of the Emergency Acts – provoked vehement student protests by the so-called extra-parliamentary opposition.



Painted by Oswald Petersen (1985)

Willy Brandt (1969–1974), SPD,

was already Deputy Chancellor in the grand coalition. The SPD and the FDP formed a Government in October 1969 and elected Brandt as the first Social Democratic Chancellor. His term in office was characterised by socio-political liberalisation, “daring more democracy” and a new Ostpolitik. Almost 30 years after the end of the war, final recognition of the Oder-Neisse line still provoked strong political resistance. In 1971, Willy Brandt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his commitment to reconciliation between the West and the East. Later on, domestic and economic problems coincided with the uncovering of an East German spy among Brandt’s closest staff, and he resigned in 1974.

Helmut Schmidt (1974–1982), SPD,

was elected by the German Bundestag as Willy Brandt's successor. He continued the socio-liberal coalition. Previously he had served as Minister of Defence and subsequently as Minister of Economics and Finance in Brandt's cabinet. Schmidt's term of office was dominated by the efforts to tackle the consequences of the oil crisis, deal with the terrorism of the Red Army Faction (RAF) and defend the controversial decision to station new American missiles in Germany (NATO double-track decision). He led a coalition with the FDP, which left the Government in 1982 to form a coalition with the CDU/CSU. Schmidt then lost the chancellorship following a constructive vote of no-confidence in the Bundestag.



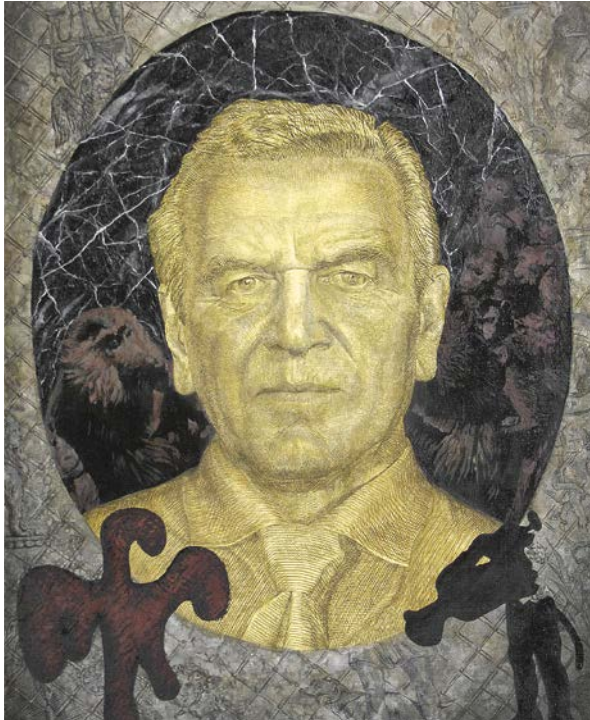
Painted by Bernhard Heisig (1986)

Helmut Kohl (1982–1998), CDU,

was elected Chancellor in 1982 following a constructive vote of no-confidence in the Bundestag. The coalition of CDU/CSU and FDP was confirmed in early Bundestag elections in 1983. In coalition with the FDP, Kohl continued the policy of détente and intensified transatlantic relations. After the peaceful revolution in the GDR, the historic opportunity to reunite Germany arose in 1990. Kohl saw this through at home and ensured that it was accompanied by appropriate foreign policy measures. He believed that German unity and European integration were inextricably linked. The widening and deepening of the European Union and the introduction of the euro dominated his Government programme during the 1990s.



Painted by Albrecht Gehse (2003)



Painted by Jörg Immendorff (2007)

Gerhard Schröder (1998–2005), SPD,

was first elected Chancellor on 27 October 1998 with a majority from the SPD and Alliance 90/The Greens. Key political measures taken included the reform of nationality law and the phasing out of nuclear power. The central foreign policy issue was the NATO operation in Kosovo, the first wartime mission for German soldiers since the Second World War. After Schröder's re-election in 2002, his second term of office was marked by the decision against military involvement in Iraq and the Agenda 2010 reform programme. After the SPD lost a number of federal state elections, Gerhard Schröder submitted a motion for a vote of confidence in the Bundestag under Article 68 of the Basic Law. The Bundestag was then dissolved by the Federal President and early Bundestag elections were held on 18 September 2005.



A painting of former Federal Chancellor Merkel does not exist yet.

Angela Merkel (2005–2021), CDU,

was elected Federal Chancellor on 22 November 2005. Merkel, who has a doctorate in physics, was the first woman to lead the government. She grew up in the GDR, and went on to shape politics in Germany over the course of four legislative periods. Her time in office consisted of three legislative periods in coalition with the SPD and one period in coalition with the FDP. The start of her time as Federal Chancellor was dominated by the restructuring of the national budget and an economic upswing. The global financial crisis of 2008 gave rise to new political challenges. Merkel's second term in office was shaped by the euro rescue package, the decision to phase out nuclear power sooner than envisaged and the suspension of compulsory military service. When millions of refugees headed for Europe in 2015, Germany took in more than a million people. Merkel's assertion that "We can do this!" remains engraved in people's memories. With regard to same-sex marriage, Merkel cleared the way for a change to the law by allowing a free vote in the Bundestag. The last two years of Angela Merkel's time as Federal Chancellor were dominated by the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

Olaf Scholz (2021–2025), SPD,

was elected as the ninth Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany in December 2021. He led the first “traffic light coalition” at the federal level, consisting of the SPD, Alliance 90/The Greens and the FDP. His time in office was characterised by international crises, above all Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. The Chancellor spoke of it as a “turning point” that led to a reorientation of Germany’s security policy. In addition to major financial and military support for Ukraine, his government increased military spending and initiated a change in energy policy. In terms of domestic policy, Scholz focused on digitalisation, climate protection and the modernisation of state and socio-political structures. After the government was unable to agree on the 2025 federal budget, Scholz dismissed Finance Minister Lindner (FDP) in November 2024. The FDP then left the coalition. With the vote of confidence, the Chancellor paved the way for early parliamentary elections in February 2025. His government remained in office on an acting basis until the election of his successor in May.



A painting of former Federal Chancellor Scholz does not exist yet.



Seats of Chancellors since 1949

Following the establishment of the two German states in 1949 and the decision to make Bonn the provisional capital of the Federal Republic, Palais Schaumburg – a villa built in 1860 – was chosen as the office of the Chancellor. Adenauer, Erhard, Kiesinger and Brandt headed a house that was practically bursting at the seams. Floating files, carbon copies and corded telephones were integral parts of their working lives.

The Chancellery in Bonn served as the office of Chancellors Schmidt, Kohl and Schröder between 1976 and 1999. Following the decision by the German Bundestag on 20 June 1991 to move the seat of the Government and Parliament to Berlin, preparations began for building a new Chancellery in the capital.





From 1999 until the completion of the new Chancellery in May 2001, the building of the former GDR State Council served as the provisional office of the Chancellor. The building had been completed in 1964. East German leaders had incorporated a portal from the Stadtschloss (City Palace) into the façade. The Palace, from whose balcony Karl Liebknecht had proclaimed the Free Socialist Republic of Germany on 9 November 1918, had been demolished in 1950.

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