

# **Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany**

## **- Extract -**

Version as promulgated on 23 May 1949 (Federal Law Gazette p. 1),  
as last amended by the Act of 21 July 2010 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 944)

### **I. Basic Rights**

#### **Article 9**

#### **[Freedom of association]**

- (1) All Germans shall have the right to form corporations and other associations.
- (2) Associations whose aims or activities contravene the criminal laws, or that are directed against the constitutional order or the concept of international understanding, shall be prohibited.
- (3) The right to form associations to safeguard and improve working and economic conditions shall be guaranteed to every individual and to every occupation or profession. Agreements that restrict or seek to impair this right shall be null and void; measures directed to this end shall be unlawful. Measures taken pursuant to Article 12a, to paragraphs (2) and (3) of Article 35, to paragraph (4) of Article 87a, or to Article 91 may not be directed against industrial disputes engaged in by associations within the meaning of the first sentence of this paragraph in order to safeguard and improve working and economic conditions.

## **II. The Federation and the Länder**

### **Article 21**

#### **[Political Parties]**

(1) Political parties shall participate in the formation of the political will of the people. They may be freely established. Their internal organisation must conform to democratic principles. They must publicly account for their assets and for the sources and use of their funds.

(2) Parties that, by reason of their aims or the behaviour of their adherents, seek to undermine or abolish the free democratic basic order or to endanger the existence of the Federal Republic of Germany shall be unconstitutional. The Federal Constitutional Court shall rule on the question of unconstitutionality.

(3) Details shall be regulated by federal laws.

## **III. The Bundestag**

### **Article 38**

#### **[Elections]**

(1) Members of the German Bundestag shall be elected in general, direct, free, equal and secret elections. They shall be representatives of the whole people, not bound by orders or instructions, and responsible only to their conscience.

(2) Any person who has attained the age of eighteen shall be entitled to vote; any person who has attained the age of majority may be elected.

(3) Details shall be regulated by a federal law.

## **Article 39**

### **[Electoral term – Convening]**

- (1) Save the following provisions, the Bundestag shall be elected for four years. Its term shall end when a new Bundestag convenes. New elections shall be held no sooner than forty-six months and no later than forty-eight months after the electoral term begins. If the Bundestag is dissolved, new elections shall be held within sixty days.
- (2) The Bundestag shall convene no later than the thirtieth day after the elections.
- (3) The Bundestag shall determine when its sessions shall be adjourned and resumed. The President of the Bundestag may convene it at an earlier date. He shall be obliged to do so if one third of the Members, the Federal President or the Federal Chancellor so demand.

## **Article 41**

### **[Scrutiny of Elections]**

- (1) Scrutiny of elections shall be the responsibility of the Bundestag. It shall also decide whether a Member has lost his seat.
- (2) Complaints against such decisions of the Bundestag may be lodged with the Federal Constitutional Court.
- (3) Details shall be regulated by a federal law.

## **Article 48**

### **[Candidature - Protection of membership – Remuneration]**

- (1) Every candidate for election to the Bundestag shall be entitled to the leave necessary for his election campaign.
- (2) No one may be prevented from accepting or exercising the office of Member of the Bundestag. No one may be given notice of dismissal or discharged from employment on this ground.
- (3) Members shall be entitled to remuneration adequate to ensure their independence. They shall be entitled to the free use of all publicly owned means of transport. Details shall be regulated by a federal law.

## **VI. The Federal Government**

### **Article 63**

#### **[Election of the Federal Chancellor]**

- (1) The Federal Chancellor shall be elected by the Bundestag without debate on the proposal of the Federal President.
- (2) The person who receives the votes of a majority of the Members of the Bundestag shall be elected. The person elected shall be appointed by the Federal President.
- (3) If the person proposed by the Federal President is not elected, the Bundestag may elect a Federal Chancellor within fourteen days after the ballot by the votes of more than one half of its Members.
- (4) If no Federal Chancellor is elected within this period, a new election shall take place without delay, in which the person who receives the largest number of votes shall be elected. If the person elected receives the votes of a majority of the Members of the

Bundestag, the Federal President must appoint him within seven days after the election. If the person elected does not receive such a majority, then within seven days the Federal President shall either appoint him or dissolve the Bundestag.

#### **Article 68**

##### **[Vote of confidence]**

(1) If a motion of the Federal Chancellor for a vote of confidence is not supported by the majority of the Members of the Bundestag, the Federal President, upon the proposal of the Federal Chancellor, may dissolve the Bundestag within twenty-one days. The right of dissolution shall lapse as soon as the Bundestag elects another Federal Chancellor by the vote of a majority of its Members.

(2) Forty-eight hours shall elapse between the motion and the vote.

### **XI. Transitional and concluding provisions**

#### **Article 116**

##### **[Definition of “German” – Restoration of citizenship]**

(1) Unless otherwise provided by a law, a German within the meaning of this Basic Law is a person who possesses German citizenship or who has been admitted to the territory of the German Reich within the boundaries of 31 December 1937 as a refugee or expellee of German ethnic origin or as the spouse or descendant of such person.

(2) Former German citizens who between 30 January 1933 and 8 May 1945 were deprived of their citizenship on political, racial or religious grounds, and their descendants shall on application have their citizenship restored. They shall be deemed never to have been deprived of their citizenship if they have established their domicile in Germany after 8 May 1945 and have not expressed a contrary intention.