

THÜRINGER  
LANDTAG



# Ort der Begegnung

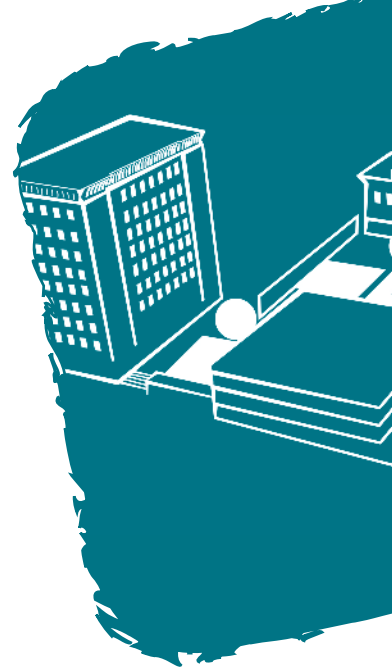


Informationen in Englisch



The coat of arms of Thuringia displays a gold-crowned and armed lion with eight horizontal red and silver stripes on a blue background. It dates back to a coat of arms of Landgrave Conrad of Thuringia from around the year 1200.

The lion is surrounded by eight silver stars. Seven of them stand for the individual states from which Thuringia was formed in 1920. An eighth star representing the former Prussian territories was added in 1945. The present coat of arms dates back to 1990.



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Dear Fellow Citizens,

How does our democracy work? Modern democratic countries rely on the division of power, the so-called separation of powers. A real democracy is characterised by the fact that power is divided into three independent areas in terms of human resources and organisation.

In our state, the executive power lies with the Thuringian state government with its ministries and authorities. The judicial power (judiciary) lies with the Thuringian constitutional court and the courts of the state. The legislative power lies with the Thuringian state parliament. All three divisions of the state have different heads who work independently of each other.

Here in the Thuringian state parliament, the democratically elected deputies discuss the best future concepts for the state and pass laws. There are often heated debates in the process because each party believes that it has the best ideas for Thuringia. You can be part of this profoundly democratic process. This brochure is intended to help you explore in detail the workings of democracy and of your state parliament. The Thuringian state parliament is an open house and a meeting point.

We extend a warm welcome to you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Birgit Pommer".

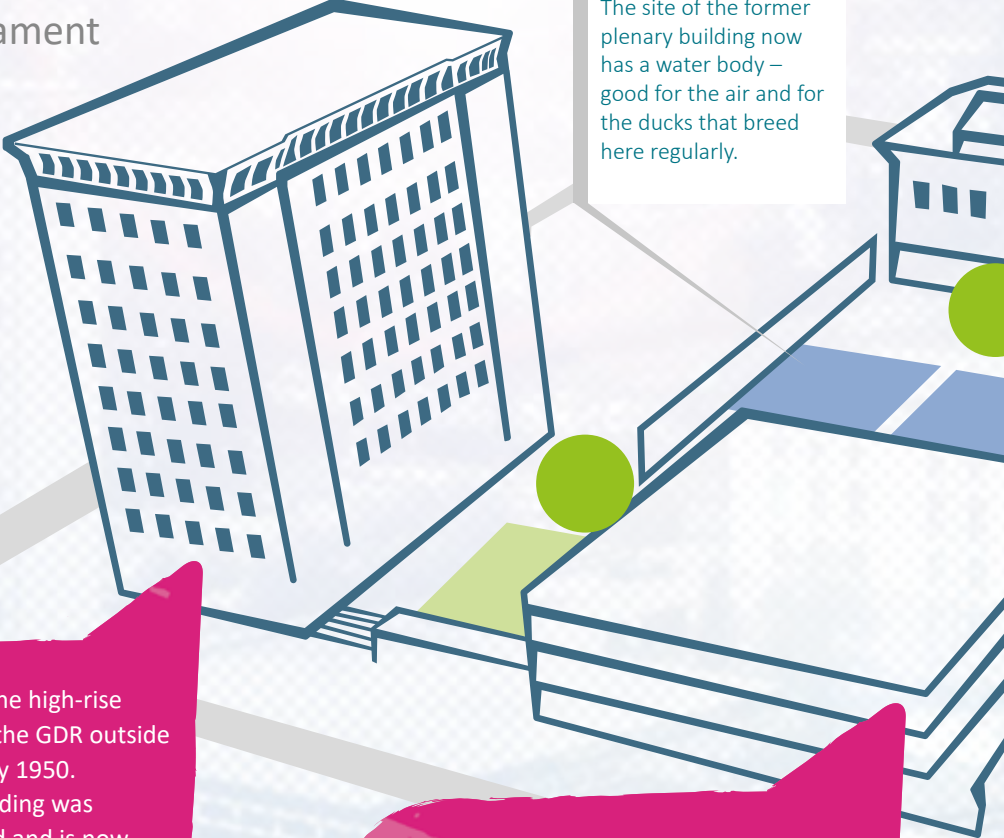
Yours, Birgit Pommer  
President of the State Parliament

# State parliament building

## Three houses - one parliament

The state parliament is a complex of several buildings and a history book made of stone.


The oldest part dates back to the 1930s and has thus also experienced some bad times. The high-rise building was added in around 1950 and the new plenary hall and the large functional building with the present-day main entrance were built around the turn of the millennium.



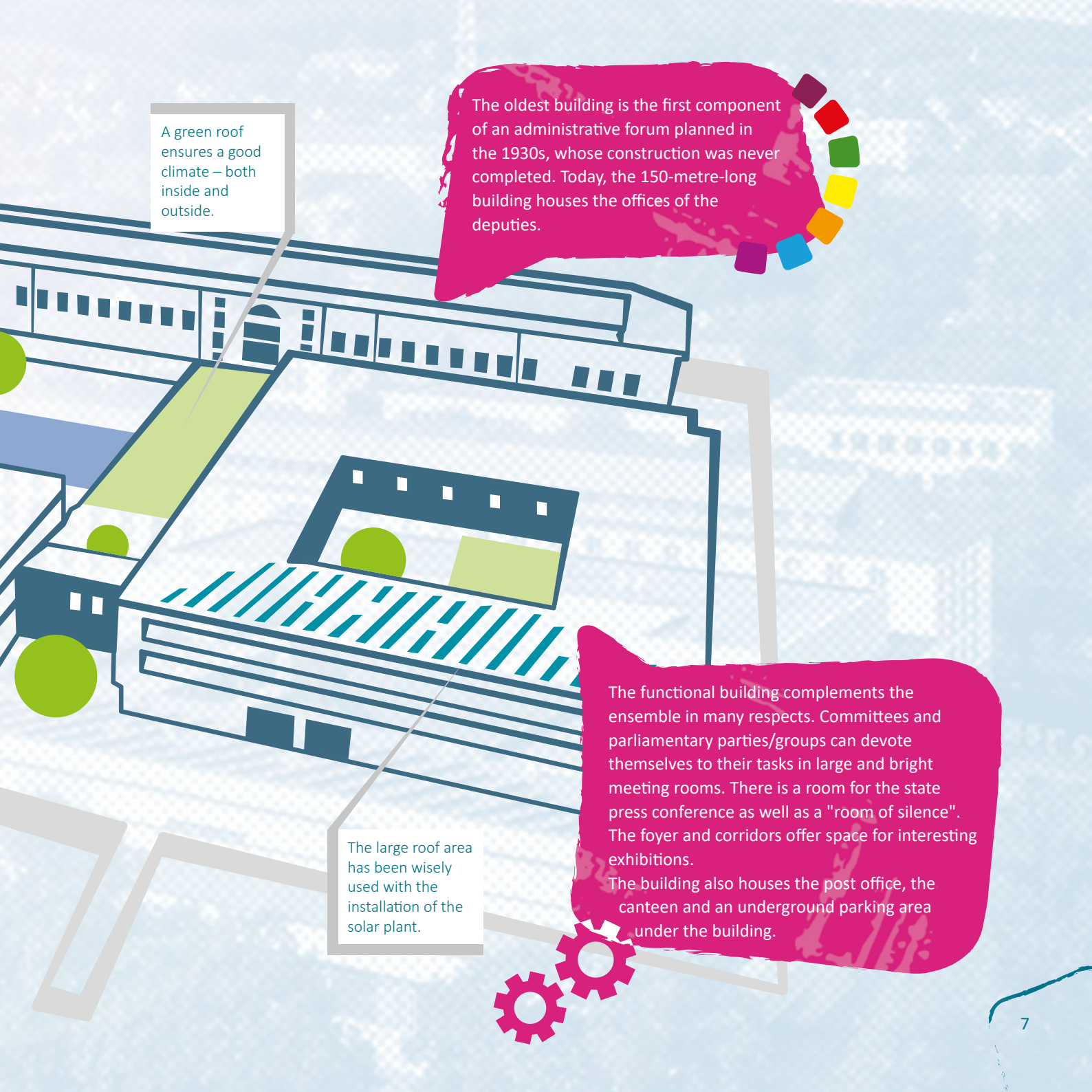
The site of the former plenary building now has a water body – good for the air and for the ducks that breed here regularly.



The construction of the high-rise building - the first in the GDR outside Berlin - started in May 1950. In the 1990s, the building was extensively renovated and is now the office of the state parliament administration. The office of the president of the state parliament is located on the top floor.



The plenary hall is the centre of the Thuringian state parliament. Openness and transparency are a cornerstone of democracy. This is also reflected in the architecture of this building, whose foundation stone was laid in April 2001. As an open house, it also allows a direct view of parliamentary events through its windows.



A green roof ensures a good climate – both inside and outside.

The oldest building is the first component of an administrative forum planned in the 1930s, whose construction was never completed. Today, the 150-metre-long building houses the offices of the deputies.

The large roof area has been wisely used with the installation of the solar plant.

The functional building complements the ensemble in many respects. Committees and parliamentary parties/groups can devote themselves to their tasks in large and bright meeting rooms. There is a room for the state press conference as well as a "room of silence". The foyer and corridors offer space for interesting exhibitions. The building also houses the post office, the canteen and an underground parking area under the building.



# Deputies

## The elected representatives

The state parliament is the central location of political debate in Thuringia.

The most important task of the state parliament is to represent the opinions and interests of the people of Thuringia. Deputies are the elected representatives of the people and they fulfil this task. They also promote the process of shaping public opinion and policies by means of discussions in parliament, and they pass laws.

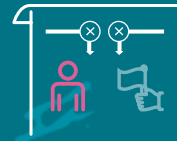
Deputies from the same parties come together to form parliamentary parties/groups. Within the parliamentary parties/groups, they organise their work together, distribute tasks in the committees and can thus contribute their very own expertise.



The state parliament is newly elected every **5** years.



Elections are general, direct, free, equal and secret.



**2** People have votes in a state election. The first vote is for a person and the second is for a party.



Thuringia has **44** constituencies.



Deputies are also called members of the state parliament (Mdl). In their function as representatives of the people, they cannot be bound by orders or instructions. They are bound only by their own conscience.

In addition, all deputies are entitled to speak in the Thuringian state parliament and to ask questions and submit table motions.

They also take part in polls and elections, for example, they elect the prime minister and members of other bodies.

However, deputies are also bound by numerous duties. They must respect the constitution and work for the good of the people. As a result, they control, for example, the activities of the state government, decide on the budget and even participate in the affairs of the European Union.



**90** Deputies are represented in the 7th Thuringian state parliament.



Only **1/3** of these are women. Although their overall number has increased over the years, the number of female deputies this time is less than during the previous electoral term.

#### Art. 53 Thuringian Constitution

- (3) Deputies are the representatives of all citizens of the state. They are not bound by orders and instructions, and are responsible only to their conscience.
- (4) Every deputy has the right to speak in the parliament, to bring forward questions and motions and to participate in polls and elections.
- (5) Every deputy has the duty to respect the constitution and use his or her power for the good of the state and all its citizens.



Deputies with the same party or list affiliation can come together to form parliamentary parties/groups.



5 Parliamentary parties and two parliamentary group are represented in the 7th Thuringian state parliament



"Governing political groups" are mostly of one mind with the government. Currently, these are The Left, SPD and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen.



Parliamentary parties/groups of the opposition thus often represent a different opinion than the governing politicians.


These are currently AfD, CDU, FDP and BfTh.

# Plenary hall

## Heart of the Thuringian state parliament

The plenum represents the deputies as a whole. The plenary hall is where the readings of bills and the polls take place. In debates, the deputies deliver their speeches and the government responds to

questions from the deputies. The president and her vice-presidents chair the meetings.



The lion is the heraldic animal of Thuringia. The stars represent the small states from which Thuringia emerged.

Chair - sessions are chaired by the president of the state parliament or one of her representatives. There are also secretaries. For example, they maintain the list of speakers, receive requests to speak and help to count votes, especially in the case of roll-call votes.

State government - the prime minister and the ministers and state secretaries of individual departments sit to the right and left of the chair.

Lectern - the height-adjustable lectern is the place from which people speak.



Deputies use polling booths during personal elections.

Visitors - sessions are open to the public and take place in the plenary hall. All sessions are also streamed online.

Traditionally, the so-called conservative parties sit to the right of the chair, while the progressive parties sit to the left. The seating arrangement is determined after each election.

Parliamentary party benches – each parliamentary party and parliamentary group has a block in the circle of the plenary hall, in which the deputies of a party sit together.

Since the seat distribution changes after every election, tables can be individually mounted.



Seat distribution

29 | Die Linke

21 | CDU

19 | AfD

8 | SPD

5 | Bündnis 90/  
Die Grünen

4 | FDP

4 | Bürger für  
Thüringen



Tasks of the parliamentary parties/groups:

Participation in the shaping of policies in the state parliament

Controlling the activities of the government

Coordination of parliamentary activity

# Committees

## Workshops of the parliament

In the committees, deputies meet to prepare laws on specific topics for the plenum. They are newly appointed and staffed in every electoral term and reflect the state government's departmental responsibilities.

Seats in the committees are distributed according to the balance of power of the plenum. Each parliamentary party/group then decides for itself which deputy will work in which committee.

### TASKS OF THE COMMITTEES

- They draw up recommendations for resolutions proposing whether an initiative should be rejected or accepted, possibly with amendments.
- Committees also perform the information and monitoring functions of the parliament.

An investigation committee is set up if matters, whose clarification is of public interest, need to be investigated. Each parliamentary party/group must be represented in this committee.



The committees mostly meet in the week before the plenary session week to prepare for it.



Their sessions are usually not open to public. However, public parts of committee sessions are streamed live as of late.



Committees involve the public in shaping opinions. This is done through hearings or online discussions.





1442 bills have  
been introduced so far.



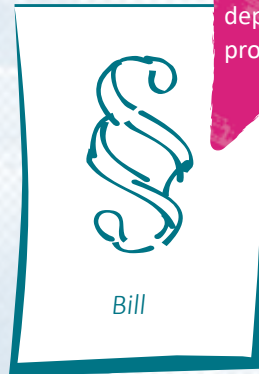
975 laws  
have been  
passed so far.



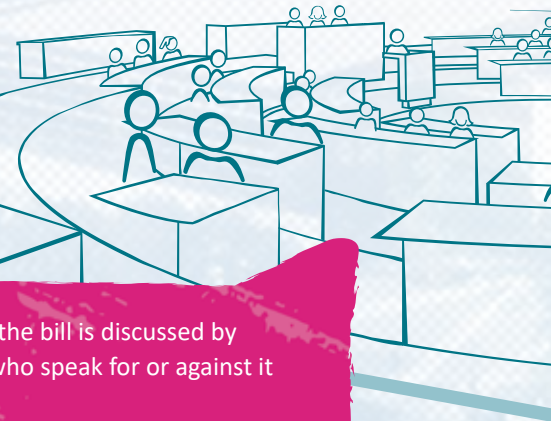
20 000  
visitors come to the  
Thuringian state  
parliament every year.

## How is a law formed?

The state government,  
one or more  
parliamentary parties/  
groups or at least ten  
deputies can make a  
proposal for a law.



The proposal is distributed to all  
deputies, parliamentary parties/groups  
and the state government in the form  
of so-called "circulars (Drucksache)".



In parliamentary sessions, the bill is discussed by  
deputies from all parties, who speak for or against it  
or propose improvements.  
This is called a reading, although nothing is actually  
read out. A bill is debated up to three times in a plenum.  
If there are requests for amendments or if there is no  
prospect of a majority, the parliament can pass the bill  
to a committee.

The parliament decides which committees deal with the bill. The bill is discussed in the committees and amendments are drafted to improve the bill and to increase the chances of a majority in the plenum. In the end, the committee(s) agree on a proposed resolution for the parliament.

At most twice, the draft is passed on to one or more committees and a proposed resolution is expected.



After a successful final vote the law is signed by the president of the state parliament, and published. It thus enters into force.

Successful final vote



Rejection



The bill is rejected if it does not find a majority and the committees do not reach a compromise.



# Submission of individual concerns



## Petitions

Every Thuringian can submit a petition to the Petition Committee of the Thuringian state parliament. The Petition Committee may decide to publish a petition.



## Citizens' motion

The aim is to submit to the state parliament items for shaping policies within the scope of its competence. This requires at least 50,000 votes of support. If the citizens' motion is declared admissible by the president of the state parliament, the Thuringian state parliament finalises its decision on the motion within four months.

## Petition for referendum

The subject matter must be an elaborated bill in the area of competence of the local state legislation. People who are at least 18 years old and have lived in Thuringia for three months can submit a petition for referendum. 5000 signatures are needed for the procedure to be admitted.

## Referendum

There are two options in the referendum: either the bill rejected by the state parliament and introduced by the petition for referendum is put to the vote alone, or the state parliament puts its own bill to the vote against it (Art. 82 Para. 7 Sentence 2 State Constitution), so that those entitled to vote can decide between alternatives.



For **6** weeks, a petition can be signed online.



After **1500** signatures, there is a public hearing in the Petition Committee.



**50000** votes are needed for the citizens' motion to bring subject matters pertaining to the shaping of policies or bills to the Thuringian state parliament.



# A look back on the state parliament

After reunification, the Thuringian state parliament met for the first time in the Deutsches Nationaltheater (German National Theatre) in Weimar. The first president of the state parliament was Gottfried Müller (CDU), former minister for media policy of the GDR in the then cabinet of Lothar de Maizière.

The deputies drafted and passed about 90 percent of the laws, which is the usual standard of a federal state.

25 Oct. 1990

1990- 1994

16 Oct. 1994

25 Oct. 1993

The constitution of the Free State of Thuringia was adopted at the Wartburg Castle near Eisenach ...

... and validated through a referendum with a majority of over 70%.

Law on direct democracy reform

Nov. 2003

Since the 4th electoral term, numerous youth-related events, such as the state competition held nationwide "Jugend debattiert" (Youth debates) and "Jugend im Parlament" (Youth in parliament), were conducted.

Since 2005

Since the 7th electoral term, representatives of civil society have been talking to the president of the state parliament, Birgit Keller (THE LEFT), about current state policy issues through "Am Pult der Zeit".

Since 2020

26 Jan. 2012

The NSU investigation committee started its work.



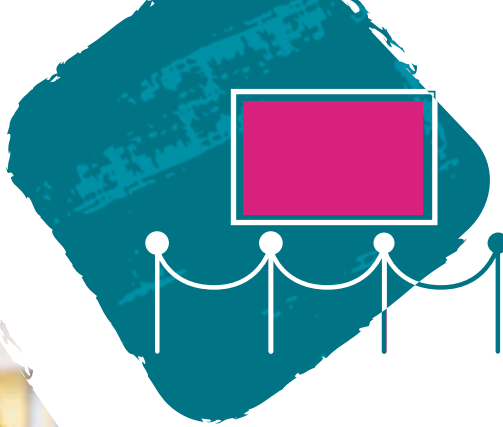
39601 circulars  
in the last 30 years



858 plenary debates  
in the last 30 years



30370 Petitions  
have been processed since 1990.



## Exhibitions in the state parliament

Art and politics come together in the state parliament. The spectrum includes exhibitions by Thuringian artists, documentaries related to history and democracy as well as presentations on the work of associations, federations and institutions to introduce deputies to citizens who may visit the state parliament.

Around 600 exhibitions have been shown in the state parliament since 1992. Among them are works by renowned artists like Werner Tübke, Alfred Traugott Mörstedt, Horst Sakulowski, HAP Grieshaber and Beate Debus as well as Ali Kurt Baumgarten.

### ARE YOU AN ARTIST?

"Forum Hobbykunst" in the high-rise building of the state parliament offers a space for everyone who wishes to present their artistic works to the public. Every Thuringian can apply to the state parliament for such an exhibition!

> [ausstellungen@thueringer-landtag.de](mailto:ausstellungen@thueringer-landtag.de)



### CURRENT AND PLANNED EXHIBITIONS

[www.thueringer-landtag.de](http://www.thueringer-landtag.de) > Landtag > Veranstaltungen

# Visit the state parliament



## EXPERIENCE A GUIDED TOUR

On all weekdays, you can get an insight into the working of the parliament from the Visitor Service staff.



## MEET THE DEPUTIES

Afterwards, you will have the opportunity to speak with the deputies of the Thuringian state parliament.



## ATTEND A PLENARY SESSION

You can, of course, also attend the monthly plenary sessions and watch the plenum live from the public gallery.



## PARLIAMENT LIVE

[liveth.thueringer-landtag.de](http://liveth.thueringer-landtag.de)



## VISITOR PROGRAMME ON WEEKDAYS

Approx. 60 min. guided tour/lecture on the building and functioning of the parliament

Approx. 60 min. round of talks with deputies of the state parliamentary parties



## VISITOR PROGRAMME ON SESSION DAYS

Approx. 60 min. lecture on the functioning of the parliament

Approx. 60 min. participation in the plenary session from the public gallery

Approx. 30 min. debriefing



All further information and an application form can be found on the following website:

[www.thueringer-landtag.de](http://www.thueringer-landtag.de)

> Besucher\*innendienst

> Besuch im Landtag



The Visitor Service looks forward to your visit and already wishes you a “warm welcome!”.

Until then, you can also find us on Instagram.



