

# GERMANY'S NEW FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

## THE KEY PLAYERS AND POSITIONS IN THE GRAND COALITION

DECEMBER 2013



Almost three months after the elections and following the approval of members of the Social Democrats (SPD), Germany has a new government.

Ministers in the 'grand coalition' of the Christian Democrats (CDU, with their Bavarian Christian Social Union partners, CSU) and Social Democrats are expected to be sworn today (17 December).

Angela Merkel (CDU) continues as Chancellor for a third term. However, the SPD succeeded in claiming important ministries and is widely seen as the winner of the negotiations.

The SPD leader, Sigmar Gabriel - who now becomes Germany's Vice-Chancellor - will lead the Ministry of Economics and Energy. He will manage Germany's 'energy transition', one of the biggest projects of the new government with significant impact on economy and industry.

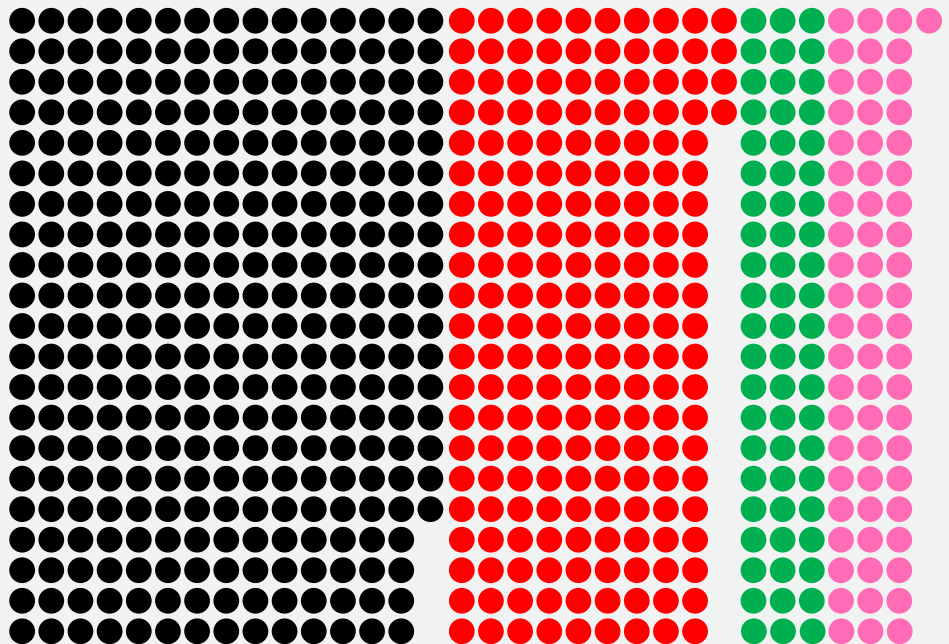
Andrea Nahles (SPD) takes a key role as Minister of Labour and Social Affairs. She will oversee the introduction of a federal minimum wage, and changes in employment and social policy will clearly bear a social-democratic mark.

However, the CDU keeps a majority of key portfolios. Ursula von der Leyen (CDU) will become the first female Minister of Defence in Germany, and this presents a big opportunity for her to position herself as the successor to Angela Merkel.

A surprising move was the inclusion of consumer protection in the justice department (under an SPD minister, Heiko Maas). There is likely to be a move towards stronger civil and consumer rights. Another surprising change came at the Ministry for Transport (under Alexander Dobrindt, CSU), which now has responsibility for broadband infrastructure.

### THE 18<sup>TH</sup> BUNDESTAG

SEATS IN PARLIAMENT  
631 SEATS; 316 NEEDED FOR A MAJORITY



**CDU/CSU + SPD GRAND COALITION**  
504 SEATS - MAJORITY OF 377 SEATS  
● CDU/CSU - 311  
● SPD - 193

**OPPOSITION**  
127 SEATS  
● GREENS - 63  
● THE LEFT - 64

# WHO'S WHO IN GERMANY'S NEW GOVERNMENT?

CC/FELICHER GLYN LOWE



## CHANCELLERY ANGELA MERKEL

CDU

Angela Merkel will lead the government for a third term - although she has already indicated that this will be her last term as Chancellor.

She has already made a few changes in the staffing of the chancellery: the former environment minister, Peter Altmaier (CDU), succeeds Ronald Pofalla (CDU) as Head of the Federal Chancellery.

Monika Grütters and Helge Braun (both CDU) will be state ministers (for culture and for coordination with the states respectively). Aydan Özoguz (SPD) is the new Minister of State for Migration, Refugees and Immigration, becoming the first Muslim to take a place in the federal government.

DOMINIK BUTZMANN / SPD



## MINISTRY OF ECONOMICS AND ENERGY SIGMAR GABRIEL

SPD

Sigmar Gabriel, the SPD leader, becomes Vice-Chancellor and head of this new and powerful ministry.

Energy policy has been a priority for the Social Democrats with the forthcoming review of energy policy and the issue of rising energy costs. The new ministry will oversee all aspects of German energy policy, ending a four year-long power struggle between the economics and environment federal ministries.

This clarification is essential since the 'energy transition' will be the first major political task for the new government. Energy expert and Green Party member Rainer Baake becomes State Secretary.

The new ministry will also lead the 'digital agenda', led by former justice minister Brigitte Zypries as a state secretary. She gained expertise in this areas in recent years as a member of a parliamentary commission on the internet.

DOMINIK BUTZMANN / SPD



## MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS ANDREA NAHLES

SPD

Andrea Nahles is a left-wing Social Democrat and currently General Secretary of her party. She takes over a key ministry for the SPD.

Nahles will handle one of the most controversial issues of the federal election, overseeing the introduction of a federal minimum wage and issues such as service contracts, temporary employment and pensions.

The coalition agreement already includes details on some of the planned initiatives (such as the minimum wage), but labour and social policy will still remain controversial throughout the next term.

Nahles will be supported by Jörg Asmussen as State Secretary, currently a member of the European Central Bank's governing council. He is one of the Social Democrats' most respected financial experts and has previously served as a state secretary.

BUNDESMINISTERIUM DER FINANZEN



## MINISTRY OF FINANCE WOLFGANG SCHÄUBLE

CDU

Wolfgang Schäuble will remain in office as Minister of Finance and is likely to continue to play a big role in European financial policy.

The Christian Democrats strongly opposed the Social Democrats' plans for tax reform and won this point in the coalition negotiations, so there will most likely be no change to tax policy.

Schäuble's main field of activity will be handling the euro crisis, but he is likely to expect some resistance in terms of the measures to be taken from the Social Democrats, notably Sigmar Gabriel and Frank-Walter Steinmeier. This is in contrast to the previous government, when the Liberals left the handling of the euro crisis to Schäuble.

As one of the most experienced ministers in the new government, he is a key player for Germany and Europe.

SPD-SAAR



## MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND CONSUMER RIGHTS HEIKO MAAS

SPD

Heiko Maas becomes Minister of Justice, with the portfolio now including consumer protection (which was previously part of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture).

Maas' State Secretary, Gerd Billen, is the current head of the Federation of German Consumer Organisations (VZBV) and has a deep understanding of consumer rights. With him being a former consumer rights lobbyist, the Ministry is set to place a strong focus on improving civil and consumer rights.

The split from the food and agriculture brief may also indicate that the focus of consumer policy will shift from food towards other products (such as financial or digital services).

HENNING SCHACHT



## MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE ALEXANDER DOBRINDT

CSU

Alexander Dobrindt will take charge of transport and IT infrastructure, especially broadband development.

While the name of the ministry may suggest a consolidation of competencies regarding digital policy, there has been no real streamlining. On the contrary: a power struggle is likely between the many ministries overseeing IT policy. Funding is likely to be one of the biggest challenges for the new 'internet minister', who has never before held a government position.

As General Secretary of the CSU, Dobrindt was known for his harsh criticism of the CDU's Liberal (FDP) coalition partner during the last term. Dorothee Bär (CSU), one of the Christian Democrats' most renowned experts on IT policy, will serve as Parliamentary State Secretary.



#### MINISTRY OF HEALTH HERMANN GRÖHE

CDU

The CDU General Secretary is a surprising choice as health minister, having not previously demonstrated much expertise or interest in this area.

The coalition agreement already foresees some health policy actions for the new government, but does not set out long-term plans for major challenges such as financing of the health insurance system and healthcare reform.

It is likely to take some time until Gröhe establishes his own agenda as health minister.



#### MINISTRY OF DEFENCE URSULA VON DER LEYEN

CDU

A former labour minister, Ursula von der Leyen becomes Germany's first female defence minister. Von der Leyen is seen as a possible successor to Angela Merkel as CDU leader and frontrunner in the 2017 elections.

With regard to her new portfolio, issues will include the handling of several defence projects such as the delayed A400M aircraft, issues with the MH90 helicopter, the Euro Hawk drone programme, and structural reform for the armed forces, which has been dragging on for years.

The German presence in Afghanistan ends next year and bringing troops home from the Federal Republic's first war could be a huge coup for von der Leyen.

Her parliamentary state secretaries will be Markus Grübel (CDU) and Ralf Brauksiepe (CDU), who held the same position in von der Leyen's labour ministry.



#### MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR THOMAS DE MAIZIÈRE

CDU

Thomas de Maizière, who has been defence minister for two years, returns to the position he held from 2009 to 2011.

He has recently struggled with several revelations, including the axing of the Euro Hawk drone programme at great expense. Although very loyal and disciplined, it was unclear whether de Maizière would return to the government.

He follows hardliner Hans-Peter Friedrich (who becomes agriculture minister) at the Ministry of the Interior. De Maizière will have to handle the fallout from the NSA scandal and civil rights issues.



#### FOREIGN OFFICE FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER

SPD

Frank-Walter Steinmeier returns to the role he held from 2005 to 2009.

Generally accepted as a skilled and influential foreign affairs expert, Steinmeier can be expected to run his ministry efficiently. His main challenge will be to consolidate Germany's positioning within the international community, especially with regard to German engagement in crisis regions, shaping the future of the EU, and handling relations with the United States in the aftermath of the NSA scandal.

With Merkel and Schäuble both very present in the euro crisis debate, there is potential for tension in this area given the different approaches of the CDU and CSU.

Steinmeier's state ministers will be Maria Böhmer (CDU) – a former migration minister in the federal chancellery – and Michael Roth (SPD).



#### MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT GERD MÜLLER

CSU

The Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, which is responsible for Germany's development aid policies, will be headed by Bavarian Christian Democrat Gerd Müller.

Müller is an expert on questions of international agricultural policy and has served as a state secretary in the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection since 2005.



#### MINISTRY FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE HANS-PETER FRIEDRICH

CSU

Hans-Peter Friedrich of the Bavarian Christian Democrats, formerly Minister of the Interior, will head the Ministry for Food and Agriculture.

The food and agriculture brief has been separated from consumer rights, responsibility for which has gone to the Ministry of Justice. Friedrich's new portfolio is therefore less prestigious and the move can be seen as a step down.



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH**  
**JOHANNA WANKA** CDU

Johanna Wanka will remain in office as Minister of Education and Research, a position she took up only in February.

Given her short time in office, she has not had much opportunity to position herself and introduce her own policies. In addition, education policy is for the most part a matter for the states.

Wanka served as an education minister in several state governments and brings a lot of experience in her field.



**MINISTRY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND BUILDING**  
**BARBARA HENDRICKS** SPD

In addition to a change in leadership, the environment ministry see some restructuring of its portfolio. Responsibility for all energy issues transfers to the Ministry of Economics, while the environment department wins responsibility for building matters (including energy-saving measures, such as insulation of buildings).

The ministry will be headed by Barbara Hendricks, a former SPD treasurer. Hendricks has some experience as a senior official in various ministries, but is not particularly known for her environmental expertise. She was chosen primarily to satisfy internal party regional quotas.

Jochen Flasbarth, who has served as President of the Federal Environmental Agency up until now, will be one of her state secretaries. He is a critic of genetic engineering and a keen supporter of action against climate change.



**MINISTRY OF FAMILY AFFAIRS, SENIOR CITIZENS, WOMEN AND YOUTH**  
**MANUELA SCHWESIG** SPD

The family ministry will be headed by Manuela Schwesig, who has five years' experience as Minister for Social Affairs (among other portfolios) in the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

Schwesig is recognised as strong advocate of family support and gender equality. Her primary challenge will be to deal with the aging society, to facilitate new models of balancing work and leisure, and to enhance family life.

## OTHER KEY POSITIONS



**CDU GENERAL SECRETARY**  
**PETER TAUBER**

Peter Tauber succeeds Hermann Gröhe, who becomes Minister of Health.

Tauber represents the liberal wing of the CDU, and advocated a coalition government with the Greens.

He will be elected officially next year and one of his first tasks will be to organise the CDU campaign for the European Parliament elections in May 2014.



**CSU GENERAL SECRETARY**  
**ANDREAS SCHEUER**

Andreas Scheuer, a former Parliamentary State Secretary in the Ministry for Transport, becomes General Secretary of the Bavarian Christian Social Union.

Scheuer's main task will be to ensure that Bavarian interests are heard in Berlin.



**SPD GROUP LEADER**  
**THOMAS OPPERMANN**

Thomas Oppermann becomes head of the SPD parliamentary group and will have a big influence on the grand coalition's policies.

He was party whip during the last term and led the Parliamentary Control Panel on Intelligence Services, where he was one of the prominent faces of the opposition during the NSA scandal.