

GERMANY: ACHIEVING A DYNAMIC REBIRTH

A Proposal for the Modernisation of the State
within the Legislative Term 2021–2025

Imprint

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Preamble

The performance of the German Federal Republic in comparison with other nation states is remarkable. Nevertheless, there is a considerable need for modernisation. State performance is being put to the test not only by acute crises such as the Corona pandemic or the floods in Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia, but also by long-term challenges such as climate change, international security developments, migration and digitalisation. The pressure to deliver is further increased by global systems competition, which challenges our own economic models and the efficiency of our administration, as well as challenging our social values.

The pandemic has shown that Germany is a resilient country, even against this backdrop. Many envy us. Many want to move to Germany. Nonetheless, many things happen too slowly, too many people are involved, many processes seem unprepared for a crisis, and we are lagging behind in terms of digitalisation. The pandemic has heightened the relevance of these criticisms in the daily lives of our people. The largely unanimous conclusion is that the German state must be comprehensively modernised. Politicians have already picked up on these challenges. As a result, almost all election manifestos for the Bundestag elections promised reforms. For the first time, the CDU/CSU has dedicated an entire chapter to this topic under the motto "Decade of Modernisation".

The Bundestag elections and the beginning of a new legislative period are an opportunity for a new coalition and a new federal government to quickly and sustainably set the course for the essential modernisation of the German state.

Many stakeholders have contributed recommendations, including an array of experts from politics, administration, business and academia with their book NEUSTAAT, the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in the German Bundestag, the Federal Government's Standards Control Council, the non-profit platform NEXT, the National eGovernment Competence Centre (NEGZ), the Federation of German Industries and a large number of academic institutions.

The common feature of these proposals is that they are often far-reaching in their ambition and scope. However, the modernisation of a state system that has for a long time proven successful in many respects does not require only big ideas, but also the right practical mechanisms to allow for concrete changes and the careful adjustment of interrelated elements.

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation has accordingly invited experts from the worlds of politics (federal, state and local), administration, business and academia, under the leadership of former Federal Minister Dr Thomas de Maizière, to draw up concrete and practical proposals for the modernisation of the German State.

To this end, three main focal points have been identified, which are very closely interrelated. The key area of "**Political Governance and State Building**" focuses on strategic issues of the political decision-making processes at the federal level as well as between the federal government and the states. "**Administrative Modernisation and Digitalisation**" aims to improve the concrete personnel and work processes of the state in order to provide better services to citizens. Finally, under the heading "**Crisis Preparation and Crisis Response**", proposals are put forward for strengthening the resilience of the state in dealing with crises.

The objective of this paper is to formulate proposals that meet the following requirements: being achievable - actionable - financially feasible. These proposals must have the support of a democratic majority and be politically feasible. They must be able to be relatively quick to implement within the statutory and legal framework. And: they must be financially feasible within the given legislative period and keeping in mind the scarcity of available resources.

This research paper was jointly formulated by a panel of experts. Even if not all participants agree with all the views expressed in it, the paper as a whole is supported by all of them.

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Political Governance and State Building

1. The “departmental” principle enshrined in the German Constitution (Art. 65) reinforces the responsibilities of the respective ministries. This has led to compartmentalisation in the thinking of individual ministries. But interdepartmental challenges require integrated approaches. Topics and tasks must be approached jointly and with commitment from a variety of perspectives. This requires the federal government (and also the state governments) to approach their work in a different way than before. The guiding principle should be competency for the accomplishment of the respective tasks on the basis of common goals and measurable indicators. In order to be able to make decisions on **inter-divisional tasks** (e.g. digitalisation), it is necessary to establish a clear allocation of responsibilities across the departmental boundaries.

The sheer size of the ministries, some of which have grown considerably in recent years, weakens top-level political control. The increasing concentration of administrative tasks in the ministerial bureaucracy, belonging more to the realm of implementation than political control, is a misguided approach. The sheer density of decision-making involving many details overloads work processes at the ministerial level. Incorrectly attributed implementation competences lead to a decision backlog and demotivates subordinate institutions. In order to increase the capacity for control, federal ministries should therefore be reduced in size and their subsidiary higher federal authorities should be strengthened in a complementary manner, by means of a thorough examination of their respective responsibilities.

We therefore propose: The “Departmental” principle be redefined for inter-departmental tasks, with vertical and horizontal responsibilities and implementation powers. The decision-making authority for the implementation of federal tasks to be consistently delegated to subordinate higher authorities or equivalent institutions.

2. According to the model of the German Federal Constitution, the Federation does not have its own administration. The federal states implement the laws of the Federation by means of their own administrations. In the meantime, however, a large number of **Higher Federal Authorities** have developed unsystematically, implementing laws and operating funding as if they were federal state authorities. Some agencies work for several departments, such as the Federal Office of Administration, while others allocate funding for which they were not intended. The Federal Office for Foreign Trade, for example, administers funding for electric cars. Despite considerable efforts in recent years, the Federal IT administration is still fragmented.

This must be systematically addressed. The federal government, unlike the federal states, has never undertaken an inter-departmental administrative reform. It should therefore begin the process of downsizing the ministries with a comprehensive and far-reaching reform of its own administration. This should cover all areas of administrative activity. Interdepartmental tasks (basic IT architecture, supply, subsidies, funding procedures, procurement, etc.) should be bundled together as part of this process. This so-called **departmental research** will require a special interdepartmental review.

An administrative reform of the federal government should be accompanied by an examination of the question of the most appropriate legal form in which the federal government's tasks can be carried out. Higher authorities or institutions outside the federal administration that are organised under private or public law (e.g. the GIZ GmbH with the federal government as sole shareholder or the Federal Employment Agency as a public corporation with self-administration) can perform many tasks faster and better without compromising political control.

We therefore propose: The federal government to carry out an interdepartmental, fundamental and comprehensive administrative reform. Entities that are governed through political legislation and that have a different legal form should increasingly take over the duties of the federal authorities.

3. Budgetary Policy is a key control instrument, not least to counteract the consequences of climate change. However, this will require a structural reform of budget planning at the federal level. To date, the government and the Ministry of Finance have not made any specifically designated funds available for achieving clearly defined climate protection goals. At present, relevant ministries use only a multitude of pre-existing budget funds for this purpose.

Future-oriented administrative activity demands measurable climate-oriented action. This requires binding targets, cost-benefit analyses and efficient cross-project planning. Climate protection standards should already include both climate action and cost efficiency in all future planning.

Consequently, the drawing up of climate budgets will have to be authoritative in the future. Every planned activity would then be given a "CO₂ price tag". This also applies to the timelines, i.e., the question of when a specific CO₂ result will be achieved. The subsequent planning and approval processes would be pre-structured on the basis of clearly defined targets. In particularly climate-relevant sub-areas, such as transport or construction legislation, all processes starting from the planning approval through to the awarding of contracts must be made transparent, and accelerated (cf. point 8). A concrete example is the climate protection standards in the construction of public buildings, whose CO₂- savings value is often negligible compared to the effort involved. With a cost-benefit analysis of climate protection standards anchored in the budget, these expenditures could be used more efficiently and with significantly higher CO₂-savings, e.g. in the refurbishment of existing buildings.

The intended benefits will only be achieved if the federal states and municipalities proceed in the same way. Uniform standards in the assessment of the impact of activities on the climate, and in the planning approval, licensing and award procedures at federal and state level will be imperative for this (cf. points 7 and 8).

We therefore propose: Climate budgets to be introduced that stipulate climate neutrality as early as the project planning stage, that require cost-benefit analyses and that are subject to target and impact monitoring.

4. During the Corona pandemic, it became apparent that decision-making processes in the German **federal/state relationship** often appear slow and are sometimes inefficient as a result. We believe that this is due to an unequal distribution and weighting of governance responsibility and implementation authority.

In this context, particularly in the case of consultations with the federal government, the Council of State Ministers has come to be regarded as a negative example in times of crisis, not least because of the discrepancy between unanimous decisions made by the federal states with the federal government at the highest level, but subsequent implementation of these decisions battling a wide range of opinions. The unanimity of decision-making in bodies such as the Council of State Ministers, but also other ministerial bodies such as the Conference of Ministers of the Interior, is a historically grown, informal agreement with a fundamentally important status. However, especially in crisis situations and for the political control of collective and transnational large-scale projects (such as network infrastructure), these discrepancies often have a delaying effect, to say the least. Here in particular, the authority to take action will be required. In areas of responsibility and specifically defined situations, the implementation of consultation and coordination that can lead to quick and sustainable decisions, even in times of crisis, should be established. Nevertheless, informal bodies cannot bind constitutional authorities (e.g. the state governments or the state parliaments). In the Bundesrat process, binding decisions affecting the entire country are decided by majority vote. However, the Bundesrat is only a legislative body. Federal state governments, i.e. the state executives, are members of the Bundesrat. Accordingly, it makes sense to transfer executive decisions to the Bundesrat in orderly, formal and quick procedures, at least in times of crisis.

We therefore propose: Consider whether the Bundesrat should be empowered in times of crisis to take individual executive decisions with a binding effect on all federal states.

Administrative Modernisation and Digitalisation

5. Modern administration is increasingly carried out digitally, but rarely in a uniform way that is equally accessible to all stakeholders. It is imperative to guarantee a network infrastructure that can be used by all levels of government, a compatible IT architecture and uniform digital standards for the whole of Germany. The necessity of such an infrastructure is indisputable. What is disputed is where this responsibility lies, and how this should be implemented.

First of all, the federal government must create the conditions that enable the federal states and municipalities to apply their individual requirements to it. To this end, laws and ordinances must be subjected to a **digital suitability test** already at the drafting stage. This must also be taken into account when defining outcomes and objectives in the federal ministries (cf. point 1). The interconnected networks and competencies of the federal government make it necessary to provide a uniform, networked and crisis-proof infrastructure to underpin them all. Bundling interdepartmental tasks (cf. points 1, 2 and 10) and simplifying planning approval and licensing procedures (cf. point 7) will be essential in this regard. To this end, the IT Planning Council of the Federation and the federal states urgently needs to be strengthened. The goal should be to enable digital platform solutions that can be used jointly in Germany, and that allow citizens and the state at all levels to communicate with each other as needed.

This could for example be a **nationwide administrative portal** ("one-stop-shop") enabling the application, processing, issuing and retrieval of public permits, a nationwide regulated participatory mechanism for the awarding of public contracts of all kinds, or a nationwide accessible knowledge platform for access to all public data at all levels. A "Germany App" that unites these features into one interface can be a tangible representation for many of these applications.

We therefore propose: The Federal Government to provide a secure and reliable single digital network infrastructure, and consistent IT architecture with common standards and interfaces that can be used by all levels of government, and to enable compatible and needs-based digital platform solutions throughout the country.

6. The current **personnel structures in public administration** no longer meet the demands of a modern administration. Narrow and administration-specific tendering procedures, overly rigid remuneration structures and overly formal qualification requirements no longer reflect the high demands placed on modern personnel and project management. Hierarchically granular structures must be replaced by open and project-based structures as well as interdisciplinary problem-solving skills, especially in the administration of services, large-scale projects and approval procedures.

In short, the work processes of the administration should reflect its most urgent tasks not only in terms of content, but also in terms of structure.

The regulation on career paths must be made more flexible in the sense of performance and competition-oriented remuneration. The administration should open itself even more to lateral and side entrants and specialists, promote regular and temporary staff changes, also across in-house and departmental divisions, and implement modern work processes. Continuous personnel development and qualification of all employees in the sense of regular ongoing training - especially in the areas of project management, digitalisation, climate protection and crisis management - are a mandatory prerequisite for this. Work processes should not be characterised by the logic of vertical hierarchies of responsibility, but rather by the logic of implementation based on goals and results. The legal framework needs to promote and reward agility and flexibility among staff. The Federation should explicitly bring these demands into the collective bargaining negotiations in 2022 (cf. point 2).

We therefore propose: The civil service, labour and collective bargaining legislation be comprehensively reformed in the sense of ensuring a wide-ranging degree of competitiveness of the administration. This objective to be introduced by the Federation in the collective bargaining negotiations in 2022 or be implemented in other legal entities that can be regulated at political level.

7. German planning and licensing legislation has become fragmented and increasingly specialised in recent decades. It had been done in good faith, in order to meet the particular requirements for the approval of specific projects. However, this has resulted not only in diverse substantive requirements for obtaining a permit, but also in different authorities, deadlines, rights of participation, and the like. This is one of the central but overlooked reasons why official procedures in Germany take longer than in comparable countries, even though the same EU regulations often apply.

At least since the ruling of the Federal Constitutional Court of 24 March 2021, it has been clear that the German state will not be able to politically meet its obligation to ensure climate neutrality for future generations. This is not even about the necessary legislation or financing. Solely owing to the time needed for the necessary planning approval and licensing procedures, this obligation cannot be implemented on the basis of existing legislation. The implementation of the Federal Constitutional Court's ruling must therefore also have drastic ramifications at the administrative level.

Efforts to speed up the process so far have mainly focused on shortening the judicial review procedures. This has been effective, but is increasingly reaching its limits. Now it is important to streamline and bundle the actual administrative procedures. To this end, the tried and tested **Administrative Procedure Act**, which applies in the same wording at federal and state level, should be brought back into line to regulate planning approval and authorisation procedures in a uniform manner, so that procedures can be completed quickly and in accordance with standards that apply nationwide.

There is no longer any need for this law. Specialised procedural regulations take precedence over this law as *lex specialis*. They must be gradually unified and integrated into the Administrative Procedure Act. Furthermore, to date, various authorities have independently examined the individual aspects of each project.

The aim should be to bundle and streamline the different procedural and administrative competences. For large projects, all decisions are bundled in one authority: one project, one authority, one procedure. Planning and approval processes must provide for the (digital) participation of citizens at an early stage. This also saves time. Regulations on preclusion also speed up the administrative procedure: particular counter-arguments against a project need not be put forward repeatedly. The duration of court proceedings cannot force the administration to constantly issue new needs assessments. The time of the last administrative decision should be decisive for the examination of the legality of a decision by an administrative court.

We therefore propose: A bundled administrative procedures law covering all procedures in order to considerably accelerate planning approvals - and approval procedures to be drafted by the federal government and the federal states during this legislative term.

8. The objective of **public procurement legislation** is transparency, legal certainty, competitiveness and economic efficiency. The existing public procurement ordinance (PPO) in the upper and lower thresholds (budgetary law) is already very flexible and offers a great deal of freedom, but implementation often does not reflect this. The fact that particularly urgent procurements can also be implemented under the existing law was recently demonstrated by procurement during the pandemic.

A public procurement policy cannot cover all eventualities in advance, but should rather be efficient in terms of meeting immediate needs and policy objectives. Accelerated and simplified procurement must not lead to diminished legal protection, competitiveness and transparency. Rather, all parties involved should already have an understanding of what the objective of the procurement is at the needs assessment stage.

Particularly within the context of modernising the State, there are political objectives that should also be pursued within the framework of the procurement process. These include a uniform digital infrastructure (cf. point 5), climate neutrality (cf. point 3), process optimisation (cf. point 7) and crisis resilience. Furthermore, a reduction in minimum company sizes and years since foundation would do much more justice to the market situation in the digital sector (e.g., start-ups). Sustainability can be promoted through greater consideration of contract-related environmental aspects. Resource conservation is an important goal and possibly even an international competitive advantage.

Professionalising public procurement through improved technical education and training (e.g., in the use of framework contracts instead of individual tenders) is an important instrument for speeding up procurement processes. In practice, the run-up to the tendering process in particular takes up a lot of time. Making use of guides and interpretation aids will facilitate more rapid application of the process. This all requires experience and qualifications that go beyond classic administrative training (cf. also point 6). Enabling and imparting these skills should be the task of a central procurement department, which not only ensures the monitoring and implementation of procurement procedures, but also the qualification and training of the staff involved.

Electronic awards (e-tendering) offer a significant acceleration potential. The existing regulations already contain sufficient specific rules, e.g., regarding electronic communications. However, there is a lack of consistent application in practice. eProcurement must be standardised and promoted nationwide. Different platform solutions from the federal government, the federal states and local authorities make it difficult for companies bidding nationwide to participate in public contracts.

Procurement thresholds for restricted invitations to tender, private treaty awards/negotiated awards and direct contracts should be standardised nationwide and reduced to an appropriate level. Exceptions to the application of public procurement regulations to be reduced to a minimum or justified by policy objectives, such as increased threshold criteria for the direct award of innovation-relevant procurements, e.g., for digital infrastructures.

In order to attract more bidders to participate in public tenders, the awarding of contracts at federal and state level should also be standardised as far as possible.

We therefore propose: Procurement legislation to be standardised by aligning state and federal awards, reducing contract value thresholds to an appropriate level, and standardising and advancing e-procurement nationwide. The application of public procurement legislation will be simplified through better qualification and ongoing training for standardised procurement.

9. Digitalisation is a process that affects all areas of society, both private and public. Digitalisation is precisely the tool necessary for the modernisation of the State. It is simultaneously a condition and an objective. Centrally managed infrastructure as well as uniform standards and interfaces (cf. point 5) must also be managed in a consistent way, avoiding any interference in technical decisions.

Consequently, responsibility and authority for the strategy and architecture of digitalisation should be exercised horizontally across all ministries and federal agencies by one body with both ministerial responsibility and implementational competence. Each ministry must also remain responsible for its digital projects externally, but must fit into the overall strategy.

There is a wealth of proposals in both the public and professional discourses on this subject, from which a number of guiding principles can be derived. Firstly, the establishment of an independent new ministry will take time. No existing ministry will welcome the surrender of important competencies and qualified staff. The more complicated the new ministry is, the more time it will take to set it up internally. Secondly, digitalisation affects so many competences that the mode of implementation must include both decision-making and coordination. A purely coordinating ministry will likely face difficulties working alongside the more traditional, established, influential ministries. It is impossible to separate every digital project from the individual state ministries, and this could in any case lead to the opposite of an expedited process. Thirdly, and following from the above points: the use of existing efficient structures is to be preferred to the creation of new ones, and these should be fully geared to the inter-departmental challenges of any digitally driven transformation.

For this reason, it seems sensible to structure the cross-sectional task of digitalisation on the basis of already existing competences.

Currently, key ministries involved are those that already work or should work across departments: the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Federal Ministry of Transport for infrastructure and administration, Federal Ministry of Economics and Federal Ministry of Research for business, technology and innovation, Federal Ministry of Defence and Federal Ministry of the Interior for cyber defence and crisis security, Federal Ministry of Finance for the Federal Information Technology Centre (ITZ). Subordinate to these are all authorities that explicitly deal with digitalisation or are relevant to decision-making (including the Federal Office of Administration, the Federal Office for Information Security, the Federal Network Agency, the Federal Agency for Leap Innovations, the Cyber Innovation Hub of the Federal Armed Forces, the Federal IT Centre).

Significant digitalisation projects include inter-departmental projects (e.g., Registry modernisation, the Federal Government's online portal, GAIA X, the Federal Government's networks, use of ID cards). Inter-departmental functional projects are largely unknown in the Federal Government, but they are essential for successful digitalisation. The objective of all organisational activities must be to reduce the gap between Germany and other world leaders in the field of digitalisation.

In order to bundle the tasks without creating just a weak coordinating ministry, two options are feasible:

- 1) **Bundling areas of responsibility** with co-ordination and implementation competences in the existing ministries (e.g., the Federal Ministry of the Interior will be responsible for the entire public sector, the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy for the private sector). This will result in strong digital ministries that together manage the overall process of digitalisation, including those ministries that implement individual digital projects. The Federal Chancellery to co-ordinate the process.
- 2) or creating an **independent Digital and Transformation Ministry** in which the above competences are fully integrated or at least coordinated by that ministry with the power to implement them.

Ensuring the immediate establishment of functioning competencies is particularly urgent. Experience has shown that the separation and bundling of existing competences is a lengthy and potentially contentious process, which is why the first option is recommended here.

We therefore propose: The responsibility for managing digitalisation to be bundled across ministries and brought together in already existing bodies with horizontal cross-coordination and implementation competences.

Crisis Preparation and Crisis Response

10. The Corona pandemic showed that in times of crisis, the State's response is not adequately covered by existing legislation: Emergency laws were rightly not applicable; at the same time, there was immense pressure to act. Allowing action to be taken by the State through short-term amendments to the Infection Protection Act was unsatisfactory from a constitutional, federal and legislative perspective. After all, a specialised federal law already exists as a basis for the specific contingency of an infectious disease. For other crises and natural disasters, there would be no corresponding laws, contingency plans or the like. After the major heavy rain disaster in Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia, there were also discussions about the reliability of warning systems and the coordination of emergency operations.

In principle, our federal crisis and disaster management system has proven its worth. It strengthens local responsibility. However, if a crisis is trans-national, the federal government must have the capacity to facilitate administrative implementations in cooperation with the affected states and municipalities.

The so-called emergency laws must be fundamentally revised with the aim of introducing a **State of Emergency legislation**, appropriate within the Federal system and under parliamentary supervision, by means of a Federal Crisis Protection Act.

It follows logically that a Federal Crisis Protection Act must be applied in the event of a national crisis involving more than one state. If the federal government is to act on a crisis not merely as a service provider in the form of the Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW) or the Federal Armed Forces, this will require a decision-making body (**crisis management team**) that is both legally mandated and administratively and technically equipped for this purpose. This body must be in a position to make decisions relevant to the whole of Germany on an interdepartmental basis. It must be legitimised and limited by the German Bundestag and the Bundesrat. All decision-making hierarchies belong to it (federal government, federal states, municipalities). Experts from outside the administration are also to be consulted. The Federal Government and the federal states should ensure that its implementation is binding.

Germany also needs stable channels for warning the population (e.g., stationary and mobile sirens, "cell broadcasts", warning apps, official presence on the internet and on social networks). The decisions on which warning channels are ultimately used, and which specific recommendations for action are linked to the warnings, have to be made by the local authorities on site.

Crisis Preparation and Crisis Response

Emergency warnings and crisis management need to be practised. This applies both to the understanding of alerts and instructions for action by the population, and to the processes of crisis management in the administrations and by the political leaders themselves. Crisis analyses must be used to develop binding measures for crisis preparation, and crisis exercise scenarios should also be conducted with the participation of political leadership bodies.

In conclusion, state intervention in crisis situations is only effective with the participation of the population and the voluntary sector, and with full democratic engagement on the subject. Cooperation in crisis preparation and response measures is based on the strength of the population itself, in the best sense of the principle of solidarity. Resilience - understood in this sense as an element of self-efficacy – must become part of everyday life, by making preparation for crisis a natural part of public life through regular counselling, training, and equipping voluntary and honorary services. Crises need to be regarded as part of ordinary life.

Alongside the tried and tested structures of the fire brigades, the THW and other blue-light organisations, and in addition to the military reservist organisations, there is a need to establish a large **civilian reserve**. Following the structural principle of the Bundeswehr reservists, people from different areas of economic and social life should be encouraged - prepared and trained - to volunteer to assist the state in crises and disasters. As in the former civil service, this requires a commitment to existing organisations so that volunteers are permanently available for certain tasks. Such volunteers could, for example, be affiliated with the Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW), which, if desired, could include former active THW volunteers, but also, for example, graduates of a Federal Volunteer Service with the THW.

We therefore propose: A Federal Crisis Protection Act to be drafted that clearly regulates the responsibilities and competences of the Federation and the federal states both prior to and in crisis situations, including by means of an overarching crisis management team at the federal level. The preparation and awareness of the population in the event of a disaster or crisis to be improved by means of a well-defined warning management system and regular training drills. State crisis and disaster response to be supplemented by the establishment of a permanent civilian reserve of citizens who can be called upon, under the leadership of the THW.

Concluding Remarks

The **federal government system** is one of the great strengths of our country. A federal system is more in touch with the people and their concerns. Yet there is increasing criticism of the current state/federal government interaction. Responsibilities are blurred or shunted back and forth. Many citizens want consistent national solutions for Germany and criticise the confusion and tardiness of the existing federal system. Challenges such as the major crises of our time, climate change and digitalisation, including cyber security, do not (or no longer) fit into the distribution of responsibilities as it is defined in the Constitution and as we live it. The existing structures do not take into account the increasing urgency and the demands for speed of decision-making.

As such, it is high time for a thorough reorganisation of the distribution of tasks and competences between the federal government and the federal states, especially with regard to political governance, digitalisation and crisis management. This should not only be a question of the responsibilities of the federal government or the federal states, but also of reliable, rapid coordination between the federal states.

The existing system of federal committees (Bundestag, state ministers, state parliaments and academic experts) has not stood the test of time. It would be more effective if the federal government and the federal states appointed a small group of some twelve individuals who, independently but in consultation with the decision-makers, could develop a comprehensive proposal with a clear mandate, which can then be discussed and decided upon within the existing framework.

We therefore propose: The Federation and the States to agree on a reorganisation of administrative structures, for adoption in the middle of this legislative period. This reorganisation to be drawn up by a streamlined commission jointly mandated by the Federation and the federal states.

Irrespective of this, key programmes for the modernisation of the State should be started without delay.

Germany needs a major state reform.

