

PRESS RELEASE 08/2024

Helmut Frister elected new chair of the German Ethics Council

Berlin, 15 November 2024

During its first meeting in new formation, the German Ethics Council elected the law professor Helmut Frister as Council chair.

The neuroscientist Susanne Schreiber, the philosopher and digital ethicist Judith Simon, and the medical doctor and ethicist Eva Winkler were appointed as deputy chairs.

Bärbel Bas, President of the German Bundestag, congratulated the new chair and board. In her speech, she emphasised the importance of the Ethics Council: “For us members of the German Bundestag, your work is a great help. You help to objectify some emotional debates. You point out developments that must not be overlooked. And you point out conflicts that we have to negotiate here in parliament.” The President of the Bundestag praised the Council’s work to date and encouraged it to continue to focus on important ethical debates, especially in times of polarisation and scepticism towards science.

In the further course of the meeting, the Council members took initial decisions on the future work programme: The next annual meeting of the German Ethics Council in June 2025 will address the topic of solidarity.

Photos of those elected, the President of the Bundestag and the entire Council can be downloaded from www.ethikrat.org/mediathek (photo credit: German Ethics Council / photo: Christian Thiel).

Background

The German Ethics Council is to have 26 members, half of whom are nominated by the Federal Government and half by the German Bundestag. The members of the Council are appointed by the President of the Bundestag. The current Ethics Council has 25 members only, because the AfD parliamentary group’s personnel proposal was rejected during one of the plenary sessions in the Bundestag.

The members of the council serve their four-year mandate on a voluntary basis and may be reappointed no more than once. They represent scientific, medical, theological, philosophical, ethical, social, economic and legal concerns in a special way. In addition to scientists from the above-mentioned fields, the council also includes people who are particularly familiar with ethical issues in the life sciences. They should reflect the diversity of opinions in society.

The German Ethics Council was established in April 2008. Its work is based on the Ethics Council Act of July 2007. The Council is to pursue the ethical, social, scientific, medical and legal questions as well as the anticipated consequences for individuals and society that arise in connection with research and development, particularly in the field of life sciences and their application to humans.

Further information on the members, the working methods of the Ethics Council and the Ethics Council Act can be found at www.ethikrat.org.

Members

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Jutta Allmendinger
Regional bishop Dr. phil. Petra Bahr
Prof. Dr. phil. Cornelia Betsch
Prof. Dr. iur. Hans-Georg Dederer
Dr. rer. nat. Uta Eser
Prof. Dr. Aldo Faisal
Prof. Dr. iur. Helmut Frister
Prof. Dr. rer. pol. Nils Goldschmidt
Prof. Dr. theol. Elisabeth Gräß-Schmidt
Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Armin Grunwald
Prof. Dr. med. Winfried Hardingham
Dr. phil. Ute Kalender
Hedy Kerek-Bodden
Prof. Dr. phil. Armin Nassehi
Prof. Dr. phil. habil. Annette Riedel
Prof. Dr. iur. Dr. phil. Frauke Rostalski
Prof. Dr. theol. Kerstin Schlögl-Flierl
Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Susanne Schreiber
Dr. med. Josef Schuster
Prof. Dr. phil. Mark Schweda
Prof. Dr. phil. Judith Simon
Prof. Dr. phil. Muna Tatari
Prof. Dr. iur. Gregor Thüsing
Prof. Dr. Achim Wambach
Prof. Dr. med. Dr. phil. Eva Winkler

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