

The Tasks - an overview

Informing members

The association informs its members about current political and economic developments affecting the banking sector. In view of the increasing number of European directives, national laws and amendments to laws, as well as regulations, this task is steadily growing in importance.

Serving as a contact point at political level Serving as a contact point for parliament, ministries and authorities on all banking issues is another major aspect of the association's work. Politicians and civil servants regularly call on the association's expertise to enable them to properly assess specific banking questions.

Cooperating with other associations

Cooperation with other associations at home and abroad also plays an important role. Questions of mutual interest are discussed and solutions worked out and channelled into the political and economic decision-making process.

Die Deutsche Kreditwirtschaft (German Banking Industry Committee [GBIC]), comprising the five leading German banking associations, deals with important overarching issues relating to banking law, banking policy and banking practice. These include, in particular, supervisory, securities and tax regulations. GBIC, which superseded the Zentraler Kreditausschuss in August 2011 and carries on the latter's work, also drafts standardised rules for the payments sector, including card payment schemes.

To support the process of European integration and safeguard their interests in Brussels, the private commercial banks' national associations joined forces in the **European Banking Federation (EBF)**.

Upcoming European Commission decisions are discussed here at association level so that the banks' position can then be conveyed to the relevant European institutions.

Brussels Office

The association has had a **representative office in Brussels** since 2004. It was opened in response to the intensity and speed with which the EU's banking and financial-markets-related legislative plans for creating an integrated European market for financial services are handled. The Brussels Office facilitates swift and efficient cooperation with the European institutions.

Informing the general public

Informing the general public about the tasks and activities of the private commercial banks is another focus of the association's work. The aim is to fill information gaps, clear up misunderstandings and promote a relationship of trust between banks and their customers. Banks, with their highly specialised financial services, are especially prone to being misunderstood or misjudged.

The association is a contact point on all banking questions. In **press releases** and other **publications**, it provides the latest news from the world of finance and comments on various banking and economic issues. It also holds reader phone-ins with many newspapers and magazines and publishes regular consumer tips. In addition, the association promotes the teaching of economics in schools by making available a wide range of **material** specially designed for use by teachers and students. Finally, it organises regular debates on socio-political issues in order to underline the private commercial banks' responsibility within society.

Ombudsman scheme

The association was the first in the German banking sector to appoint an **independent Ombudsman**. The Ombudsman looks into complaints filed by private customers and tries to settle these quickly and unbureaucratically. The advantage for the customer: the scheme is free of charge. Any private customer of a private commercial bank can make use of this service by simply writing to the Kundenbeschwerdestelle (Customer Complaints Office) at the following address:

Kundenbeschwerdestelle beim
Bundesverband deutscher Banken
Postfach 04 03 07
10062 Berlin

Deposit protection scheme

The association operates a **Deposit Protection Fund** which gives the customers of its member banks virtually full deposit protection. The Deposit Protection Fund, run on a voluntary basis, is a major stabilising factor in the German financial sector and provides a level of protection unmatched by schemes abroad.

In addition, a subsidiary of the association called the **Entschädigungseinrichtung deutscher Banken GmbH** operates a statutory compensation scheme for depositors and investors.