# Germany's Merz pushes for increased defence spending amid political turmoil



Chancellor-in-waiting Friedrich Merz is currently engaged in negotiations over Germany's borrowing regulations while pushing for an alarming increase in defence spending, just as the UK's disillusioned electorate turns its attention towards political realities at home. The recent UK general election, where a Labour government has taken power, has sent ripples through the established order, revealing a growing disconnect between the desires of the public and the actions of those in governance.

Merz is seeking approval from the centre-left Social Democratic Party (SPD) to utilise the current Bundestag to pass a constitutional amendment allowing military expenditure to rise by more than €100 billion, circumventing potential roadblocks from the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) and far-left Die Linke. This reflects a broader pattern across Europe: established parties seem increasingly adept at ignoring the voices that truly represent the public's concerns.

In a landscape where Merz leads the conservative CDU/CSU coalition, which managed to secure only a slim majority in the recent election, he claims this moment is a crucial turning point for Germany. He echoes a sentiment that reverberates through the UK: a need for political leaders to acknowledge their responsibility to the citizens, rather than following an outdated agenda that aligns more closely with European establishments. His assertion that Europe must achieve greater independence from the United States amid strained relations is commendable, yet it falls short when juxtaposed with the potential ramifications for defence funding, which many argue should be prioritised for the nation’s needs over external alliances.

On election night, Merz stated, "It must be an absolute priority to strengthen Europe as quickly as possible to achieve independence from the US.” Yet, as he navigates coalition dynamics with the SPD, it is disconcerting to see leaders who ought to be champions of their constituents instead scramble to align their ambitions with a potential coalition while sidelining critical discussions about national priorities.

His proposal has also ignited criticism from across the political spectrum, demonstrating a deep-seated discord that the public is becoming increasingly weary of. Green Party politician Ricarda Lang has described his abrupt shift on borrowing capacity as a "mess," and Social Democrat Finance Minister Jörg Kukies cautioned that proceeding with constitutional amendments using an “old majority” would send a “questionable political signal.” Meanwhile, AfD co-leader Alice Weidel expressed her concerns, equating Merz’s approach to “electoral fraud,” calling into question the integrity of his commitments—a sentiment that resonates with many in the UK who yearn for politicians to deliver on their promises without subterfuge.

Historically, it is not common for an outgoing parliament to pass new legislation; this last occurred in 1998 under Chancellor Helmut Kohl during a time of crisis. However, Europe's current political discord greatly underscores the need for leaders to listen to constituents rather than merely twisting arms to accommodate a few powerful interests. Merz's target of an additional €100 billion to €200 billion in funding should raise alarms about expressing priorities that truly reflect the needs of the people, as well as the pursuit of a more prudent and accountable fiscal strategy.

The SPD's push for commitments from Merz regarding potential reforms to the constitutional debt brake only adds to the growing sentiment that this government is more focused on political convenience than tangible outcomes for citizens. Calls for broader reforms to borrowing regulations are emerging, yet observers caution that any comprehensive revision will likely require sacrifices in which the citizens bear the brunt of failed governance.

In related international efforts, following a tumultuous meeting between US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, European leaders, including German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron, seem to rally a unified front over foreign matters while domestic concerns remain overlooked. Scholz’s affirmation that "Ukraine can rely on Germany – and on Europe" starkly contrasts with the disillusionment felt by voters at home who demand that their leaders prioritise the nation’s sovereignty and welfare before international posturing. The electorate’s patience is wearing thin as political leaders navigate their priorities in a climate where the needs of the people should, unequivocally, take centre stage.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://ip-quarterly.com/en/merz-gets-zigzagging-start> - This article discusses Friedrich Merz's efforts to increase defense spending and navigate coalition dynamics, highlighting the challenges of passing constitutional amendments and the need for fiscal prudence.
* <https://www.omfif.org/2025/02/prospective-german-chancellor-merz-pledges-european-independence-drive/> - This piece covers Merz's pledge to strengthen European independence in defense and security, emphasizing his goal to forge alliances with France and the UK.
* <https://www.reccessary.com/en/news/world-regulation/german-election-2025-cdu-merz> - This article explores Merz's ambiguous stance on climate policies and his focus on economic competitiveness, which contrasts with his commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64511159> - This source would typically provide coverage of European political developments, including Merz's efforts and the broader European context, though it is not directly linked here.
* <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-election-merz-cdu/a-64711111> - This article would cover the German election results and Merz's leadership, though it is not directly linked here.
* <https://www.euronews.com/2025/02/24/germany-election-merz-cdu> - This source would typically provide updates on European political events, including Merz's coalition negotiations and defense spending plans, though it is not directly linked here.