

Chancellor as Scientist-in-Chief (2020)

Abstract

Under Angela Merkel's leadership, Germany garnered international praise for its initial response to the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. In this moment of crisis, Merkel's scientific training—she has a Ph.D. in quantum chemistry—proved advantageous, making it easier for her to explain complex virus reproduction models and other data-driven health information to the German public. In a televised speech on March 18, 2020, Merkel explained the epidemiological basis of the COVID shutdown to a national audience. In this speech, which was widely publicized internationally, she also spoke about her own background as an East German and how this informed her views on restricting freedom of movement. Merkel's emphasis on science, transparency, communication, and her willingness to defer to experts, including virologist Christian Drosten of Berlin's Charité Hospital, helped Germany navigate the difficult early days of the pandemic. At the time, world health leaders and others took note of Germany's ambitious COVID testing and contact tracing programs, as well as its comparably low mortality rates.

Source



Source: Original caption: BERLIN, March 18, 2020 -- Photo taken on March 18, 2020, shows German Chancellor Angela Merkel delivering a video speech on COVID-19, in Berlin, capital of Germany. German Chancellor Angela Merkel urged solidarity among citizens in a speech on Wednesday evening, calling the COVID-19 the nation's biggest challenge since World War II. (/Shan Yuqi). Picture Alliance, Media-no. 217450556.

picture alliance / Photoshot

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